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BEN JONSON'S VOLPONE:
A CRITICAL VARIORUM EDITION

by

Michael Wayne Stamps

Bachelor of Arts
San José State University
1993

Master of Arts
San José State University
1996

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in English
Department of English
College of Liberal Arts

Graduate College
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August 2004
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Dissertation Approval
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August 16, 2004

The Dissertation prepared by

MICHAEL WAYNE STAMPS

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BEN JONSON'S VOLPONE: A CRITICAL VARIORUM EDITION

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Examination Committee Chair

Dean of the Graduate College

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ABSTRACT

Ben Jonson's Volpone: A Critical Variorum Edition

by

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Ben Jonson's Volpone: A Critical Variorum provides modern scholars with a comprehensive bibliographic reference work devoted to Jonson's early seventeenth-century dramatic comedy and its four hundred years of critical commentary. By joining together Jonson's Volpone and the work's full complement of editorial information and critical material, this Variorum edition illuminates the play's entire history of critical reception and literary interpretation within a format that allows readers and researchers to follow the evolving lines of influence peculiar to the work's critical tradition and to locate new areas of investigation. Based upon an authoritative copy of the 1607 quarto, the Variorum reprints Jonson's primary text above a continuous subset of line-by-line annotations that reflects the history of glosses and notes produced by the play's legion of editors and commentators. At a glance, readers may review each footnote's chronological survey of the editorial insights and critical remarks related to either the elucidation of the text's dramatic language or the identification of Jonson's historical and literary allusions. Those early observations that have since developed into larger critical debates receive
fuller treatments within the variorum’s extensive collection of appendices. Drawing upon printed materials ranging from the earliest contemporary allusions to established critical works to the latest journal articles, each subsection of the Appendix provides a chronological distillation of the most significant contributions made to the play’s long history of textual scholarship, literary interpretation, or theatrical evaluation. Among its expansive range of topics, the Variorum’s appendices compile and organize the critical material and textual information related to the play’s printing and editorial histories; Jonson’s source materials and literary influences; and literary studies of the play’s genre, themes, language, and characters. In addition to its footnoted annotations and fully developed appendices, this variorum edition also provides a complete bibliographic catalogue of critical materials and resources pertinent to the study of the text.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .................................................................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................. vii

PLAN OF THE WORK ................................................................................................. ix

Abbreviations and Symbols ......................................................................................... xx

*VOLPONE, OR THE FOX: TEXT, TEXTUAL NOTES, AND COMMENTARY* ............ 1

APPENDIX .................................................................................................................. 304

I. The Text: Dates and Contexts ............................................................................. 304

A. Dates of Original Composition, Performance, and Publication ....................... 304
   1. Printed Evidence ............................................................................................ 304
   2. Internal Evidence ....................................................................................... 305
   3. Secondary Evidence ................................................................................... 307
   4. Earliest Performances ................................................................................. 308

B. First Publishers and Printers ............................................................................ 310
   1. The Quarto: Thomas Thorpe and George Eld ........................................... 310

C. Historical, Biographical, and Literary Contexts .............................................. 311
   1. Cambridge and Oxford .............................................................................. 312
   2. Blackfriars ................................................................................................. 315
   4. The Gunpowder Plot ................................................................................. 318

II. Sources, Analogues, and Influences ................................................................. 320

A. Sources and Analogues ..................................................................................... 320
   1. Legacy Hunting .......................................................................................... 321
   2. Metempsychosis ......................................................................................... 332
   3. Folly ........................................................................................................... 344
   4. Animal Lore ............................................................................................... 346
   5. Venetian Background ................................................................................. 352

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
6. Minor Characters .......................................................................................... 427
   a) The Avocatori .................................................................................. 427

D. Dramatic Structure and Technique ............................................................. 428
   1. Setting ........................................................................................................ 428
      a) Venice .............................................................................................. 428
      b) Volpone's Household ....................................................................... 430
   2. Plot ............................................................................................................. 430
      b) The Unities ...................................................................................... 431
      c) The Sub-Plot .................................................................................... 433
   3. Major Scenes ........................................................................................... 435
   4. Style and Language .................................................................................. 454
   5. Irony .......................................................................................................... 457

E. Themes, Symbols, and Imagery .................................................................... 458

F. Extra-Dramatic Texts .................................................................................... 462
   1. The Title-page ............................................................................................ 462
   2. The Dedication ........................................................................................... 463
   3. The Epistle ................................................................................................ 464
   4. The Commendatory Verses ....................................................................... 466
   5. The Persons of the Comedy ....................................................................... 467
   6. The Argument ............................................................................................ 467
   7. The Prologue ............................................................................................. 468

G. Literary and Cultural Influences ..................................................................... 469
   1. Literary Influences .................................................................................. 469
   2. Cultural Influences .................................................................................. 472

BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................. 474

VITA ..................................................................................................................... 531
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To hear Jonson tell it, *Volpone* was conceived and composed all within two months’ time. For my own part, producing a variorum edition worthy of the play’s four centuries of critical commentary and editorial tradition has taken somewhat longer. As this dissertation project owes an immediate and sustained debt to those scholars and editors whose labors are represented throughout its pages, I am likewise indebted to those people in my life who have, in addition to my family and friends, supported and inspired this work throughout its development. The UNLV Graduate College and a series of generous assistantships afforded me three summers of research and writing. To that end, this work would be far more imperfect were it not for the consistently helpful assistance of Victoria A. Hart and the Document Delivery staff at UNLV’s Lied Library. I am especially thankful for the regular encouragement and practical advice I have received from my professors and examination committee members, Dr. Philip Rusche, Dr. Charles Whitney, and Dr. Elspeth Whitney, which also extends to include the staff and faculty of the UNLV English Department. In particular, I am gratefully indebted to Dr. Richard Harp, who not only first suggested that a variorum edition of *Volpone* would make for a viable dissertation project but also directed and coached its steady and stubborn progress from a degree requirement toward a potentially valuable contribution to the future study of the play. Above all, my wife April—the daily aid to my muses—has in countless ways made this work both possible and worth accomplishing.
PLAN OF THE WORK

Ben Jonson "fully penned" his *Volpone* within a five-week period early in 1606; the King’s Men promptly staged the play at the Globe in Southwark, and later presented it in the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge; Thomas Thorpe published a quarto edition of the text in the first months of 1607. Since this pivotal year in Jonson’s dramatic career, nearly four centuries of critical commentary, editorial industry, and theatrical activity have been devoted to his play. As *Volpone* regularly appears in variety of scholarly editions and theatrical forms, the range and volume of printed material related to the investigation, interpretation, and appreciation of the play also continue to expand and diversify. Faced with the imposing challenges that come with contemplating this mass of information, modern readers and researchers may begin navigating *Volpone*’s extensive critical tradition by consulting the growing assortment of casebooks, companions, bibliographies, and specialized editions dedicated to the study of Jonson and his plays. Such serial reference works are the industry standard for most major writers of

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1 Ben Jonson, “Prologue,” *Volpone, or the Fox*, line 16. All citations from the primary text have been drawn from Brian Parker, ed., *Volpone, or the Fox*, The Revels Plays, revised ed. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1999).

any period or genre. However, with regard to those major authors of the English Renaissance whose works have inspired equally vast critical traditions, dedicated editorial teams have labored to compile and organize every significant scholarly contribution made to the understanding and appreciation of their literary texts within comprehensive variorum editions. But while today’s scholars may consult variorum editions of Spenser, Shakespeare, Donne, and Milton, no comparable edition has yet been devoted to any of Jonson’s major dramatic works. The following plan for this critical variorum edition of *Volpone* provides a descriptive outline of the various editorial procedures that have been used to organize and unify such a wide array of textual materials into a coherent and useful reference work.

As its subtitle implies, *Ben Jonson’s Volpone: A Critical Variorum* fulfills a purposely selective series of objectives, which though vast in their own right do not extend to include the full range of editorial labors traditionally associated with standard variorum editions. Strictly defined, a “variorum” ought to fulfill the basic expectations of

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the titular Latin phrase *cum notis variorum* from which such an edition derives its name; that is, the edition joins together the author's original text “with the notes of various persons.” While most variorum editions aim to reproduce and/or reference the notes of “various persons” throughout their pages, it should be noted however that no absolute rule mandates that any given variorum must accommodate *all the notes of every person* who might have written on the primary work in question. In its current presentation, this variorum edition makes no claims to being exhaustive. In its most typical form, a variorum edition provides an authoritative version of the primary text together with a comprehensive running commentary of footnoted annotations which details the chronological history of critical response to specific features of the literary work. In the case of those works with fuller critical traditions, variorum editions expand upon the greater wealth of secondary material within a series of secondary appendices. The *Volpone* variorum consists of two such main components, which appear in this edition under the separate headings of (1) “The Text, Textual Notes, and Commentary” and (2) “Appendix.”

The basis for any variorum edition is the primary text of the literary work, and this critical variorum edition reprints the 1607 quarto as its copy-text rather than the 1616 folio text. In particular, this edition provides a near-facsimile printing of the unique quarto copy Jonson inscribed to John Florio, which is currently housed at the British Library (Shelfmark: C.12.e.17; STC 14783) and readily available in a proper facsimile edition. Though both the 1607 quarto and the 1616 folio have been granted authoritative status—each having been produced and printed in Jonson’s lifetime, if not under his direct supervision—the quarto’s original presentation of various non-dramatic texts (e.g.,

---

its title-page, Dedication, Epistle, commendatory verses, *dramatis personae*, Argument, and Prologue, etc.) reflects the author’s earliest literary intention on behalf of his printed work. Jonson and his printer William Stansby may have altered certain aspects of the quarto text in order to prepare *Volpone* for its inclusion in the folio *Workes*, but the sum of these changes does not diminish the primacy of the quarto. Certainly, the case would be vastly different if one were considering the more extensive revision Jonson performed on behalf of his *Every Man in His Humour* between its own quarto and folio printings.

Otherwise, the rather minimal alterations performed by Jonson between 1607 and 1616 represents the more practical corrections of an editor rather than the special creative designs of an author. In effect, by adopting the 1607 quarto as the copy-text for this edition, the 1616 folio edition of Jonson’s play takes its place among the long list of editions devoted to his work. The following list provides a chronological catalogue of the major editions of *Volpone*, excluding reprints. Each edition cited throughout this variorum may be identified according to its assigned siglum: an abbreviation of the text’s official title, major editor, or main bookseller set in small caps followed by the date of publication in parentheses. The complete publication information for each work may be found in the Bibliography.

| Q (1607) | BEN: JONSON his VOLPONE OR THE FOXE [QUARTO] |
| F (1616) | The Workes of Benjamin Jonson [FIRST FOLIO] |
| F2 (1640) | The Workes of Benjamin Jonson [SECOND FOLIO] |
| F3 (1692) | The Works of Ben Jonson [THIRD FOLIO] |
| TONSON (1709) | Volpone: or, The Fox ... Printed for Jacob Tonson |
| HILLS (1710?) | Volpone, or, The Fox ... Printed and Sold Henry Hills |
| JOHNSON (1714) | VOLPONE: or, THE FOX ... The Hague: Printed for T. Johnson |
| BAKER (1715) | Four Select Plays. viz. ... Volpone. Printed for J. Baker |
| FEALES (1732) | The Three Celebrated Plays ... Sold by William Feales |
| BOOKSELLERS (1738) | O Rare Ben Jonson! ... Sold by the Booksellers |
| MIDWINTER (1739) | Volpone: or, the Fox ... Printed for D. Midwinter, et al. |
| COTTER & HAMILTON (1749) | Volpone ... Dublin: Printed for Joseph Cotter and Joseph Hamilton |

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URIE (1752)  
WHALLEY (1756)  
URIE (1766)  
COILMAN (1778)  
STOCKDALE (1811)  
SCOTT (1811)  
GIFFORD (1816)  
CORNWALL (1838)  
CUNNINGHAM (1875)  
MORLEY (1885)  
NICHOLSON (1893–95)  
O'SULLIVAN (1898)  
HOLT (1905)  
N&S (1905)  
SCHELLING (1910)  
NEILSON (1911)  
RHYS (1915)  
RE (1919)  
H&S (1925–52)  
SCHELLING (1926)  
OLIPHANT (1929)  
DUNN (1932)  
BROOKE & PARADISE (1933)  
SPENSER (1933)  
de Vocht (1937)  
LEVIN (1938)  
DEAN (1950)  
SALE (1951)  
KRONENBERGER (1952)  
BARISH (1958)  
COOK (1962)  
CORRIGAN (1961)  
KERNAN (1962)  
BAMBOUGH (1963)  
WRIGHT & LAMAR (1963)  
JAMIESON (1966)  
BROCKBANK (1968)  
HALIO (1968)  
MCPHERSON (1972)  
CREASER (1978)  
ADAMS (1979)  
PROCTOR (1989)  
PARKER (1983)  
DONALDSON (1985)  
WILKES (1982)  
OSTOVICH (1997)  
HUTSON (1998)  
PARKER (1999)  
P&B (1999)  
WILKES (1999)  
HARp (2001)  
WATSON (2003)  

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These editions have served as the primary sources for much of the textual information and editorial notes that constitute the variorum’s annotations; however, in its current presentation, this variorum has not made equal use of every edition. As with the significant textual alterations that have been introduced by later editors—including stage directions but excluding modernized spellings—the series of substantive variants that reflect Jonson’s own authorial changes to the text will be noted in the variorum’s footnotes.

This critical variorum adopts the basic editorial apparatus and textual features common to most modern variorums and scholarly editions, especially in its combined use of footnoted annotations, critical appendices, and systems for numbering the primary text and documenting the secondary materials. Each footnote provides a full, self-contained chronological survey of the notes, glosses, and commentary that have been produced by editors and critics responding to isolated words or discrete passages within Jonson’s text. Larger literary and critical discussions that may not be effectively treated within the limited space of the footnotes have been gathered together in a series of appendices at the end of the text, for which the footnotes typically supply the cross-reference, “Cf. app.” Every editorial note or critical comment that has been quoted or cited in the footnotes and appendices of this edition has been documented using the following formula: “EDITOR (YEAR [page]).” The full bibliographic information for each work set in this formula may be located in the Bibliography, where each entry has been arranged and alphabetized according to this system and occasionally supplemented with notes. No overriding attempt has been made to regularize the variety of textual sources that make up the notes and appendix of this edition; grammatical and mechanical errors or any mistakes in
quotations that might strike readers as typographical slips have been attended with
"<sic>.” Unifying the text and its various editorial and critical components is a system of
Text Line Numbers (TLNs) which has been set in the left margin of the text in increments
of five. As the copy-text reprints a version of Jonson’s play that neither represents the
original lineation nor corresponds to the modern act/scene/line divisions employed by
modern editors, the TLNs are unique to this edition of Volpone. Moreover, TLNs set in
square brackets supercede every printed reference to the differing act-scene-line divisions
used by individual editors to cite passages in Volpone. Otherwise, all quotations and
references to the works of Jonson have been regularized according to the Herford and
Simpson edition. Aside from The Riverside Shakespeare, ed. G. Blakemore Evans, 2nd
ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), most references and quotations have been
documented according to the work represented by their assigned sigla. All quotations of
classical works or non-English texts have been translated, regularized, and documented
according to the translators’ published texts. The majority of classical quotations have
been translated using the dual-language volumes of the Loeb Classical Library. But as
with the remaining quotations that have been translated throughout this edition, each
translator has been identified by the formula “Surname, trans., vol:p.” and each work has
been documented in the Bibliography according to the last name of the translator.

In short, this critical variorum edition focuses more upon the play’s editorial details
and critical tradition than its analytical bibliography. Textual notes detailing both the
peculiarities of the copy-text and significant variants between editions have been
identified and described in the footnotes of this edition alongside its text-specific
commentary and editorial glosses. Occasional collations have been performed among the
earlier texts of the play only in special cases—specifically to illuminate an editor’s peculiar choice of emendation. Brian Parker, in his edition of *Volpone*, has recently presented an extensive collation of the quarto and folio texts, and his edition’s appendix is an excellent source for reviewing the text’s analytical bibliography. In effect, Herford and Simpson’s once confident assertion that Jonson personally oversaw the composition and correction of *Volpone*’s original quarto and folio press-runs has lost much of its previous authority, as has the possibility of identifying any one authoritative text of the play. Indeed, following various comparative collations of surviving copies, it now appears that no single *authoritative* text of the quarto exists; instead, what remains is a perplexing range of imprints whose shared quires and individual pages bear the characteristic marks of different stages of incomplete proof- and press-correction. Moreover, as Brian Parker has recently concluded from his own collation of twenty-one quartos, any attempt to discern the individual compositorial practices that governed the text’s progress through the printing-house remains “fairly complicated.” While it now appears obvious that “several compositors” contributed variations of line-measure and orthography to their assigned gatherings, “the data on individual pages are too contradictory to be assigned to particular workmen.”

Despite such an array of “corrected” and “uncorrected” states, none of the collation’s compositorial disparities reveals any significant substantive variants among the quarto copies. Indeed, the full extent of those textual differences recorded by Parker reveals

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6 For Parker’s collation, see “Appendix D: Collations of 1607 Quarto and 1616 Folio,” 326–38.
7 Parker, ed., 4.
8 Ibid., 4.
mostly “composers’ spelling preferences,” none of which has any “relevance for modernised editions unless they affect meaning, and such problems do not arise in the *Volpone* quarto.”\(^9\) A host of variants crops up later in the 1616 folio version of *Volpone*, whose printing represents more than 3,000 total textual changes. However, following his collation of forty different imprints, Parker declares that “these are nearly all minor matters of orthography and setting, rather than changes of meaning.”\(^10\) The folio version does produce a few substantive variants that reflect Jonson’s attentive but restrained efforts to revise his text, particularly in the recasting of whole words, the minor revision of the Epistle, the addition of twenty-nine marginal stage directions together with a final page documenting the play’s early stage history, and the reformatting and revision of certain textual features such as the commendatory verses. All of these alterations and additions have been accounted for in the footnotes of this edition; no effort, however, has been made to document the folio’s vast assortment of minor orthographic changes which were the result of early compositorial errors and corrections.

Due to the absence of any authoritative “corrected” impression completely free of compositorial slips, the choice of any quarto as a copy-text must be taken together with all of its accidental variants and textual damage. The hope, of course, is to select a copy whose collected quires represent a later, more refined state of press-correction. The British Library copy of the quarto (aka, Florio’s copy) heads Parker’s collation list—a position of prominence which only slightly distinguishes it from the remaining copies. However, among Parker’s textual notes for his collation of the quarto, this particular copy frequently reflects a conspicuous pattern of later corrections. Parker identifies no more

\(^9\) Ibid.

\(^10\) Ibid.
than eighty-six total variants among his collation of the quartos, eighteen of which have been classified as "uncorrected" within the Florio copy, with another eight owing to "damage." Among the twelve different stages of correction peculiar to the separate portions of this copy, Parker indicates eight instances where the copy reflects the corrective efforts of a later state, five reflecting a finalized state. In addition to such a relatively short list of printed variants, this particular copy is but one of two extant copies that contains N.F.'s (i.e., Nathan Field's) commendatory poem to Jonson on an inserted leaf. Given the choice of copy-texts, one could not hope to locate a cleaner, more complete, and less problematic text than the one Jonson himself presented to Florio.

Though Jonson's handwritten inscription to Florio does not form part of the printed text and has been reset within the variorum's footnotes, strict attention has been paid to reproducing a truly accurate version of this copy so that it preserves all of the printed textual details unique to its various stages of press- and proof-correction. Rather than produce a modified or modernized version based on this copy—a service that would effectively produce an ideal but otherwise nonexistent edition—the variorum preserves all of the printed variants, accidentals, and damage. Though none of these textual anomalies results in a substantive variant that alters the possible meaning of Jonson's text, each incident of uncorrected spelling and punctuation or faulty type-setting and uneven inking recorded in Parker's collation, or observed in my own review, will be accounted for within the variorum's footnotes. Otherwise, no attempt has been made to apply editorial changes or to insert obtrusive brackets that indicate modern corrections. As a minor exception, the quarto's page signatures have been inserted in bold square brackets in the right margin of the text according to the quarto's original page-breaks. No
attempt has been made to preserve the original lineation of those passages set in prose, namely the Epistle and Volpone’s speeches in the mountebank scene—consequently bracketed page signatures have been occasionally inserted in the middle of lines to indicate where the original page-breaks occur.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<td>A&amp;S</td>
<td>Sir Philip Sidney, <em>Astrophel and Stella</em></td>
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<td>ApolDial</td>
<td><em>Apologetical Dialogue, Poetaster</em></td>
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<td>app. (s.)</td>
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<td><em>Journal of the Australasian Universities Lang. and Lit. Assoc.</em></td>
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<td>Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher</td>
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<td>BartFair</td>
<td>Ben Jonson, <em>Bartholomew Faire</em></td>
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<td>BJ</td>
<td><em>The Ben Jonson Journal</em></td>
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<td>BJL</td>
<td><em>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library</em></td>
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<td>bk.</td>
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<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library</td>
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<td>c.</td>
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<td>ca.</td>
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<td>Ben Jonson's <em>Conversations with William Drummond</em></td>
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BEN: IONSON

his

V O L P O N E

Or

THE FOXE.

——Simul & iucunda, & idonea dicere vitae.

Printed for Thomas Thorppe.

1607.


Simul & iucunda, & idonea dicere vitae (6) Horace, Ars Poetica 334: “[Poets aim] ... to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life” (Fairclough, trans., 470).


1607. (8) Most commentators agree that this date represents a calendar year reference (i.e., with the year beginning 1 January). See app. The Text: Dates and Contexts.
TO THE MOST NOBLE
AND MOST ÆQVALL
SISTERS
THE TWO FAMOVS VNIUVERSITIES,
FOR THEIR LOVE
AND
ACCEPTANCE
SHEW’N TO HIS. POEME
IN THE PRESENTATION:

BEN: IONSON

THE GRATEFVLL ACKNOWLEDGER

DEDICATES

BOTH IT, AND HIMSELF.

There follows an Epistle, if
you dare venture on

ÆQVALL (10) SCHELLING (1910 [1:630]), equal: “just, impartial.” REA (1919 [138]): “Used as an
equivalent of the Lat. aequus, just or fair, not in the ordinary Eng. sense of the word; cf. CynRev 5.1.9.”
SALE (1951 [108]): “Eds. usually give the meaning as that of the Lat. aequus, ‘just.’ Few members of either
University would regard them as equal in any other respect, and, certainly, both were just to Volp, in that
they applauded it; nevertheless, as they are Sisters, they are, surely, equal in the more usual sense, which J,
whether or not he was ever a member of St. John’s College Cambridge, may have diplomatically intended,
for besides their equal applause, they seem both to have given him an honorary Degree (‘by their favour,
not his studie,’ as he told Drummond), or, more likely, a laurel wreath, for he was not made an M.A. at
Oxford till 1619.” KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “equal, of equal merit, and in the Lat. sense: aequus, just.” Also
see nn. 26 and 1651.
THE TWO FAMOVS VNIIVERSITIES (12) Oxford and Cambridge. Regarding J’s relation to the
POEME (16) REA (1919 [146]). Cf. the prologues of Terence, Andria 1: “Poeta quom primum animum ad
scribendum adpulit” (“When the playwright first steered his thoughts towards authorship...”). Also cf. n.
PRESENTATION (17) PARKER (1999 [62n]): “Between the London performance early in 1606 and the
printing of Volp in Feb 1607, the play was performed at the two university towns.” Regarding the dates and
details of these university performances of Volp, cf. app. Dates & Contexts.
BOTH IT, AND HIMSELF. (21) REA (1919 [139]): “I believe this was suggested by the dedication of Del
Rio, Disquisitionum Magicarum (1604), which the notes on the Masques show J to have been reading at
about this time: ‘Martinus Delrio Societatis Iesu Presbyter, se suaque L. M. D. D.’”

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THE EPISTLE.

Never (most æquall Sisters) had any man a wit so presently excellent, as that it could raise it selfe; but there must come Matter, Occasion, Commenders, and Fauorurers to it. If this be true, and that the Fortune of all Writers doth daily proue it, it behoues the carefull to prouide, well, toward these accidents; and, hauing acquir'd them, to preserue that part of reputation most tenderly, wherein the benefit of a Friend is also defended. Hence is it, that I now render my selfe grantefull, and am stidious to justifie the bounty of your act: To which, though your mere authority were satisfying, yet, it being an age, wherein Poetry and the Professors of it heare so ill, on all

11 There follows an Epistle, if you dare venture on the length. (22-24) F (1616) om.
THE EPISTLE (25-133) F. omits this title. For commentary directly related to this document, cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.
most æquall Sisters (26) H&S (1950 [9:682]): “Edmund Gayton, Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixote (1654 [20, 21]): ‘We will therefore end this perplexed piece of controversy (as our father Ben hath given example,) who dedicating his Fox to the two Universities of this Iland, Fox-like (knowing they always quarrelled for Antiquity) in a most handsome and unenviable compellation, still’d them most æquall Sisters.’”
aequall (26) DONALDSON (1985 [617]): “(i) of equal merit; (ii) impartial (Lat. æquus).” Cf. nn. 10, 1651.
Matter (27) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “subject matter.”
that (28) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “i.e., ‘that it be the truth.’”
prouide, well, toward these accidents (30) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “chance occurrences, incidental additions to wit rather than innate characteristics.” DONALDSON (1985 [617]): “look after these incidental matters.” SALE (1951 [109]), accidents: “i.e., Matter ... Fauorers”; or, “writers need as much support as possible.” PARKER (1999 [63n]): “accessories to success (i.e., ‘matter, occasion, commenders, and favoures’). Also see nn. 80-81 and 81.
toward (30) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “for.”
the benefit of a Friend is also defended (31-32) SALE (1951 [109]): “a writer must value his reputation since it is for the benefit of other (good) writers also.”
benefit (31) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “kindness, i.e., the ‘love and acceptance shown to his poem.’”
DONALDSON (1985 [617]): “good name.” PARKER (1999 [63n]): “patronage.”
the bounty of your act (33) REA (1919 [139]): “Presumably the confering of a degree on the author.”
SALE (1951 [109]): “i.e., their honouring J—by praising his play, or by giving him a Degree, or both. J is all the more grateful for the official recognition (authority) in that it is sure to be questioned (there will a reason bee look’d for in the subject) by the enemies of poetry. J proceeds to provide that ‘reason’ for them.” DONALDSON (1985 [617]): “i.e., approval of the play.”
mere authority (33) SCHELLING (1910 [1:635]): “undiluted; absolute, unmitigated.” PARKER (1999 [63n]): “authority alone, by itself.”
were satisfying (34) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “sufficient.” PARKER (1999 [63n]): “should be sufficient.”
Professors (34) KERNAN (1962 [27n]): “practitioners.”
sides, there will a reason bee look’d for in the subject. It is certaine, nor can it with any forehead be oppos’d) that the too-much licence of Poëasters, in this time, hath much deform’d their Mistresse; that, every day their manifold, and manifest ignorance doth stick unnaturall reproches vpon her. But for their petulance, it were an act of the greatest inujustice, either to let the learned suffer; or so diuine a skill (which indeed should not be attempted with uncleane hands) to fall, vnder the least contempt. For if men will impartially, and not à-squint, looke toward the offices, and function of a Poët, they will easily conclude to themselves, the impossibility of any mans being the good Poët, without first being a [¶2] good Man. He that is sayd to be able to informe young-men to all good disciplines, inflame grownemen to all great vertues, keepe old men in their best and supreme state, or as they decline to child-hood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the Interpreter, and Arbiter of Nature, a Teacher of things diuine, no lesse then humane, a Master in manners; and can alone (or with a few) effect the busines of Man-kind. This, I take him, is no subject for Pride, and Ignorance to exercise their railing \textit{rhetorique} vpon. But, it will but here be hastily answer’d, that the Writers of these

\begin{quote}
\text{heare so ill (34) GIFFORD (1816 [3:161n]): “a mere Latinism (\textit{tam maie audient}) for ‘are so ill-spoken of.’” H&S (1950 [9:682]): “have such an evil reputation.” REA (1919 [140]) adds: “I found the phrase in the first sentence of \textit{MorEnc} 1.” Sec app. \textit{Init. \& Trans.} Also cf. \textit{Alch} 1.1.24; \textit{BartFair} 4.1.73; \textit{Cat} 4.823, \textit{LoveRest} 163; \textit{FQ} 1.5.23.7.\\
\text{there will a reason bee look’d for in the subject (35) DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “i.e., the work must be justifiable in itself.” PARKER (1999): “i.e., the ‘subject’ of the universities’ bounty, J and his play.”\\
\text{oppo’s’d (36) F (1616 [442]): oppo’s’d}\\
\text{Poëasters (36) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “petty poets.” PARKER (1999 [63n]), per \textit{OED}: a petty or paltry poet.”\\
\text{Mistresse (37) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “the poetic muse, i.e., poetry.”\\
\text{But for (38) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “because of.” PARKER (1999 [64n]): “except [for].”\\
\text{petulance (38) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “insolence.”\\
\text{impossibility of any mans being the good Poët, without first being a good Man (42-43) GIFFORD (1816 [3:162n]): “taken almost lit. from Strabo, \textit{Geog} 1.2.5: ‘... the excellence of a poet is inseparably associated with the excellence of the man himself, and it is impossible for one to become a good poet unless he has previously become a good man’ (Jones, trans., 1:63). COLE RIDGE (1836 [14:2.255]) wrote in 1833: ‘I quite agree with Strabo, as trans. by J. in his splendid dedication of the \textit{Fox}—there can be no great poet who is not a good man, though not, perhaps, a goody man. His heart must be pure; he must have learned to look into his own heart, and sometimes to look at it; for how can he who is ignorant of his own heart know any thing of, or be able to move, the heart of any one else?’”\\
\text{the (42)} PARKER (1999 [64n]): “for this use of \textit{the} [i.e., the good Poet], cf. \textit{EMI} 5.3.405, \textit{BartFair} 4.2.40.”\\
\text{He that is sayd to be able to informe young-men to all good disciplines, inflame grownemen to all great vertues, keepe old men in their best and supreme state, or as they decline to child-hood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the Interpreter, and Arbiter of Nature, a Teacher of things diuine, no lesse then humane, a Master in manners; and can alone (or with a few) effect the busines of Man-kind. This, I take him, is no subject for Pride, and Ignorance to exercise their railing \textit{rhetorique} vpon. (43-49) A passage generally noted for its various debts to Horace, \textit{Epist} 2.1.126–31, \textit{ArsPoet} 340–41; Cicero, \textit{Pro Archia Poeta} 7.16; Erasmus, \textit{EpistApol}; and Minturno, \textit{De Poeta} (1559 [8]). SALE (1951 [109]): “This view of the poet as a teacher of morality, divinity, etiquette, and practical affairs, is as old as literary criticism, and the special defence of Ren. criticism. REA (1919) finds J’s immediate}
\end{quote}
dayes are other things; that, not only their manners, but their natures are inuerted; and nothing remaining with them of the dignity of Poët, but the abused name, which every Scribe vsurpes: that now, especially in Dramatick, or (as they terme it) Stage-Poëtry, nothing but Ribaldry, Profanation, Blasphemy, al Licence of offence to God, and Man, is practised. I dare not deny a great part of this (and am sorry, I dare not) because in some

source in Erasmus’s EpistApol, to which latter he traces a good many things in Volp itself. But Sidney, in his Apologie for Poësie, had answered the Puritan detractors of poetry in a similar way. In their set defences, both find it necessary to stress the first element of Horace’s utile dulci at the expense not only of the second, but also of a sense of proportion. To which last it could be objected that there were many precedents for the view of the Poet as portentously noble (Rea mentions Strabo, Cicero, Horace, Minturno, Erasmus, and there are others), and at least one Romantic analogue—Carlyle’s Hero as Poët. It is, nevertheless, a grandiose conception, which leaves little for the ‘straight’ teachers of morals, manners, and religion, to do, and is tenable only if the teacher be considered as using the indirect method.” Cf. Disc 2388–96. Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.

informe yong-men ... inflame growne-men ... keepe old men ... (43–44) H&S (1950 [9:683]): “So Epig 85.3: ‘Where I both learn’d, why wise-men hawking follow.’ The accent falls on the first syllable in the contrasted word: cf. HERRICK (1648 [221]), ‘Upon the Nipples of Jullin’s Breast’: ‘Have ye beheld (with much delight) / A Red-Rose peeping through a white?’


state (45) HUTSON (1998 [497]): “dignity of bearing.”

Master in manners (47) H&S (1950 [9:683]): cf. Disc 2394–95: “the wisest and best learned have thought her [i.e., poetry] the absolute Mistresse of manners.”

effect the busines of Man-kind (47–48) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “perform the proper functions of man.”

I take him (48) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “as I understand it.”

railing (49) KERNAN (1962 [28n]): “abusive.”

the Writers of these dayes (49–50) SALE (1951 [109]): “Detractions against poetry apply only to the poetasters, the abusers of poetry. Sidney had used the same method of confounding detraction, but it had the further convenience for J that it enabled him so to have one more fling at his adversaries in the now-quietescent War of the Theatres, whose activities he summarises in l. 35ff., and whose criticisms of himself he answers in lines 45–74. It is possible that to read a personal war into this general anatomy of abuses is to be one of those who ‘utter their owne virulent malice, under others mens simplest meanings’; on the other hand, in EMO, J calls himself Asper, and the poetaster and the noble Horace of Poet are very much like the poetasters and the noble J of this Epist. Academic recognition of the Jonsonian way of life may have prompted this row across the surprised years to Dekker’s challenge of 1601 (Satiromastix), which was unanswered except by an ApolDial appended to Poet, and in the same strain as the present Epist.”

not onely their manners, but their natures are inuerted (50) PARTRIDGE (1958 [68–70]), with reference to EMI-Q 5.3.304–7, which he identifies as “an earlier and shorter statement of the charge made in the Epist prefacing Volp: not only the manner, but also the natures of the writers of the day are inverted, so that they write only parodies of true poetry.”


the abused name, which every Scribe vsurpes ... (51ff.) KERNAN (1962 [205]): “Blasphemy, obscenity, and lack of moral purpose were the standard charges leveled by the Puritans in their continuing war against the theaters. By 1606 there was some substance to their accusations, as J admits, for in the sensational plays of some writers like Marston and Middleton there is a pronounced tendency to seek out the obscene for its own sake. J in the Induction to EMO describes more fully the poetical practices to which he objects.”

that now, especially in Dramatick, or (as they terme it) Stage-Poëtry, nothing but Ribaldry, Profanation, Blasphemy, al Licence of offence to God, and Man, is practised (52–54) PARKER (1999 [65n]): “Cf. J’s attack on contemporary playwrights in the Ind. to EMO.”

al Licence (53) PARKER (1999 [65n]): “excessive liberty.”

mens abortiue Features (and would they had never boasted the light) it is ouer-true: But, that all are embarqu’d in this bold aduenture for Hell, is a most vncharitable thought, and, vterd, a more malicious slander. For my particular, I can (and from a most cleare conscience) affirm that I haue euer trembled to thinke toward the least Prophaneness; haue loathed the vse of such foule and vn-washd Baud’ry, as is now made the foode of the Scene: And, howsoever I cannot escape, from some, the imputation of [2^2'] sharpsesse, but that they will say, I haue taken a pride, or lust to be bitter, and not my yongest Infant but hath come into the world with all his teeth; I would aske of these supercilious Politiques, what Nation, Society, or generall Order, or State I haue prouokd? what publique Person? whether I haue not (in all these) preseru’d their dignity, as mine owne person, safe? My workes are read, allow’d, (I speake of those that are intirely

abortion Features (55)] Kernan (1962 [29n]): “premature and malformed plays—plays are here considered the offspring of the poet.” Donaldson (1985 [618]); “i.e., botched plays.” Parker (1999 [65n]): “cf. ‘no feature’ [366].”

But, that all are embarqu’d in this bold aduenture for Hell, is a most vncharitable thought ... (55ff.) Donaldson (1985 [618]): “Cf. Erasmus’s defence of MorEnc in his letter to Martin Dorp (1515).”

For my particular ... (57ff.) Sale (1951 [109]): “the first instance of a true poet that occurs to him is himself.” Parker (1999 [65n]): “for my own part.”

loathed the vse of such foule and vn-washd Baud’ry (59)] H&S (1950 [9:684]): “Cf. Epig. 2.11, a disclaimer of ‘lewd, prophane, and beastly phrase.’”

vse (59)] Hutson (1998 [498]): “practice.”

foode (59)] Kernan (1962 [29n]): “substance.”

sharpnesse (61)] Sale (1951 [109]): “in EMO, there is a character called Asper who is, despite his name, praised to the skies by all discriminating people in the play (and out of it, for J includes outside commentators in his dramatis personae).” Parker (1999 [65n]): “severity, bitterness [per OED], extending ‘food of the scene’ [59–60].”

lust (61)] F (1616): lust, / Kernan (1962 [29n]): “liking.”

not my yongest Infant but hath come into the world with all his teeth (61–62)] Rea (1919 [141]): “This seems a singularly confused and illogical sentence. J evidently means ‘my infants have all their teeth when very young, and are actually born with them.’” As an echo of Erasmus, EpistApol, cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.

my yongest Infant (61–62)] H&S (1950 [9:684]): “A glance at the attack on Sej, which brought J before the Privy Council.” Parker (1999 [65n]): “(a) most innocent play; (b) most recent play?—perhaps Sej (1603) ... or, more likely, the collaborative EastHo (1605).” Cf. app. Dates & Contexts and Init. & Trans.

into the world with all his teeth (62)] Kernan (1962 [29n]): “capable of biting, satiric.” Kernan (1962 [205]) adds: “Richard III was popularly believed to have been born with a full set of teeth, and Sh., following tradition, makes of this a fearful omen of Richard’s later unnatural behavior.” Cf. 3Hen6 5.6.75, Rich2 2.4.28.

Polities (63)] Kernan (1962 [29n]): “shrewd persons, with the additional sense of cunning contrivers.” Donaldson (1985 [618]): “World-wise schemers (Fr. ‘politiques’), also recalling the name of the opportunist and moderate Fr. political party of the 1570s.” Hutson (1998 [495]): “schemers.” Parker (1999 [65n]): “schemers who believe everyone is scheming, cynical know-alls.”


Nation (63)] Hutson (1998 [494]): “sect.”


allow’d (65)] Sale (1951 [110]): “allowed to be acted’ is a possible but superfluous meaning: ‘recognised’ (as authoritative) is more likely the sense: the recognition of his high standing by the Universities.” Kernan (1962 [205]): “Licensed for public production by the Master of the Revels, a court
mine) looke into them, what broad reproofoes haue I vsd: Where haue I bin particular? Where personall, except to a Mimick, Cheater, Baud, or Buffoon, creatures (for their insolencies) worthy to be tax'd? or to which of these so pointingly, as he might not, either ingeniously haue cofest, or wisely dissembled his disease? But it is not Rumour can make me guilty, much lesse entitle me, to other mens crimes. I know, that nothing ca be so

official who acted as censor in Eliz. times. This power later passed to the Lord Chamberlain, who, through a deputy called the censor, still exercises it.” DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “By the Master of Revels.” PARKER (1999 [66n]): “uncensored.”

I speake of those that are entirely mine (65–66) GIFFORD (1816 [3:162n]): “This he says, because he had written in conjunction with Chettle, Dekker, Chapman, and others.” REA (1919 [141]) suggests an echo from EpistApol. Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts. H&S (1950 [9:684]): “A reference to collaboration in Sej and EastHo, both of which had got him into trouble.” KERNAN (1962 [205–6]): “I was the part author of a number of plays, among them EastHo (1604), which he wrote with Chapman and Marston. This play, though it was produced, was definitely not allowed, and J went to jail, along with Chapman and Marston, for certain passages in it which offended King James.” PARKER (1999 [66n]): “i.e., not collaborative works.”

them, what broad reproofoes haue I vsd: (66) F (1616 [444]) them: What broad reproofoes haue I vs’d?

broad (66) KERNAN (1962 [29n]): “indecent.” PARKER (1999 [66n]): “(a) explicit; (b) unrestrained; (c) indecent?”

reproofoes (66) PARKER (1999 [66n]), per OED: “insulting, opprobrious language.”

particular (66) DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “Cf. ded. to Epig 28–29: ‘I have aoided all particulars, as I have done names....’”

Where personall, except to a Mimick, Cheater, Baud, or Buffoon, creatures (for their insolencies) worthy to be tax’d? (67–68) SALE (1951 [110]): “The exceptions disprove this rule. Naturally, a satirist is not personall except about people he thinks ought to satirised. Rea, although he notes the general agreement that this Epis is one of the noblest pieces of Eng. prose, evidently does not take J’s protestations entirely noble, since he devotes a considerable part of his Introduction to the theory that Sir Politique Would-Bee is Sir Henry Wotton. However plausible J may be, the fact of the Theatre War reveals his sophistry. If he had not portrayed his dramatist enemies on the stage, there would obviously have been no war. Jasper Mayne at once ingeniously and disingenuously declares that since the offending characters are not given the names of real people (as are Aristophanes’ characters), they cannot be meant for real people.” MIMICK (67) H&S (1950 [9:684]): “actor, as in Poet 3.4.278–306.” KERNAN (1962 [29n]) adds “perhaps plagiarist.” DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “malicious wit (Epig 115.28).” HUTSON (1998 [494]): “burlesque actor.”


tax’d (68) KERNAN (1962 [29n]): “censured.”

or to which (68) F (1616 [444]) Yet, to which

pointingly (68) KERNAN (1962 [29n]): “specifically.”

to which of these so pointingly, as he might not, either ingeniously haue cofest, or wisely dissembled his disease? (68–69) REA (1919 [141]) cites a parallel passage in Disc 2329-31, which in turn suggests its similarity to Erasmus, EpistApol. SALE (1951 [110]): “‘He who says I mean to portray him in one of these insolent charlatans, cheats, etc., is naively admitting his guilt; it is quite safe for him to keep silent for no one will recognise him in the very much generalised pictures I have drawn.’ Cf. Jaques’s defence of his sharp tongue in AYLI 2.7.79–87.” Jasper Mayne, “To the Memory of Ben Johnson” (1638) is useful as an epitome of the many statements of theory which, prefixed, infixed, and suffixed, to J’s plays, are angry local applications of the dispassionate laws to be found in Timber—birch-rods, in fact, and not least like in the superficiality of their application.” Cf. app. Dates & Contexts and app. Extra-Dramatic Texts respectively.

ingeniously (69) F (1616 [444]): ingeniously. SCHELLING (1910 [1:633]), ingenuous: “used indiscriminately for ingenious; intelligent, talented.”

haue (69) SALE (1951 [110]): “should, strictly follow not [68], or be repeated before dissembled [69].”

But it is not Rumour can make me guilty, much lesse entitle me, to other mens crimes (69–70) REA (1919 [141]) quotes similar passage from Erasmus, EpistApol. See app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.
innocently writ, or carried, but may be made obnoxious to construction; mary, whilst I beare mine innocence about me, I feare it not. Application, is now, growne a Trade with many; and there are, that professe to haue a Key for the deciphering of every thing, but let wise and noble Persons take heed how they bee too credulous, or give leave to these inauding Interpreters to be ouer-familiar with their names, who cunningly, & often, vtte their owne virulent malice, undr other mens simplest meanings. As for those, that wil (by faults which charity hath rak'd vp, or com'd honesty conceald) make then'selues a name with the Multitude, or (to drawe their rude, and beastly clappes) care [¶3''] not whose

entitle me, to (70)] PARKER (1999 [...]), per OED: "impute to me."
I know, that nothing can be so innocently writ ... (70ff.) REA (1919 [141]) locates an echo in Erasmus, Epistapol, rpt. H&S (1950 [9:684]), PARKER (1999 [66n]). Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.
carried (71)] KERNAN (1962 [30n]): "managed." PARKER (1999 [66n]) adds: "conducted."

obnoxious to construction (71)] DONALDSON (1985 [618]): "open to misinterpretation."

obnoxious to (71)] H&S (1950 [9:684]): "liable to (Lat. obnoxious)," HUTSON (1998 [494]) adds "prone."

construction (71)] KERNAN (1962 [30n]): "by interpretation."
mary (71)] HUTSON (1998 [494]): "indeed."
Application, is now, growne a Trade with many ... (72-76)]] H&S (1950 [9:684]): "Cf. EMO 2.6.147–79."
CLARE (1990 [19]): "J... denouced informers and agents who allegedly sought to distort his literary purpose." As with the Ind. to BartFair, "There is, of course, more than an element of disingenuousness in such protestations, since the avowals of innocence and assaults upon 'picklocks' of the scene are part of a dual strategy, designed to repel the attentions of the censor while simultaneously exciting the interest of the initiated spectator in decoding those apparently forbidden meanings."

Application (72)] SALE (1951 [111]): "ferreting out personal allusions." KERNAN (1962 [30n]):
"specific identification of persons and events in the play.") DONALDSON (1985 [618]): "interpreting fiction as veiled fact." PARKER (1999 [66n]): "i.e., discovering (or inventing) personal allusions and innuendo."

Cf. EMO 2.6.170–79; Aliche, 19; Epig Ded., 4–6."

there are that (72)] KERNAN (1962 [30n]): "there are those. PARKER (1999 [66n]): "there are those that."
Cf. PARTRIDGE (1953 [56]).
fames (75)] PARKER (1999 [66n]): "public repute."

vttre (75)] KERNAN (1962 [30n]): "used in the special sense of circulating false money."

simplest (76)] SCHELLING (1910 [1:639]), simple: "silly, witless; plain, true."
rak'd vp (77)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:163n]): "i.e., smothered, hidden; alluding to the practice of covering live embers, by raking ashes over them"; rpt. REA (1919 [142]), H&S (1950 [9:685]), SALE (1951 [111]): "to rake a fire is to cover the embers with ash to prolong its life: hence, here, the sense is 'hidden';" rpt. SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]), KERNAN (1962 [30n]), DONALDSON (1985 [618]), PARKER (1999 [66n]). REA (1919 [142]) adds: "Cf. John Lyly, Euphues: 'Albeit I can no way quench the coales of desire with forgetfulness, yet will I rake them vp in the ashes of modestie.'"
honesty (77)] PARKER (1999 [66n]), per OED: "decency, decorum."

make theselues a name (77)] KERNAN (1962 [30n]): "by insisting that they are caricatured in some play."
rude, and beastly clappes (78)] HARBAGE (1941 [122–231]) quotes J's phrase here in reference to the dramatist-audience relationship within the public theaters: "The charge that the groundlings lacked understanding was made only when they disliked the spokesman's play or had liked that of his rival. [...] It must be viewed in relation to a similar charge, made as frequently and under the same circumstances, against the genteel section of the audience. [...] The rank and file do not always come off worst at the hands of the satirists."
rude (78)] SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]): "unpolished, rough, coarse."
caffles (78)] KERNAN (1962 [30n]): "applause."
liuing faces they intrench with their petulant stiles; may they doe it, without a riuall, for mee: I chuse rather to liue grau’d in obscuritie, then share with them, in so preposterous a fame. Nor can I blame the wishes of those graue, and wiser Patriots, who prouiding the hurts these licentious spirits may do in a State, desire rather to see Fools, and Diuells, and those antique reliques of Barbarisme retiu’d, with all other ridiculous, and exploded

intrench with their petulant stiles (79) REA (1919 [142]) allows “a reference to the Lat. stilus, which, with its sharp point, would make a somewhat dangerous weapon,” and draws similarities from Erasmus, EpistApol and the Poet ApoDial 97; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:685]). SALE (1951 [111]): “disfigure with their sharp writing instruments.” The metaphorical meaning is, then, ‘slander.” PARKER (1999 [67n]): “i.e., disfigure with (a) their rude writing instruments; (b) their insolent writing styles.” Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts and app. Dates & Contexts respectively.

intrench (79) HUTSON (1998 [493]): “mark, disfigure.”

stiles (79) SCHELLING (1910 [1:640]), style, “title; pointed instrument used for writing on wax tablets.” DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “pens.”

may they doe it, without a riuall, for mee (79–80) REA (1919 [142]) notes similarities in Erasmus, MorEnc and Neoldh d.p. Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.

for mee (79–80) PARKER (1999 [67n]): “as far as I am concerned.”

grau’d in obscuritie (80) PARKER (1999 [67n]): “as far as I am concerned.”

graue (81) F (1616 [445]) feure PARKER (1999 [67n]), severe: “serious, grave (Lat. severus); Q’s graue was presumably altered to avoid the chime with grau’d [80].”


providing the hurts (80–81) WHALLEY (1756 [2:268n]): “i.e., foreseeing the hurts”; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:164n]). GIFFORD (1816 [3:144n]), in his n. to Sej 5.613, glosses “providere” as: “to look to, by anticipation. A Latinism [i.e., providere, “to foresee”] like a hundred other expressions in this play [i.e., Sej]. Whalley probably overlooked this sense of the word, for he inserted ‘for’ after it; but J has it again in the ded. To Volp.” Cf. n. 30.


Foolcs, and Diuells (82) SALE (1951 [111]): “the comic relief, of med. drama. J was not above using such ridiculous, and exploded follies himself, as in DevAss. In Timb, he mentions the Old Comedy with more respect, and, both early (CaseAlt) and late (StapNews), his work shows traces of the Abstractions of Morality drama.” KERNAN (1962 [206]): “The reference here is to the old-fashioned morality plays and early Eliz. drama modeled on these, in which fools of the slapstick variety, clowning devils, and melodramatic Vices were stocks in trade. The playwrights of the early 17th c., and J particularly, were extremely self-conscious of writing a more sophisticated type of play, and they looked back with tolerant scorn on earlier plays, ‘antique relics of barbarism,’ and even on such recent drama of the ranting variety as Kyd’s SpanTrag and Marlowe’s Tamhurtaine. For an example of J’s amused treatment of devils and the older type of play, see the opening scene of DevAss.” PARKER (1999 [67n]): “i.e., the revival of comic types from the med. mystery and morality plays, later mocked in DevAss.”

antique (83) KERNAN (1962 [30n]): “grotesque.” PARKER (1999 [67n]): “(a) old-fashioned; (b) antic, grotesque?—cf. [2145].”

Barbarisme (83) PARKER (1999 [67n]): “a time uncivilised because unclassical.”

exploded (83) REA (1919 [142]): “Used in the Lat. sense <i.e., explodere: “to drive off by clapping: to boo (off the stage)>”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [30n]), DONALDSON (1985 [618]), PARKER (1999 [67n]). REA (1919 [142]) adds: “The use of this word makes me believe this sentence was suggested by Erasmus, EpistApol 14: ‘Nunquam explosa fuisse vetus comedia, si ab aedendis nominibus illustrium virorum abstinuisset’” ["The Old Comedy would never have been hissed off the stage if it had refrained from publishing abroad names of well-known men" (Radice, trans., 223)].
And men may justly impute such rages, if continu'd, to the Writer, as his sports. The encrease of which lust in liberty, together with the present trade of the Stage, in all their misc'line Enterludes, what learned or liberal soule doth not already abhor? where

_Trebatius_ (85) The collation prepared by PARKER (1999 [326]) notes that the present copy is but one of three press runs to leave this word unhyphenated, which is otherwise printed on §3 as "Trebatius" and carried over to the next line with "attius."

_in (85)_ F (1616 [445]) among these (85) SALE (1951 [111]): "the libellers. Gifford reads 'speak among these,' which destroys the sense." PARKER (1999 [67n]): "i.e., the 'licentious spirits' [82]."

_Sibi quiesce timet, quamquam est intactus, & edit._ Drawn from Horace, Sat 2.1.23: "whereupon everybody is afraid for himself, though untouched, and hates you" (Fairclough, trans. 129); rf. REA (1919 [142]), H&S (1950 [9:685]), SALE (1951 [111]), KERNAN (1962 [31n]), DONALDSON (1985 [618]). Cf. Poet. 3.5.41-42.

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follies: then behold the wounds of Private men, of Princes, and Nations. For as HORACE, makes _Trebatius_ speake, in these

— _Sibi quiesce timet, quamquam est intactus, & edit._

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nothing but the garbage of the time is uttered, & that with such impropriety of phrase, such plenty of solecismes, such dearth of sense, so bold prolepsye's, so rackt metaphor's, with brothelry able to violate the eare of a Pagan, and blasphemy, to turne the bloud of a Christian to water. I cannot but be serious in a cause of this nature, wherein my fame, & the reputations of diuerse honest, & learned are the question; when a NAME, so full of authority, antiquity, and all great marke, is (through their insolence) become the lowest scorne of the Age: and those MEN subject to the pe-


**Prolepsy (91)** i.e., prolepses. H&S (1950 [9:685]): “anachronisms.”


**I cannot but be serious in a cause of this nature ... (93ff.)** REA (1919 [143]): cf. Erasmus, Epistapoli; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:685]). Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.

**Diuers (94)** F (1616 [445]): divers

**Honest, & learned (94)** PARKER (1999 [68n]): “i.e., honest and learned persons.”

**Question (94)** KERNAN (1962 [31n]): “topic.”

**A Name (94)** SALE (1951 [111]): “that of the Poet, and those men of [96] are poets”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [618]), PARKER (1999 [68n]). KERNAN (1962 [31n]): “Horace.” SALE (1951 [111]) adds: “He seems to mean both that good poetry shares the deserved ill repuete of the bad and that good poets are subject to attacks on their own account (a possible reference back to the Theatre War).” KERNAN (1962 [31n]) adds: “Thomas Dekker, Satiromastix (1601), presented J in a ridiculous manner under the name of Horace. I had previously used Horace as the satirist in his Poet”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [618]), PARKER (1999 [68n]).


**Those Men (96)** PARKER (1999 [68n]): “i.e., poets.”

**Petulancie (96)** The Q catchword reads “pe-tulancie” between 3' and 3".

**Vernacular (96)** SALE (1951 [111]): “the OED gives ‘ill-bred,’ ‘scurrilous,’ but quotes only this instance. The context is not against these meanings, but ‘slangy’ would be closer to the root meaning with, perhaps, abuse implied, as in ‘a slanging match.’ ‘A soap-box orator’ would be the nearest modern equivalent”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [31n]), DONALDSON (1985 [618]), HUTSON (1998 [498]) adds “low-bred.” PARKER (1999 [68n]) adds: “Lat., vernacularus, ‘home-born slave.’”

This it is that hath not onely rap’t mee to present indignation, but made mee studious, heretofore, and, by all my actions, to stand of from them (97-99) SALE (1951 [111]): “My indignation is not something I have worked myself up into while writing this: I have considered these matters for a long time, and now, in everything, to hold myself distinct from these vile playwrights.”

**Rap’t me (98)** SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]): “carried <me> away.” KERNAN (1962 [31n]): “carried by force.”
crowne, approu’d) wherein I haue labourd, for their instruction, and amendment, to reduce, not onely the antient forms, but manners of the Scene, the easiness, the propriety, the innocence, and last the doctrine, which is the principal end of POESY to informe men, in the best reason of liuing. And though my Catastrophe may, in the strict rigour of Comick Law, meete with censure, as turning back to my promise; I desire the learned, and charitable Critick to haue so much faith in me, to thinke it was done off industrye: For with what ease I could haue varied it, nearer his Scale (but that I feare to

to my crowne (100–1)] SALE (1951 [111]): “approved enough to award me the crown of laurel.” DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “recalling the coronation of poets; cf. Epig 17.4.” PARKER (1999 [68n]): “as crowning honour to me.”
not only the antient forms, but manners of the Scene (102)] SALE (1951 [111]): “not only the pure forms of drama (i.e., not the Eliz. mixtures of tragedy and comedy, on which see Polonius), but also the conduct of each scene (or, just possibly, the ‘Image of the times’ promised in the prologue to EMI).”
antient forms (102) PARKER (1999 [68n]): “i.e., traditional dramatic techniques, including (a) the distinction between comic and tragic (see [104ff.]), and (b) the unities of time and place (cf. Prol. [383-84], and Beaumont’s ‘To my dear friend ...’ [204]).”
manners of the Scene (102)] PARKER (1999 [68n]): “this is glossed by the rest of the sentence; it subsumes the kind of action appropriate to comedy (cf. Prol. [372-74, 377-76]), decorum of style (cf. Prol. [376-77, 379-82, 385-86], and the morals implicit in the action (OED, ‘manners,’ 4b).”
propriety (103)] SALE (1951 [111]): “everything must be in keeping.”
in the best reason of liuing (103)] H&S (1950 [9:685]): “Cf. Aristophanes, Frogs 1008–10: [‘Aes ... Come, tell me what are the points for which a noble poet our praise obtains. / EU. For his ready wit, and his counsels sage, and because the citizen folk he trains / To be better citizens and worthier men’” (Rogers, trans., 2:389–91).

And though my Catastrophe may, in the strict rigour of Comick Law, meete with censure, as turning back to my promise (104–5)] SALE (1951 [112]): “i.e., by confounding the comic with the serious he is breaking his promise to keep to the ancient rules of drama. Comedy, as Cicero and the prologue to EMI said, should ‘sport with humane follies, not with crimes,’ but, at the end of Volp, Mosca and Volpone are treated as criminals. Some modern critics find not only the end of the play too harsh for comedy. Ironically enough, Dryden, in the preface to An Evening’s Love (1671), uses J’s lenience in, e.g., Aich, to defend his own comedies from the charge that we never punish vice in our enterludes.” KERNAN (1962 [206]): “According to the critics, comedy was supposed to end joyfully. This ‘comic law’ was purportedly derived from the practice of classical comedy, but as J points out a few lines later on, not all plays of Aristophanes, Plautus, and Terence end on a happy note.”

Catastrophe (104)] SCHELLING (1910 [1:627]): “conclusion.” KERNAN (1962 [32n]) “climax of the play.” PARKER (1999 [69n]): “denouement, possibly the last act; cf. NewInn Arg. 104–5: ‘The fifth, and last Act is the Catastrophe, or knitting vp of all...’ and MagLad 4:Last Chorus,27–28: ‘Stay, and see his last Act, his Catastrophe, how bee will perplexe that, or spring some fresh cheat....’”

Comick Law (105)] DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “possibly recalling Aristotle on comedy, Poetics, ch. 5.”
as turning back to my promise (105)] KERNAN (1962 [32n]): “because it fails to fulfill my promise (to reduce ... the ancient forms) [102ff.]” PARKER (1999 [69n]): “turning my back on my promise (to restore a classical distinction between the comic and the serious: see [102] above).”

turning back to (105)] DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “breaking.”
promise (106) DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “i.e., to restore to ancient forms.”
Scale (107)] PARKER (1999 [69n]): “capacity, playing on its specific musical sense.”
boast my owne faculty) I could here insert. But my special aime being to put the snaffle in their mouths, that crie out we never punish vice in our Enterludes &c. I tooke the more liberty; though not with out some lines of example drawn evin in the Antients themselves, the goings out of whose Comadies are not always ioyfull, but oftimes, the Baudes, the Servants, the Riualls, yea and the maisters are mulcted: and fitly, it beeing the office of a Comick-POET to imitate justice, and instruct to life, as well as purtie of language, or stirre vp gentle affections. To which, vpon my next opportunity toward the examining & digesting of my notes, I shall speake more wealthily, and pay the World a debt.

In the meane time (most reuerenced SISTERS) as I haue car’d to be thankefull for your affections past, and here made the vnderstanding acquainted with some groud of

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with what ease I could have varied it, nearer his Scale (but that I feare to boast my owne faculty) I could here insert. But my special aime ... (107-8) H&S (1950 [9:685]): “Cf. SilW1 Prol., 14-15: ‘... Who wrote that piece, could so have wrote a play: / But that, he knew, this was the better way.”
neuer punish vice in our Enterludes (109) KERNAN (1962 [206]): “Another common Puritan complaint against the theater.”
Enterludes (109) KERNAN (1962 [32n]): “plays.”
more (109) HUTSON (1998 [494]): “greater.”
goings out (111) KERNAN (1962 [32n]): “conclusions” rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [618]). PARKER (1999 [69n]) adds “endings.”
whose Comadies are not always ioyfull (110) H&S (1950 [9:685]): “As when a knave is exposed or trounced, e.g. Pyrgopolinices in Plautus, Miles Gloriosus.”
I tooke the more liberty ... the maisters are mulcted (109-12) PARKER (1999 [69n]): “J is hee repeating an (inaccurate) observation by J. C. Scaliger, Poeticus libri Septem (1561 [1.5.11]) (Creaser).”
the office of a Comick-POET to imitate justice, and instruct to life (113) KRUTCH (1924 [79; 81-82]): “J ... comes very close to the actual words ‘Poetic Justice’ when ... defending the punishment of the villainous character in this comedy. This very phrase was quoted by COLLIER (1698) in his attack on the contemporary stage.” “At first poetic justice was thought to be chiefly the concern of tragedy. J ... thinks amount of apology necessary to defend its use in comedy....”
to (113) KERNAN (1962 [32n]): “about.”

as well as purtie of language, or stirre vp gentle affections (113-14) KERNAN (1962 [32n]): “J’s parallelism breaks down in the last two grammatical elements.” PARKER (1999 [69n]): “The grammar is contorted, though the meaning is clear: ‘purity of language’ depends on ‘instruct to,’ and ‘stir up’ parallels to ‘to imitate’ and ‘instruct.’”
To which, vpon my next opportunity toward the examining & digesting of my notes, I shall speake more wealthily, and pay the World a debt. In the meane time (114-17) F (1616 [446]) To which, I shall take the occasion else-where to speake. For the present / Commonly regarded as J’s plans to present an Engl. trans. and commentary on Horace, ArsPoet, which he had promised in Sej, ‘To the Readers,’ 11-18: ‘Nor is it needful, or almost possible, in these our times, and to such auditors as commonly things are present, to observe the old state and splendor of the dramatic poems, with preservation of any popular delight. But of this I shall take more seasonable cause to speak, in my observations upon Horace his Art of Poetry which, with the text translated, I intend shortly to publish’”; rf. GIFFORD (1816 [3:165n]), who adds that J’s “‘notes’ were written, and, as I have already observed [3:5n], burnt in the fire which destroyed his library ca. 1623-24”; REA (1919 [143]), H&S (1950 [9:685]), SALE (1951 [112]), KERNAN (1962 [206]), DONALDSON (1985 [618]), PARKER (1999 [69n]). Cf. Und 43.89-91; Disc 1039ff.
To which (114) PARKER (1999 [69n]): “about which.”
the understanding (118) KERNAN (1962 [32n]): “the intelligent.” DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “the discerning readers: cf. Epig 1, etc.” PARKER (1999 [69n]): “i.e., men of understanding.”
your fauors; let me not dispayre their continuance, to the maturing of some wortherier
fruits: wherein, if my MvSES bee true to me, I shall raise the despis’d head of POETRY
againe, & stripping her out of those rotten and base ragges, wherewith the Times haue
adulterated her forme, restore her to her primitiue habite, feature, and maiesty, and render
her worthy to be imbraced, and kist, of all the great and Maister Spirits of the World. As
for the vile, and slothfull, who neuer affected an act, worthy of celebration, or are so
inward with their owne vicious natures, as they worthely feare her; and thinke it a high
point of policie, to keepe her in contempt with their declamatory, and windy inuictuies:
shee shall out of just rage incite her Seruants (who are Genus irritabile) to spout inke in
their faces, that shall eate, farder then their marrow, into their fames; and not CINNAMVS
the Barber, with his art, shall be able to take out the brands, but they shall liue, and be
read, till the Wretches die, as Things worst deseruing of themselues in chiefe, and then of
all mankind.

From my house in the Black-Friars

adulterated her forme (122)] PARKER (1999 [70n]): “marred her beauty by prostitution; leading to the
conceit ‘embraced and kissed’ [123].”
primitiue habit (122)] KERNAN (1962 [32n]), primitive: “original, first”; KERNAN (1962 [32n]), habit:
“clothing.”
affected (124)] DONALDSON (1985 [618]): “liked.” PARKER (1999 [70n]): “(a) attempted, aspired to; (b)
admirled.”

inward with (125)] SCHELLING (1910 [1:633]): “intimate.” PARKER (1999 [70n]): “(a) closely associated
with; (b) secretly aware of?”
as they worthely feare her (125)] SALE (1951 [112]): “that they fear her worth.”

high point of policie (125–26)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:497]): “an high point of policy: It is worth while to
note that J wrote “a high point.”

vatum’” (“fretful tribe of bards” (Fairclough, trans., 433)). PARKER (1999 [70n]): “‘people easily aroused’;
cf. Cicero, Letters to Atticus 1.17, says the best men are those whose feelings are easy to arouse (irritabiles
animos) (Creaser).”

inke in their faces, that shall eate (127–28)] PARKER (1999 [70n]): “I may be aware that ‘ink’ derives
from Lat. encaustum which itself derives from Gr. for a special ink that ‘burns into’; the conceit is carried
on into ‘brands.’” Cf. n. 385.

CINNAMVS the Barber, with his art, shall be able to take out the brands ... (128ff.) GIFFORD (1816
[2:546n]), in his notes for Poet ApoDial 164–69, observes that “[t]his sentiment, which J repeats in his
ded. to the Fox is from Martial. Epig 6.64.24–26: ‘at si quid nostrae tibi bilis inusserit arder, / vivet et
haeret totaque legetur in urbe, / stigmata nec vastra delebit Cinnamus arte’” (“But if the heat of my wrath
sets a brand upon you, that will remain and cling to you and be read all over the town, and Cinnamus, for
all his cunning skill, will not efface the marks” (Ker, trans., 1:399)). REA (1919 [143]) cites additional
parallels in Martial, 7.64 and 10.56.6: “tristia servorum stigmata” (“the degrading brands on slaves” (Ker,
trans., 2:197)). H&S (1950 [9:583]), per OED: “The Company of Barber-surgeons was incorporated by
Edward IV in 1461; under Henry VIII the title was altered to ‘Company of Barbers and Surgeons,’ and
barbers were restricted to the practice of dentistry; in 1745 they were divided into two distinct
corporations.” KERNAN (1962 [206–7]): “In Eliz. days the barber often was a surgeon as well and would be
called on to remove such marks as J, figuratively, plans to make on the poetasters who have whored the
Muse. Martial in one of his epigrams mentions the skill of Cinnamus in removing ‘stigmata.’”

brands (129)] KERNAN (1962 [33n]): “scars, marks.”
in chiefe (131)] KERNAN (1962 [33n]): “first of all.” PARKER (1999 [70n]): “in the first place.”
AD UTRAMQVE ACA-
DEMIA M, De BENIAMIN
IONSONIO.

Hic ille est primus, qui doctum drama BRITANNIS,
GRAJORVM antiqua, et LATII monimenta Theatri,
Tanquam explorator verfat, felicibus auras
Prebebit: Magnis ceptis Gemina atra faute.
Alterutram veteres contenti laude: Cothurnum hic,
Atq’ pari foccum tractat Sol fenicus arte:
Das VOLPONE iocos, fletus SEIANE dediti.
At si IONSONIAS mulctatas limite MVAS

From my house in the Black-Friars [this I. of February, 1607 (132–33)] F [1616 (447)] om. these lines. CASTELAIN (1907 [36n]), regarding J’s peculiar closing, “La dedicace se Volp porte au bas ces mots, qui font songer à un monarque signant un edit.” REA (1919 [143]) counters: “But this form was common,” adding “Erasmus uses this form.” H&S (1950 [9:686]): “Thomas Coryat, Traveller for the English Wits (1616), wishes to be remembered to ‘Maister Beniamin Johnson the Poet, at his chambere at the Blacke Friers.’” Cf. Muchado 1.1.284, Cf. app. Dates and Contexts.

Black-Friars (132) PARKER (1999 [70n]): “a fashionable residential area on the site of an old Dominican monastery between Ludgate Hill and the Thames, where there was also a private theatre.” I. of February, 1607 (132–33) FLATY (1891 [1:373]): “The date of this Address, ‘11th Feb. 1607,’ must mean 1607–8.” PARKER (1999 [8]): “If the dating of the Epistle as February 1607 is calendar dating, as has been suggested, the production probably took place in July 1606, a period of plague when we know the King’s Men were at Oxford; if the dating is old-style, then the production may have been in September 1607, when the company was also at Oxford.”

COMMENDATORY VERSES (134–327) Regarding the printing history of these poems within Q and F, cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.

AD UTRAMQVE ACA- | DEMIAM, De BENIAM | IONSONIO... (134–50) Redeployed with the title “In Vulponem” among the commendatory verses of F (1616). “To Each University, Concerning Benjamin Jonson. This man is the first, who, studying Greek antiquities and the monuments of Lat. theatre as an explorer, by his happy boldness will provide the Britons with a learned drama: O twin stars favour his great undertakings. The ancients were content with praise of either [genre]; this Sun of the Stage handles the cothurnus [i.e., tragedy] an the sock [i.e., comedy] with equal skill: Volpone, thou givest us jokes; thou, Sejanus, gavest us tears. But if any lament that Jonson’s muses have been cramped within a narrow limit, say, you [universities], on the contrary: ‘O most miserable [people], who, though English, know the English language inadequately or know it not at all (as if you were) born across the sea), the poet will grow with time, he will transform his native land, and himself become the English Apollo” (Parker, trans., 71n).

Tanquam explorator (139) PARKER (1999 [71n]): “J’s motto from Seneca, Epist 2.5, ‘as an explorer or scout,’ which he inscribed in his books.” Cf. H&S (1925 [1:261]).


this I. of February, 1607.
Angustia plangent quiquam: Uos, dicite, contrà,
O nimiui miferos quibus ANGLIS ANGLICA lingua
Aut non fat nota efi; autqueis (feu trans mare natis)
Haud nota omninò: Vegetet cum tempore Vates,
Mutabît patriam, fieta' ipse ANGLVS APOLLO.

E. B.

Tomam, veteres fequi emularierq,
O omnes faperemus ad salutem.
His fed funt veteres araneofi;
Tam nemo veterum eff sequitor, vt tu
Illos quod sequeris novator audis.

Gemina altra (140) PARKER (1999 [71n]): “Oxford and Cambridge.”
feu (147) H&S (1952 [11:318]): ceu
E. B. (150) F (1616): E. BOLTON. / PARKER (1999 [71n]): “probably the Edmund Bolton (ca. 1575-ca. 1633) who was summoned for recusancy with J and eighteen others on 9 Jan 1605/6, at which time he was described as ‘musician’; rf. H&S (1952 [11:579]). He may previously have written verses missigned ‘Ev. B.’ for Sej.; rf. ibid., 11:317, and he turns up later in 1610 and 1618; rf. H&S (1925 [1:86, 124])."
Amicissimo, & meritissimo [BEN: IONSON. (151-69)] Redeployed with the title “In Vulponem” among the commendatory verses of F (1616). “To the Most Friendly and Deserving Ben Jonson. If counselors in the law[s] of men and God would dare follow and emulate what you have dared here in your art, Poet, O, we all should have the wisdom needed for salvation. But to these [men] the ancients are cobwebby; for no one is a follower of the ancients like you [who] hearken as an innovator after those whom you will follow. Go on as you are; and let your books seem ancient from their birth, for boyhood is incompatible with literature, and it is proper that books to which eternal life is given be born old. Genius and toil put you on a level with the ancients; excel them, so that you may raise a new race from our wickedness, in which we surpass both past and future ages” (Parker, trans., 72n). PARKER (1999 [72n]): “A. B. Grosart, ed., The Complete Poems of John Donne (1873 [2:97]), has a clever, though freer, trans. into rhyming couplets.”
Confulti veteres (155) H&S (1952): Confulti, [veteres] / H&S (1952 [11:318]): “In line [155] emularierq ends a line of 13 syllables; Professor P. Maas corrects it by deleting ‘veteres’ as an interpolation; it breaks the sense and the metre and seems to have been unintelligently taken up from ‘veteres’ in line [157]. With this elimination the ‘quod’ of line [159] necessarily becomes ‘quos.’ The poem then becomes coherent. Scan ‘sequit’ as in Catullus 62.7, ‘uno in lectulo, erudituli.’ In line [168] ‘vt’ is found in some copies before et, taken from the ‘vt’ in line [166].”
Fac tamen quod agis; tuique primâ
Libri canitie induantur horâ:
Nam cartis puertia est neganda,
Naufragique fenes, oportet, illi
Libri, queis dare vis perennitatem.

Prêts, ingenium facit, labórique
Te parem; hos superes, vt & futuros,
Ex nostrar vitiositate fumus,
Quâ prêcos superamus, & futuros.

I. D.

To my friend M'. Ionson.
Epigramme.

IONSON, to tell the world what I to thee

Am, 'tis Friend. Not to praise, nor vther forth

Thee, or thy worke, as if it needed mee

Send I these ri'mes to adde ought to they worth:

So should I flatter my selfe, and not thine;

For there were truth on thy side, none on mine.
To the Reader. Upon the worke.

If thou dar'lt bite this Foxe, then read my ri'mes;
Thou guilty art of some of these foule crimes:
Which, else, are neyther his, nor thine, but Times.
If thou doft like it, well; it will imply
Thou lik'lt with judgement, or beft company:
And hee, that doth not fo, doth yet enuie.

The auntient formes reduc'd, as in this age
The vices, are; and bare-fac'd on the stage:
So boyes were taught t' abhorre feene Dronkards
rage.

T. R.

To my deare friend, M'. Benia-


min Ionson, vpon his Foxe.

If it might stand with luftice, to allow
The swift conversion of all follies; now,
Such is my Mercy, that I could admit
All forts should equally approve the wit,
Of this thy euen worke: whose growing fame
Shall raife thee high, and thou it, with they Name.
And did not Manners, and my Loue command
Mee to forebeare to make those understand,

To the Reader. Upon the worke. (178–89)] F (1616) om.
The auntient formes reduc'd, as in this age / The vices, are; and bare-fac'd on the stage: / So boyes were taught t' abhorre feene Dronkards | (rage (185–88)] PARKER (1999 [74n]): “a contorted construction that hearkens back to J's promise 'to reduce [i.e., bring back] not only the ancient forms, but manners of the scene'; cf. nn. 102. It can be glossed as: 'The ancient forms [i.e., techniques, genres] are brought back, as are the vices in this age [J's 'manners'], and [the latter are shown] barefaced on the stage. Line [187] then makes J's point about 'doctrine': 'So boys were shown drunkards raging to teach them to abhor such behaviour.'”
To my deare friend, M'. Benia-
min Ionson, vpon his Foxe. (190–218)] Redeployed with the title "Vpon his foxe" among the commendatory verses of F (1616).

18

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Whome thou, perhaps, hast in thy wiser doome
Long since, firmly resolu’d, shall never come
To know more then they do; I would have shoune
To all the world, the Art, which thou alone
Haft taught our tongue, the rule os Time, of Place,

205  And other Rites, deliver’d, with the grace
Of Comick style, which onely, is farre more,
Then any English Stage hath knowne before.
But, since our subtle Gallants thinke it good
To like of nought, that may be understood,

Leaf they should be disprou’d; or haue, at best,
Stomachs for raw, that nothing can digest
But what’s obscene, or barkeres: Let vs desire
They may continue, simple, to admire

Fine clothes, and strange words; and may lieu, in age,

210  To see themselves ill-brought upon the Stage,
And like it. Whilft thy bold, and knowing Muse
Contemnnes all praisfe, but such as thou wouldst chuse.

F. B.

To my good friend. M’. Ionfon.

The strange new follies of this idle age,

220  In strange new formes, presented on the Stage
By the quick Muse, so pleas’d judicious eyes;
That th’ once-admired antient Comedies
Fashions, like clothes grewne out of fashion, lay

225  Lock’d vp from vfe: untill thy Foxe birth-day,

To my good friend. M’. Ionfon. (219–28) F (1616) om.
In an old garbe, shew'd so much art, and wit,
As they the Laurell gaue to thee, and it.

D. D.

To the ingenious Poet.

The Foxe, that eaj'd thee of thy modest feares,

And earth'd himselfe, alioe, into our eares,

Will so, in death, commend his worth, and thee

As neyther can, by praifes, mended bee:

Tis friendly folly, thou maist thanke, and blame,

To preaife a booke, whose forehed heares they Name.

Then IONSON, onely this (among the rest)

I, euer, haue obseru'd, thy laft work's beft:

Pase, gently on; thy worth, yet higher, raise;

Till thou write beft, as well as the beft PLAYES.

I. C.

To his deare Friend, Benia-

min Ionfon

his

VOLPONE.
ome, yet, more forth, VOLPONE, and thy chase
Performe to al length, for thy breath wil ferue thee;
The Vturer fhall, never, weare thy cafe:
Men do not hunt to kill, but to preferue thee.
Before the béft houndes, thou doft, still, but play;
And, for our whelpes, alaffe, they yelp in vaine;
Thou haft no earth; thou hunt’fi the Milke-white way;
And, through th’ Elision feilds, doft make thy traine.
And as the Symbole of lifes Guard, the Hare,
That, sleepeing, wakes; and, for her feare, was faf’t:
So, thou fhalt be aduaunc’d, and made a Starre,
Pole to all witts, beleue’d in, for thy craft.
In which the Scenes both Marke, and Mystery
Is hit, and founfled, to pleafe béft, and worft;
To all which, fince thou mak’ft fo fweete a cry,
Take all thy best fare, and be nothing curst.

G. C.

To my worthily-efteeemed M’. Ben: [A3’]
Ionfon.

VOLPONE now is dead indeed, and lies

In which the Scenes both Marke, and Mystery / Is hit, and founfled, to pleafe béft, and worft (257–258)
PARKER (1999 [76n]): “a comment on the play’s ambiguity of effect: i.e., the fox’s cunning is both a ‘mark’ for satire to ‘hit’ yet also a ‘mystery’ (or craft) which is ‘sounded’ (celebrated, or perhaps ‘explored’), thus pleasing both the ‘best’ and the ‘worst’ in the audience.”
G. C. (261) George Chapman (1559–1634). GIFFORD (1816 [1:ccxxviin]): “these lines may be set down, without scruple, to Chapman’s account.” PARKER (1999 [76–77n]): “the poet and playwright ... whom J told Drummond, ConvDrum 169, he ‘loved.’ They worked together for Henslowe as early as 1598; Chapman was probably J’s collaborator on the first version of Sej; and they were imprisoned in 1605 for their share in Elsho. Chapman wrote a poem about J’s Epig 104 and dedicated verses for Sej, and J reciprocated later with verses for Chapman’s trans. of Hesiod (1618).”
To my worthily-efteeemed M’. Ben: | Ionfon. (262–74) F (1616) om.
Exposed to the cenfure of all eies,
And mouth's; Now he hath run his traine, and show'n
His subtil body, where he best was knowne;
In both Minerua's Cityes: he doth yeeld,
His well-form'd-limbes vpon this open field.

VVo, if they now appeare fo faire in fight,
How did they, when they were endew'd with fpright
Of Action? Yet in thy praiile let this be read,
The FOXE will liue, when all his hounds be dead.

E. S.

To the true M'r. in his
Art, B. Ionson.

Forgiue thy friends; they would, but cannot praiife,
Inough' the wit, art, language of thy PLAYES:
Forgiue thy foes; they will not praiife thee. Why?

Thy Fate hath thought it best, they shoulde envy.
Faith, for thy FOXES fake, forgiue then thosfe
Who are nor worthy to be friends, nor foes.
Or, for their owne braue fake, let them be stiill
Fooles at thy mercy, and like what they will,

I. F.

both Minerua's Cityes (268)] PARKER (1999 [77n]): "Oxford and Cambridge."
E. S. (274)] GIFFORD (1816 [1:xxxvn]): "Edward Scory?"; GIFFORD (1816 [1:cccxxvn]): "probably by Edward Scory"; rpt. H&S (1952 [11:322]), who add: "Edmund Scory? [...] Edmund prefixed verses to Drayton's Heroicall Epistles (1619)." PARKER (1999 [77n]): "almost certainly J's patron at this time, Esmé Stuart, Lord Aubigny (1574–1624). I dedicated Sej to him, and told Drummond, ConvDrum 254–55, he once lived with Aubigny for five years; Epig 127 records gratitude to Aubigny for help in time of need; and H&S conjecture that this five years was from 1602 to 1607, covering the time when Volp was written and produced but before J signed the epistle to the 1607 Q from his own house in Blackfriars. Soon after, J wrote a tribute to Aubigny's new wife, and some years later composed an epithalamion for his sister." See these poems in H&S (1947 [8:116–20; 252–8]).

To the true M'. in his [Art, B. Ionson. (275–85)] F (1616) om.
Inough' the (278) GIFFORD (1816 [1:cccxxv]): Enough the / H&S (1952 [11:322]): Inough, the / PARKER (1999 [77]): Enough the
To the worthiest Maister
Ionson.

For mee, your Worke or you, most worthy Friend,
(Mongst these vn-æquall’d Men) to dare commend,
Were damnable preAimption; whole weake flame
Can neither dimme, or light your full grow’n fame:
How can my common knowledge set you forth,
When it wants art, and Art it selfe wants worth?
Therefore, how vaine (although by you, made one)
Am I, to put such fauyce boldneffe on
To lend you Verses? vainer, to conceiue
You do in my weake time so much beleue,
As, that without the forfeit of your owne
Judgement, you’d let my pen, with theirs, be showne:

Vnleffe, to haue me touch what they do write,
To giue my lame-blind Muse found strength, cleare light.
There’are, whose Playes (nere lik’d) do alwaies paffe;
That haue read more, then euer written was;
Will ignorant be of nothing; euer place

I. F. (285] GIFFORD (1816 [1:cccxxvn]): “these lines are entirely in Fletcher’s manner, to whom, I believe, we may safely ascribe them.” H&S (1952 [11:322]): “John Fletcher.” PARKER (1999 [78n]): Possibly John Florio, but more probably the dramatist John Fletcher (1579–1625) whom J told Drummond, ConvDrum 169, he also ‘loved’ and for whose unsuccessful Faithful Shepherdess he wrote dedicatory verses. There are verses to Cat also signed ‘J.F.’ A conjunction of Beaumont and Fletcher’s verse to Vulp would be one of the first evidences of their acquaintance. The copy-text for this ed., which J inscribed to Florio, reads: “To his loving Father, & worthy Freind / M. John Florio: / The ayde of his Muses. / Ben: Jonson seales this testimonie / of Freindship, and Love.” See facsimile reprints in H&S (1925 [1:56]); DE VOCHT (1937 [1]); SCOLAR (1968). For this poem’s attribution to Florio, see ANON. (1918 [25]), YATES (1934 [278]), SIMONINI (1950 [512]), GILBERT (1947). Also see app. Other Sources, Analogues, and Influences.

To the worthiest Maister | Ionson. (286–328] F (1616) om. | H&S (1952 [11:322, 323]): “found only in the British Museum copy, C. 12. c. 17, and in the Wise copy, on a leaf inserted in signature A.” H&S (1937 [5:5]): “A set of verses signed ‘N. F.’ was added to the preliminary tributes after the sheet had been set up. It survives in two copies, Mr. Wise’s and the British Museum copy with the autograph dedication to Florio. In the Museum copy it is inserted between the original A 3 verso and A 4, before the last leaf containing ‘The Persons of the Comedy,’ ‘The Argument,’ and ‘The Prologue,’ which thus becomes A 5: this was the proper place for it. But in the Wise copy it is inserted in the middle of the sheet between A 2 verso and the original A 3 with Chapman’s verses.”
lame-blind (301] PARKER (1999 [78]): lame, blind
There’are (302] PARKER (1999 [78]): there are
Th' haue scene, or knowe; who, had they but the grace,
That you do me (me thinkes) would lay, your freine
Exceede PLATVS, HORACE, VIRGIL'S vaine:
Two points they would hit, here; give you your due,
And tell the world how many names they knew

Of Poets, and nought else. For, as the poore,
To make one dinner, scrape at every doore,
Get here a bone, there tainted meate, here bread,
To saue 'hem from the number of the dead;
Euen so, their Beggar-Muse hence fleales a Scene,

Thence begges a speach, & from moft Plaies doth gleane,
Till they haue made one: which is like, being showne,
The Prisoners-basket, into which is throwne
All moomocks, fifth, and flesh, which but to eye
Or sent, would make all (but the neare-fleru'd) die

These I can now dlepraife, But, how O Muse,
Canst thou praife him, who hath more worth t' excuse
Thy not prayling, then thou faculty to praife?
His name (long since at higheft) none can raife.
Yet he, that couets worthy deedes, doth doe 'hem;

If nought, but meanes, withfland thee to purifie 'hem;
But, thou that wouldst ore his true praifes looke,
Firft, pray to vnderfland; then read his booke.

N . F.

THE PERSONS OF

THE COMOEDYE.
Volpone, a Magnifico. Politique Yould-bee, a Knight.

Mosca, his Parasite. Peregrine, a Gent-trauiler.

Voltoire, an Advocate. Corbaccio, an olde Bonario, a yong Gentleman.

J’s “usual spelling of the word.” Upton (1749 [20–21]) trans. the It. Corbaccio in passing; later eds., following Cunningham (1875 [3:497]), address the potential bibliographic and/or personal influence of Florio on the It. names J assigned to his Venetian d.p.: “Some of these names are very characteristically explained in the contemporary dictionary of J’s friend Florio.” The individual significance of each character’s name is discussed separately below; more extensive commentary follows below in app. Characters and app. Extra-Dramatic Texts, s.v. “The Persons of the Comedy.”


Magnifico (331) Florio (1598 [211]), s.v. Magnifico: “[ad.] magnificent, noble, nobly minded. Also [n.] a Magnifico or chief man or one of the chief men of Venice.” Cunningham (1875 [3:497]) cites John Minshew, A Dictionarie in Spanish and English (1599), s.v. Magnificent: “The chief men of Venice are by peculiar name called Magnifici, i.e., Magnificoes.” Kernan (1962 [34]): “a rich and distinguished man.” Adams (1979 [3n]): “not a formal title; it simply means ‘gentleman.’” Donaldson (1985 [618]): “magnate.”

Politique Yould-bee (331) Florio (1598 [283]), s.v. Póla: “a birde like to a swallow called a martin. Some take it to be a dawe or a chough”; Politico: “politeke. Alfo a politician, one that hath good vnderstanding, or that dealeth in the government or rule of a common wealth. ciuill, a flates-man. Alfo pertaining to a politcull or ciuill government”; also, Florio (1611 [387]), Póla: “a Cough, a Rooke, a Lack-daw”; Poladim: “all manner of poultry or foule”; Florio (1611 [388]), Politico: “politeke, politcally. Alfo a Politician or States-man.” Schelling (1910 [1:637]), politico: “judicieuus, prudent, political”; politicien: “plotter, intriguer.” Among the various connotations suggested by the character’s first name, Kernan (1962 [34]) notes that “‘Politic’ here has the meaning of crafty and skilled in diplomacy”; Adams (1979 [3n]) adds that “in the 17th c. the word ‘politic’ carried overtones of devious and subtle calculation.”

Regarding this character’s place among J’s cast of animals, REA (1919 [145]) notes “the fact that Sir Pol and his wife are also birds—chattering pol-parrots,” and refers to a parallel passage in [Epig 62, “To Fine Lady Would-bee” and Epig 71, “On Court-Parrat”]. Cf. app. Dates and Contexts. Kernan (1962 [207]): “Sir Pol, the Parrot.” Adams (1979 [3n]): “His name spells out, almost too explicitly, Sir Politic’s character; and in its abbreviation (‘Pol’) suggests further the parrot he is.” Donaldson (1985 [618]): “‘Politic’ suggesting (i) Machiavellian scheming; (ii) temporizing and worldly wisdom (Fr. Politiques [cf. n. 63]); (iii) as ‘Pol.’ a parrot-like loquacity.” For more on the popular and theatrical afterlife of the label “Sir Politic” in all its various forms, cf. app. Characters.

Mosca, his Parasite (332) Florio (1598 [233]), s.v. Mófeca: “any kinde of flye”; rpt. REA (1919 [144]), H&S (1950 [9:687]), Donaldson (1985 [618]). Florio (1611 [357]), s.v. Parasito: “a parasite, a flatterer, a snell-feafl, a trencher or bellie-friend.” REA (1919 [144–45]) adds that “Mosca is merely the It. for the Lat. musca, a common nickname for a parasite; on its use, see the sixth book of Athenaeus, Deip, where a very full discussion of parasites is given, with many quotations illustrating their characteristics. Lucian, whose dialogues furnished much material for J, has a treatise on the fly. As most of the characters in the present play are birds of prey, it is perhaps worth noting that at the beginning Lucian includes the fly among the ‘other birds.’” In Newln 2.2, introduces a character named Fly, whom he describes as ‘the Parasite of the Inn,’ and whom he often classes as a bird.” Cf. app. Dates and Contexts. H&S (1950 [9:687]) also refer to Athenaeus via Erasmus, Adagia (1558 [4.7.43]). Editors generally gloss “Mosca” as simply “fly”; cf. Kernan (1962 [207]) and Adams (1979 [3n]), who qualifies Mosca’s description as a parasite: “The figure of the parasite implies scavenging, as well as fawning dependence. The client-patron relationship in Rome fostered parasitical dependents, and J saw something similar, not only around the Eng. court, but around the big money-men of London city.” Kernan (1962 [34]): “a flatterer, hanger-on; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [618]), who adds “see Mosca’s account [1608–34].”
Gentleman.
Corvino, a Marchant.
Avocatorì. 4. Magistrates.

Fine Mada. Wolfd-Bee;
the Knights wife.

Celia, the Merchants wife.
Commandadori, Officers.

VoltoRE (333)] Florio (1598 [455]), s.v. VoltoRE: “a rauenous bird called a vultur, a geyre or grap. Alfo a greddie cormorant”; rpt. Cunningham (1875 [3:497]), REA (1919 [144]), H&S (1950 [9:687]), Donaldson (1985 [618]). Also, Florio (1611 [609]), Voltorio: “a greedy cormorant, a rauenous fellow, an extortioner.” Adams (1904 [299]): “From this satire [i.e., Horace, Horace, Sat 2.5] may have come also the suggestion of making one of Volpone’s suitors a lawyer.” REA (1919 [145]) links the advocate’s association with the vulture to his practice of preying upon the dead or dying, “a common name for legacy-hunters,” which suggests an echo from Erasmus, Adagia (1558), 1.7.14; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:687]), who locate Erasmus’ source in either Seneca, Epist 95.43, or Martial, Epigram 6.62. Cf. *vultures* in Und 33.9; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [618]) who notes that vultures’ “association with lawyers was traditional.” Cf. app. *Dates and Contexts.* Editors generally gloss VoltoRE as “vulture”; cf. Kernan (1962 [207]), Adams (1979 [3n]).

Adovcate (333)] Florio (1611 [49]), s.v. Avocato or Avocatore: “an advocate or an attourney.” Kernan (1962 [34]): “lawyer.”
Peregrine (333)] Kernan (1962 [207]): “Peregrine, a hunting hawk.” Adams (1979 [3n]): “in Eng., a ‘falcon,’ but the word also associates with ‘pilgrim,’ i.e., ‘traveller.’” Donaldson (1985 [618]): “(i) traveller; (ii) hunting falcon.”


Fine Mada. Wolfd-Bee (335)] Regarding this character’s place among J’s cast of animals, REA (1919 [145]) notes “the fact that Sir Pol and his wife are also birds—chattering poll-parrots,” and refers to a parallel passage in Epig 62.

Corvino (336)] Florio (1598 [89]), s.v. Corvo: “Crooked, bent, hooked. Alfo a rauen or crow”; also, Florio (1611 [127]), s.v. Corvo: “of a rauens nature or colour”; rpt. Cunningham (1875 [3:497]), H&S (1950 [9:687]), Donaldson (1985 [618]). Adams (1904 [299]): “Holthausen (1889) also thinks that the name of Corvino was probably suggested to J by the picture in Petronius, Satyr 116. But Horace, Sat 2.5 could as readily have suggested the name.” Cf. n. 580–82. REA (1919 [144]): “Corvino is not given by Florio; this fact, and slight differences in the spelling of various words indicate that J did not use the World of Words directly, but rather got his information from Florio in person.” Synmonds (1886 [71]): “spruce young crow.” Kernan (1962 [207]): “raven.” Adams (1979 [3n]): “crow.”

Marchant (336)] Cornwall (1838 [811]), Merchant; “sometimes used to express broker, or banker.”

Avocatorti (337)] H&S (1950 [9:687]): “in J a judicial body. Gasparo Contareni, The Commonwealth and Government of Venice (1599, trans., Lewkenor), describes them rather as prosecutors who ‘pleaded and made report unto the … xl. men for small causes, for greater to the Senate, for the greatest of all to the greater Counsell, if so they shall think good’ (Lewkenor, trans., 85). They punished ‘lewd & wicked men, that trespass … wickedly against any citizen, or member thereof in particular’ (84).” Adams (1979 [3n]): “properly, in It., ‘prosecutors’; J makes them judges.”

Celia (337)] Florio (1611 [101]), s.v. Cielo: “the heaven, the skie, the firmament or wellkin. Alfo a canopie or telierne of a bed, the vpper face or roofe of any thing elle.” Adams (1979 [3n]): “lit. ‘heavenly.’” Donaldson (1985 [619]): “Cf. Lat. caeolum, ‘sky, heaven.’”
NOTARIO, the Register.
MERCATORI. 3. Merchants.
NANO, a Dwarf.
ANDROGYNO, a Hermaphrodite.
CASTRONE, an Eunuch.
SERVITORE, a Servant.
GREGE.
WOMEN. 2.

THE ARGUMENT.

V oipone, childlesse, rich, faines fick, despaires,
O ffers his flate to hopes of feuerall heyres,
L ies languishing; His Paraffite receaues
P refents of all, affures, deludes: Then weaues
O ther crosse-plots, which ope 'themselves, are told.

COMMANDADORI (338)] ADAMS (1979 [3n]): “a not very distinguished title of honor; J assigns them a function akin to sergeants or marshals of a court.”
NOTARIO (339)] FLORIO (1611 [341]), s.v. Notario: “a Notarie, a Scriuener.”
the Register (339)] KERNAN (1962 [34]): “clerk of the court.” ADAMS (1979 [3n]): “Notario: ‘recorder.’”
MERCATORI (339)] FLORIO (1611 [309]), s.v. Mercadante or Mercante: “a Marchant, a chap-man.”
ADAMS (1962 [3n]): “merchants.”
NANO (340)] FLORIO (1598 [236]), s.v. Náno: “a dwarfe, or dandiprat”; rpt. REA (1919 [144]). FLORIO (1611 [327]) adds: “a twattle.” SYMONDS (1886 [72]): “the pigmy.” ADAMS (1979 [3n]): “dwarf.”
ANDROGYNO (340)] FLORIO (1598 [19]), s.v. Androgino: “he that is both male and female, or man and woman, or of both sexes and kindest.” SYMONDS (1886 [72]): “the page.” ADAMS (1979 [3n]): “from the Gr., ‘man-woman,’ i.e., hermaphrodite.”
CASTRONE (341)] FLORIO (1598 [63]), s.v. Castrone: “a gelded man. Also a wether or ewe mutton. Also a noddle, a mea-cocke, a cuckold, a ninie, a gull”; rpt. REA (1919 [144]). SYMONDS (1886 [72]): “the wether.” ADAMS (1979 [3n]): “gelding.”
GREGE (342)] FLORIO (1611 [219]), s.v. Gregge: “a flocke of any thing, as of sheere, goates, swine and horses. Vfed alfo for a troupe or multitude of men or women.” GASSNER (1960 [203]) adds “or Mob”; KERNAN (1962 [34]): “crowd.” ADAMS (1979 [3n]): “from the Lat., ‘mob’ or ‘crowd.’”
SERVITORE (341)] FLORIO (1611 [493]), s.v. Seuitore: “a feruitur, a feruant, a serving-man, an attendant, a waiter, a thrill.”
SERVITORE, a Servant. | WOMEN. 2. (341-42)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:166]) reads “Servitori, Servants, two Waiting-women. &c.”
SD (343)] F (1616 [448]) adds “THE SCENE | VENICE.” after its “The Persons of the Play.” F (1616 [449]) also adds “VOLPONE, | OR | THE FOXE.” above its “THE ARGUMENT.”
THE ARGUMENT (344-51)] Regularly noted for its acrostic presentation of the play’s plot, a classical flourish attributed to Plautus. For commentary directly related to the Argument, cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts. SCHELING (1910 [1625]): “plot of a drama; theme, subject.”
despair (345)] PARKER (1999 [83n]): “i.e., his life is despaired of.”
state (346)] KERNAN (1962 [35n]): “property”; DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “estate.”
ope (349)] KERNAN (1962 [35n]): “open.”
told (349)] DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “exposed.”

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New tricks for safety are fought; They thrive: When, bold,
Each tempt’s th’other againe, and all are fold.

The PROLOGUE.

Now, luck God send vs, and a little wit
Will ferue, to make our PLAY hit;
(According to the palates of the season)
Here is ri’me, not emptie of reason:
This we were bid to credit, from our Poët,
Whose true scope, if you would know it,
In all his Poèmes, still, hath beene this measoure,
To mixe profit, with your pleasure;
And not as some (whose throates enuie fayling

bold (350)] REA (1919 [145]): “The use of the adjective bold modifying the subject each, instead of an adverb modifying the verb, is a Latinism.”
sold (351)] KERNAN (1962 [35n]): “enslaved”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [619]). ADAMS (1979 [4n]): “deceived”; PARKER (1999 [84n]): “(a) betrayed; (b) tricked (OED, 8).”
The PROLOGUE (352–88)] For commentary directly related to the Prologue, cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts. PARKER (1999 [85n]) cites SALE’s (1951 [116]) “interesting suggestion that the roughness of metre may indicate that the Prologue was spoken by Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone; line 19 [371], however, refers to the speaker in the first person singular. In the National Theatre production of 1977 it was spoken from the side of the house by Sir John Gielgud in modern dress.”
Now, luck God send vs (353)] F (1616 [449]): “God” recast as “yet.” REA (1919 [146]): “The word luck is object of the verb send; yet seems a little awkward; it implies that the poet has done his duty, but now hopes for luck in addition. It is evidently a makeshift substitute for God of Q, which had to be eliminated on account of the stricter regulations against using sacred names on the stage.” PARKER (1999 [85n]) concurs with REA: “a substitute ... probably to conform to the 1606 Act against Blasphemy”; and glosses the first four lines as “Public taste being what it is, we only need luck and a little cunning to make our play a hit, (but) here is rhyme not empty of reason.”
palates of the season (355)] REA (1919 [146]) notes that “this would not be a complimentary phrase,” which he ties to J’s earlier reference to “the garbage of the time” [90]. PARKER (1999 [85n]) glosses this phrase as “public taste.”
Here is ri’me, not emptie of reason (356)] Typically regarded as proverbial. REA (1919 [146]) observes that “the phrase ‘rhyme or reason’ has long been common both in French and Eng.,” with precedents in the OED dating back to the 13th c. REA (1919 [146]) cites a parallel passage from Disc 2445–49. See app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.
reason (356)] DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “cf. Und 29.53.”
credit, from (357)] KERNAN (1962 [35n]): “believe understand”; PARKER (1999 [85n]): “trust in by (Lat., credere).”
scope (358)] KERNAN (1962 [35n]) “aim”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [619]). PARKER (1999 [85n]): “objective, purpose.”
our Poët ... In all his Poèmes (357–59)] For commentary related to J’s special application of the terms “poet” and “poems” to his work as a playwright, cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts, s.v. “The Prologue.”
measure (359)] PARKER (1999 [85n]): “(a) criterion, (b) purpose?”
Whose true scope ... mixe profit, with your pleasure (358–60)] UPTON (1749 [1–2]) observes how “our learned Comedian takes particular care, in many passages throughout his works, to let his audience know,
Crie hoarely, All he writes, is rayling:

And, when his PLAYES come forth, thinke they can flout them,

With sayling, He was a yeare about them.

To thefe there needes no Lye, but this his creature,

that he strictly observed what his favourite author writes in the art of poetry," and quotes ArsPoet 343–44. GIFFORD (1816 [3:167n]) remarks that "I never forgets to put the audience in mind of the ethical purpose of his writing." Most of the above eds., including KERNAN (1962 [36n]) and ADAMS (1979 [4n]), generally credit Horace as the source of J's profit/delight credo—H&S (1950 [9:686]) regard it as "a favourite quotation" of J—REA (1919 [147]), however, dissents and charges that "the immediate source of the present passage and of its repetition, just quoted, is Erasmus, EpistApol," remarking "it will be noticed that J is practically translating the sentence." REA (1919 [147]) also discerns a possible source in Erasmus' trans. of Lucian's Dream, particularly in line 34. DONALDSON (1985 [619]): "Horace, ArsPoet 333–46." Cf. app. Contexts and app. Sources below.

And not as some (whose throates ensieu faying / Crie hoarely, All he writes, is rayling (361–62))

Though editors and commentators have argued on behalf of separate but specific targets, especially as to whether J intended to antagonize either Dekker or Marston here, most tend to discuss these and many of the Prologue's references to the War of the Theatres. UPTON (1749 [2–3]): "He means particularly Dekker, the author of Saturnomastix (1601), which was written as an answer to J's Poet, where Dekker is lashed under the name of Crispinus; who in the fifth act has a vomit given him, to make him bring up his far-fetched words. 'What a tumult he had in his belly!' (5.3.501), says Caesar of him, just as was said of Lexiphanes in Lucian, Lexiphanes 20, who was served after the same manner: '[The bombulation is vast!'] (Harmon, trans., 5:321)." Upton likewise correlates these lines to a significant passage in Poet, ApollDial, 184–85. WHALLEY (1756 [2:274n]): "at the end of Poet. J has before touched on these reflections of his adversaries; and Dekker seems to be the person particularly aimed at." REA (1919 [147]) follows Upton in his identification of Dekker. GIFFORD (1816 [3:168n]) notes that "[t]his alludes to the ApollDial" (Poet 185); for Gifford's argument on behalf of Marston and his disagreement with Whalley, see n. 373–74. Following Gifford, H&S (1950 [9:686]) describe these lines as "a reply to John Marston, who had written in the Prologue to The Dutch Curteesan (1605 [A2]): 'Yet thinke not, but like others raile we could, / (Best art Presents, not what it can, but should) / And if our pen in this scene ouer sliht / We striue not to instruct, but to delight,... / Sit then, with faire Expectance, and suruay / Nothing but passionate man in his sliht play, / Who hath this onely ill: to some deem'd worst, / A Modest diffidence, and selfe mistrust'"—an extensive attack that swipes at J's instructional aims and perceived railing. PARKER (1999 [85n]) diplomatically identifies "some" as both Dekker and Marston.

some (361) DONALDSON (1985 [619]): "e.g., Marston, The Dutch Courteesan, prologue."

rayling (362) KERNAN (1962 [36n]) "carping abusive language"; ADAMS (1979 [4n]) "abusive, invective."

And, when his PLAYES come forth ... a yeare about them (363–64) WHALLEY (1756 [1:331]) was among the first commentators to defend J's typically lengthy creative process: "The enemies of J industriously gave out, that all he wrote was produced with extreme pains and labour, and that he was not less than a year about every play. This objection, had it been true, was really no disgrace to him; for the best authors know by experience, that what appeareth to be the most natural and easy writing, is frequently the effect of study, and the closest application; but their design was to insinuate, that J had no parts, and a poor unfruitful imagination. To this objection, he hath retorted in the prologue to this play [366–68]: and from thence we learn, that the whole was finished by him in five weeks." Following GIFFORD (1816 [3:168n]), later eds. such as H&S (1950 [9:686]), KERNAN (1962 [207]), DONALDSON (1985 [619]), and PARKER (1999 [86n]) have related these lines to J's rebuttal in Poet ApollDial, 193–94, which responded to Dekker's Saturnomastix 5.2.201–3: "you Nastie Tortois, you and your Itchy Poetry breake out like Christmas, but once a yeare." Following REA (1919 [147–48]), H&S (1950 [9:584]) refer to the further evidence set down among the contributors to JonVir (1638). KERNAN (1962 [207]) remarks that "it was one of J's boasts that he was a craftsman who worked and reworked his plays rather than turning them out hurriedly, as most Eliz. playwrights apparently did." PARKER (1999 [86n]) remarks upon "J's advocacy of slow, careful writing," and correlates this practice to Poet ApollDial, 193–221, and Disc 1705–13, 2435–45. Cf. app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.
Which was, two monthes since, no feature;
And, though he dares give them fiue lies to mend it,
'Tis knowne, fiue weekes fully pen'd it:
From his owne hand, without a Co-adiutor,

Nouice, Iorney-man, or Tutor.

Yet, thus much I can give you, as a token

To these there needs no Lye, but this his creature (365) KERNAN (1962 [36n]) glosses this line as "this play answers the charge." ADAMS (1979 [4n]): "‘To give the lie’ was to deny flatly; we would use here the word ‘denial.’” PARKER (1999 [86n]): "(a) needs no challenge (as in ‘to give the lie’); (b) needs nothing to show that they lie."

Which was, two monthes since, no feature (366) HOLT (1905a [165n]): “The difference between two months and five weeks [368] is probably the difference between the time when the first conception of the play came to his mind, and when he had actually put pen to paper.” KERNAN (1962 [36n]): “was not begun two months ago.”

‘Tis knowne, fiue weekes fully pen'd it (368) CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:147-48]): “This [J] delivers in his usual vaunting stile, spurning at the critics and detractors of his day, who thought to convict him of dulness by testifying in fact to his diligence. [...] J therefore affects to mark his contempt of the public judgment for applauding hasty writers in the couplet preceding. But at the same time that he shews this contempt very justly, he certainly betrays a degree of weakness in boasting of his poetical dispatch, and seems to forget that he had noted Sh. with something less than friendly cenfure for the very quality, he is vaunting himself upon.” REA (1919 [147-48]), with reference to “many of the poems in JonVir,” observes that “J’s usual slowness in composition was well known” just as the “unusual speed in the case of Volp is alluded to” by Jasper Mayne. Cf. app. Dates and Contexts. Likewise, REA (1919 [148]) finds it “interesting that Erasmus in EpistApol 10.” Cf. app. Imit., Trans., etc.

From his owne hand, without a Co-adiutor, / Nouice, Iorney-man, or Tutor (369–70) ATTWATER (1934 [220]): “... this claim to have written his masterpiece so quickly without assistance emphasises a dominant condition of work in the Eliz. theatre and a resulting practice.” WHITE (1935 [141]): “the assertion ... only means that this play is not a collaboration such as EastHo.”

Co-adiutor (369) FLEY (1891 [1:373]): “A most interesting passage in the Prologue shows how joint plays were written”: rpt. REA (1919 [148]), H&S (1950 [9:687-88]). FLEY (ibid.) defines “coadiutor” as “the second hand ... where the authors had equal powers each over his own share of the play, as in the Beaumont and Fletcher series.” H&S (ibid.) add that “Sej had been originally written in this way.” KERNAN (1962 [207–8]): “Eliz. playing companies were repertory companies requiring vast numbers of plays. Plays were thus usually treated as mere commodities an were often written by factory methods. The various forms which this method could take are referred to in this list: coadjutor, a co-writer who wrote part of a play, as J wrote part of EastHo.” KERNAN further notes: “In this passage, and throughout the Epist. and the Prol., J is anxious to make it clear that he is a poet with the loftiest understanding of his art and not a mere writer of plays seeking to make a living by pleasing his audience. No doubt the length of J’s explanations was necessitated by the fact that the Elizabethans denied the elevated name of poet to mere playwrights, and that J, from the time he began working in the theater, about 1598–99, had been engaged in all the activities he now scorcs. At one time he was an actor and early in his career he worked as a play-patcher for the theatrical entrepreneur Philip Henslowe. He had undoubtedly engaged in personal quarrels with other playwrights, caricaturing them in his plays, and these satirical activities had recently been exposed in Dekker’s Satiromastix.” ADAMS (1979 [4n]) glosses the terms as “piece-worker”; DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “an equal partner”; HUTSON (1998 [490]): “fellow-writer”; PARKER (1999 [86n]): “an equal collaborator.”

Nouice (370) FLEY (1891 [1:373]): “where the second hand was learning his business.” KERNAN (1962 [207]): “an apprentice doing parts under a master’s direction”; “Richard Brome, later a dramatist in his own right, was J’s novice.”

Iorney-man (370) FLEY (1891 [1:373]): “where a part of the play was put out to an underwriter, as one act of The Arraignment of London was to Cyril Tourneur”; repr. REA (1919 [148]), H&S (1950 [9:688]). H&S note useful parallels in Randolph, The Jealous Lovers (1632), 3.5, Thomas Dekker, Newes from Hell (1606 [sig. H’]), and Ham 3.1.28–35. KERNAN (1962 [207]): “a specialist called in to repair plays and
Of his PLAYES worth, No eggs are broken;
Nor quaking Custards with fierce teeth affrighted,
Wherewith your route are so delighted;
Nor hales hee in a Gull, old ends reciting.

rewrite parts, as J wrote additions to The Spanish Tragedy.” ADAMS (1979 [4n]); “assistant.” DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “a literary hack.” PARKER (1999 [86n]): “more than a novice but less than a master, brought in for a limited responsibility.”

Tutor (370) pleay (1891 [1:373]): “the tutor, superintended and corrected, as in the early form of some of Sh.’s plays.” H&S (1950 [9:688]) refer to Lord Falkland’s description of J in JonVir 1.141–42 as one who “Vs’d not a tutoring hand his to direct, / But was sole workeman and sole Architect.” KERNAN (1962 [207]): “a guide and corrector of what others wrote—in later life J, whose reputation was by then assured, often performed this function for other poets and playwrights.” DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “[one who supervised and corrected another’s work.” PARKER (1999 [86n]) adds: “director.”

No eggs are broken (372) ADAMS (1979 [4n]): “Comic routines—thrown eggs or custard pies—which had popular success on the low Eliz. stage.” BEVINGTON (2000 [74]): “slapstick effects.”

Nor quaking Custards ... so delighted (373–74) WHALLEY (1756 [2:274n]): “This is still a sneer on his old antagonist Dekker, and so is what follows. In the vomit given to Crispinus, (i.e., Dekker) in Poet, 5.3.525, he throws up the words quaking custard. And these tricks were probably the practice of inferior poets, to collect an audience.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:168n]): “In Poet, Marston (not Dekker, as Whalley has it) throws up the words quaking custard. The allusion, however, is not to this, but to the burlesque representation of a city feast, of which, in J’s days, an immense custard always made a conspicuous part. With this custard a number of foolish tricks were played, at the Lord Mayor’s table, to the unspeakable delight of the guests; and some dramatic writer, perhaps, had transferred them, with improvements, to the stage, where they seem to have given equal pleasure”; repr. REA (1919 [148]); rpt. H&S (1950 [9:688]).

ADAMS (1979 [4n]), PARKER (1999 [86n]). CORNWALL (1838 [809]): “the large custard prepared for the Lord Mayor’s feast, into which it was a standing joke … for the Lord mayor’s fool to leap.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]): “The City custards continued to be famous down to Peter Pindar’s time [pseudonym of John Wolcot, 1738–1819]: ‘Rich as Dutch cargoes from the fragrant East, / Or Custard Pudding at a City Feast’”; repr. REA (1919 [148]). SMALL (1899 [60n]) acknowledges that “quaking custard” may allude to Marston’s part in Poet, “But the phrase seems to have been common, and a stock matter of ridicule,” as in the clown’s song in the anon. Wily Beguiled. SCHELLING (1910 [1:629]): “rf. AA’sWeA 2.5.37.” REA (1919 [148–49]) notes a parallel reference to the “custard” in DevAss, 1.1.97. H&S (1950 [9:688]) also note that “the epithet quaking is from Marston, particularly his Scourge of Villainy (1599), Sat. 2.4: ‘Let custards quake, my rage must freely run’; PARKER (1999 [86n]) extends the possible associations J might have had in mind: “I seems to mean physical force exploiting cowardice (Eng. children still jeer ‘cowardly custard’).” BEVINGTON (2000 [74]): “the equivalent of a pie thrown somebody’s face to get a quick laugh. J will have none of this gratuitous crowd-pleasing horseplay.”

with fierce teeth affrighted (373) Reviewing the source of this passage in Marston’s Scourge of Villainy, KERNAN (1962 [208]) concludes that “it is difficult to see how a custard can be ‘with fierce teeth affrighted.’” Marston writes, ‘Let custards quake, my rage must freely run,’ and the word ‘Custards’ refers to the bumbling fools whom he is prepared to attack in his fierce satiric style. J in his Poet, where he objects to the outlandish style of the verse satirists, makes Crispinus (Marston) the false poet vomit up this term along with a number of others (5.3.525ff.). In 1599, when the further printing of verse satire was forbidden, Marston carried his satiric style to the theater, where for a number of years his dramatic satirists [sic] proceeded with “fierce teeth” to frighten “quaking custards.” It is, I believe, such satiric plays as Marston’s Histriomastix and The Malcontent that J is referring to here.”


hales hee in a Gull, old ends reciting (375) GIFFORD (1816 [3:168–69n]): “I suspect that J’s ‘taxing’ did not always ‘fly like a wild goose, unclaimed of any man’; yet I cannot pretend to guess at the objects of his present satire. Whalley observes, in the margin of his copy, that Marston is probably meant by the ‘reciter of old ends’; and it must be granted that they abound, as he says, in the Malcontent. The Malcontent,
To flout gappes in his loose writing;
With such a deal of monstrous, and forc’d action:
As might make Bethlem a faction:

Nor made he his PLAY, for jests, stolen from each Table,
But makes jests to fit his Fable.

And, so presents quick Comedy, refined,

however, which was inscribed to J, has no ‘gull’ amongst its characters; who are all equally liberal of old ends, and all equally oracular. In those days the town swarmed with writers for the stage; and we may collect from various sources, that there was no incident so extravagant and ridiculous, which some or other of them did not venture to adopt.” H&S (1950 [9:688]) reject Whalley’s identification of Marston and The Malcontent here, despite its “some fifty couplets, proverbial especially,” and instead recommend that “his Parasitaster, acted in 1604, would suit better; the gull would be Gonzago, who has been dubbed “an over-coloured Polonius.”” DUTTON (1983 [141]): “All the evidence … suggests that the figure of Crispinus in Poet is a satirical portrait of the poet and playwright, John Marston; not only does Crispinus use inflated language and neologism associated with Marston, but we even have J’s own admission to Drummond, ConvDrum, that he ‘wrote his Poet on him.’ It simply will not do in this case for J to claim that he depicted vice and that it is Marston’s hard luck of the cap fits.” PARKER (1999 [86n]): “J may have had Marston specifically in mind, as Whalley suggests, but his point is a general, not a specific, one.”

Gull (375)

KERNAN (1962 [36n]): “simple dupe.” ADAMS (1979 [4n]): “buffoon.” PARKER (1999 [86n]): “one who swallows anything (from gull, ‘to swallow or gorge’), specially a foolish imitator.”

old ends reciting (375)


forc’d (377)

PARKER (1999 [86n]): “strained, distorted, unnatural.” HUTSON (1998 [492]): “(a) obligatory; (b) clumsy, inept.”

make Bethlem a faction (378)

REA (1919 [149]) glosses this line as “add a new disorderly party to Bedlam,” and quotes a lengthy passage from John Stow, Annals, 1:164–65, on the history of St. Mary of Bethlehem in London. H&S (1950 [9:688]): “make the inmates of Bedlam a set of your supporters. The reference is to the ‘monstrous and forc’d action’ Sh. had criticized in Ham, 3.1, players who had neither the accent ‘nor gait of Christian, pagan, nor man,’ imitating humanity abominably and seeming as if ‘some of nature’s journeymen’ had made them.” CORRIGAN (1961 [3n]): “disrupt Bedlam (the famous madhouse at Bethlehem Green).” KERNAN (1962 [36n]) supplies the gloss “add a new party to the madhouse”; and properly notes “Bedlam” as “St. Mary of Bethlehem, a religious institution which became the London insane asylum,” rpt. ADAMS (1979 [4n]) and PARKER (1999 [87n]), who suggests a series of possible glosses: “(a) as might make a disturbance (even) in Bedlam; (b) as might add a new group to Bedlam; (c) as might enlist the support of Bedlam.”

Nor made he his PLAY, for jests, stolen from each Table / But makes jests to fit his Fable (379–80)

REA (1919 [149–50]): “He did not collect jests and then write a play to include them, but rather planned his play first, then invented his jests to fit it.” REA (1919 [149]): cf. CynRev Ind.183–89. WHITE (1935 [142]): “[J] denies that [Volpe] is a patchwork of borrowed trifles.” H&S (1950 [9:688]) refer to Dixe 1819–20, wherein “J noted as a blot on contemporary comedy ‘the forcing in of jests.”” BEVINGTON (2000 [74]): “his jests will … be integral to the plot and dramatic composition.” Though possibly overlooked by the eds., J may have intended to add his own defensive retort to Dekker, Satyromastix 5.2.195–97.

from each Table (379)

CORNWALL (1838 [812]), Tables, table-book: “a pocket-book for making memoranda.” KERNAN (1962 [208]) further notes that “the comparison is to scraps stolen from a feast. The Eliz. playwright was notorious for lifting material from the classics and from his contemporaries. Since no playwright borrowed from the classics more readily than J—the present play is a tissue of lines and situations borrowed from every comic writer from Aristophanes to Erasmus—he must have in mind some distinction between the writer who simply lifts whole passages and the writer, like himself, who reworks

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As best Criticks have design'd,
The Lawes of Time, Place, Persons he observeth,
From no needfull Rule he swereth,
All gall, and coppresse, from his inke, he drayneth,
One lie, a little fall remaineth;
Wherewith, hee'll rub your cheekes, till (red with laughter)
They shall looke fresh, a weake after.

and recombines the old material into a new play," PARKER (1999 [87n]) glosses the phrase as "both 'leftovers from others' feasts' and, more specifically, 'other men's table talk.'"

quick (381) KERNAN (1962 [37n]): "lively."

As best Criticks have design'd (382) Namely Aristotle and Horace. DENNIS (1720 [2:196]) cites J as an authority and quotes these and the preceding three lines to support his argument that the best drama will always adhere to its established rules. REA (1919 [150]) cites J's comments on this topic from Disc 2508–11. REA also points out areas of contradiction within J's thought, as in Disc 2095–97.

designed (382) PARKER (1999 [87n]): "designated, pointed out."

The Lawes of Time, Place, Persons he observeth (383) KERNAN (1962 [208]), ADAMS (1979 [4n]), and PARKER (1919 [87n]) remark upon the pervasive influence of those 16th-c. It. critics who codified the theories of Aristotle's Poetics into a series of dramatic regulations. On J's general adherence to the Unity of Time, REA (1919 [150]) recommends BULAND (1912), for its discussion of elapsed time in the action of J's comedies, and determination that the action of Volp involves less than one day. REA (1919 [150]) also cites testimony from MAYNE (1638). KERNAN (1962 [208]): "the law of time limited stage time to 24 hours. ADAMS (1979 [4n]): "The so-called Aristotelean unities, actually imposed as prescripts by the It. Ren. critics Castelvetro and Scaliger, placed limits of time and place on a dramatic action." PARKER (1919 [87]) cites J's parameters for the Unity of Time from Disc 2746: "that it exceed not the compass of one Day."

Concerning the Law of Place, KERNAN (1962 [208]): "the law of place limited stage action to an area which could be realistically traveled in the space of time allowed." Concerning the Law of Persons, KERNAN (1962 [208]): "the law of persons limited growth and change in characters to an amount that could realistically occur in twenty-four hours"; ADAMS (1979 [4n]) recognizes that "the limitation on persons was less strict." DONALDSON (1985 [619]): "That the represented action should occur on the same day in the same place; that characters be not of high rank, and be consistent to type." PARKER (1919 [87]) adds that such a law "is presumably Horace's demand for 'decorum,' meaning both the consistent typing of individual characters (reflected in J's own theory of 'humours') and the exclusion of high-born or tragic characters from comedy."

To testify to J's reputation as a stickler for these dramatic rules, esp. where he castsigates his contemporaries, PARKER (1999 [87n]): cf. EMI Prol., and MagLad 1.chorus.16–24. Also see app. Init., Trans., etc. and app. Plot, s.v. "The Unities."

From no needfull Rule he swereth ... (384) REA (1919 [150]): "The word needful is to be noted. J does not believe in blind obedience to rules." Cf. Disc, 2095–97; 2555–57. KERNAN (1962 [208]): "Obviously the average Eliz. playwright paid no attention to these 'laws,' but J adhered to them rather closely. His qualification in line [384], 'needful rule,' suggests his basic attitude toward the 'laws.'" PARKER (1999 [87n]): "J's main divergence from classical precept is his use of multiple plot (cf. Disc 2751–63), a neoclassical 'law' he carefully omits from line 31 [383]." Cf. app. Dates and Contexts.

All gall, and coppresse, from his inke, he drayneth ... (385) NEILSON (1911 [286n]) coppresse: "green vitriol, used in making ink." REA (1919 [151]) cites parallel references to coppresse in Horace, Sat 1.4.100–3, and to gall in Plautus, Cistellaria 69 ("felle"), noting that "it is easy to forget that both gall and coppresse are actually used for making ink. Fig., they represent respectively bitterness and poisonous malignity," KERNAN (1962 [37n]): coppresse, "an acid." ADAMS (1979 [5n]): "both are corrosive and bitter to the taste." DONALDSON (1985 [619]): "both bitter, both used in ink-making, as 'salt' [386] (i.e., 'wit') is not." PARKER (1999 [87n]): "(a) oak-apple and vitriol (iron sulphate), both used in the manufacture of ink; (b) fig., rancour and bitterness." BEVINGTON (2000 [74]): "i.e., rancor and vitriol." Also rf. n. 128.
THE FOXE.

ACT, I. SCENE. I.

VOLPONE. MOSCA.

Good morning to the Day; and, next, my Gold:
Open the shrine, that I may see my Saint.
Hayle the worlds soule, and mine. More glad then is

Onelie, a little salt remaineth ... They shall looke fresh, a weke after (386–88)] Cf. MAYNE (1638), lines 101–2: "'Tis true thou hadst some sharpnesse, but thy salt / Serv'd but with pleasure to reforme the fault...." Following UPTON (3–4), most eds. note J's debt to Horace, Sat 1.10.3–4; "This is a latinism borrowed from Horace: 'At idem quod sale multo / urbem defruicuit, charta laudatur eadem'" ["And yet on the self-same page the self-same poet (i.e., Lucilius) is praised because he rubbed the city down with much salt" (Fairclough, trans., 115)]; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:169n]), PARKER (1999 [87n]). CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]) adds that "Nothing, to our present ideas, can be clumsier than J's use of the word rub in this place. Horace's defruicuit multo sale is translated by COOPER (1565), 'very pleasantly taunted.'" REA (1919 [151]) returns to his n. on J's possible debt here to Erasmus' trans. of Lucian. Also, "Cunningham has a rather strange note.... If rub is clumsy, then Horace's defruicuit is clumsy too. But why should there be any objection to either word? Salt is common in both Lat. and Eliz. literature for wit. [...] Salt is merely stinging—and stimulating. Dryden has a passage that may be reminiscent of this one, in the dedication of his trans. of Juvenal and Persius." H&S (1950 [9:688]): "Samuel Butler, Characters and Passages from Note-Books (1908, ed. Waller [407]): 'Ben Johnson in saying (in one of his Prologues) All Gall and Coprace from his Inke he drayneth, only a little Salt remaineth &c., would in these more Censorious times be chargd with a kinde of Nonsense, for though Gall and Coprace be used in Inke Salt never was.'" H&S also note a parallel passage in HonWales 291–92. Cf. app. Contexts. ADAMS (1979 [5n]): "Salt, though not an ingredient of ink, is a classical metaphor for wit, that which gives flavor to speech or writing." PARKER (1999 [87n]): "(a) sediment (OED 4a); (b) pungent wit (Lat. salt)."

laughter. / ... after (387–88)] PARKER (1999 [87n]) identifies similar rhymes at [559–60]; EntAlt 242–43; EntHigh 259–60; HonWales 291–92; and Epig 73.7–8.

ACT, I. SCENE 1 | VOLPONE. MOSCA. (390–91) The play's commentators and editors have applied a general range of stage descriptions and directions to the opening scene. UPTON (1749 [4]): "The scene is room in Volpone's house." GIFFORD (1816 [3:170]): "A Room in Volpone's House [Enter VOLPONE and MOSCA]."

NIELSON (1911 [286; 286n]): adds the SDS "[Enter]" and the note, "A room in Volpone's house." KERNAN (1962 [38]): "[Volpone's house]." DONALDSON (1985 [7]): "[Volpone's house] [Enter VOLPONE and MOSCA];" HUTSON (1998 [222]): "[Enter VOLPONE and MOSCA];" PARKER (1999 [88; 88n]) adds the SD "[Enter] MOSCA [and discovers] VOLPONE [in his bed]," together with the note that "Volpone's bed would probably be a four-poster on the main stage whose curtains Mosca would open; in modern productions he often opens window curtains too, letting in the sunlight that Volpone compares to his gold." Regarding J's use of massed entries and the absence of initial speech prefixes with each scene, PARKER (1999 [88n]) notes: "J never provides a speech ascription for the first speech in a scene, but usually puts the speaker first in his list of characters at the beginning of the scene."

Good morning to the Day (392)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]): "Against this is written, in a contemporary hand, in the margin of my copy of the 1640 folio, 'Supposed to be writ by William Earle of Derby, who gave the author his education';" rpt. REA (1919 [151]), who adds: "The opening lines of this scene reminded BRADBROOK (1957 [146–47]) of Donne's aubade, 'The Sunne Rising.'" SD (392) PARKER (1999 [88]) inserts the SD "[Rising.]" prior to Volpone's opening words.
The teeming earth, to see the longd-for Sunne

Peepe through the horns of the Celestial Ram,

Open the shrine that I may see my Saint (393) PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [47n]): “Volpone begins the play with a mock prayer that parodies the traditional Christian matins.”

Open the shrine ... (393 + SD) UPTON (1749 [4]): “He speaks to Mosca, his servant or parasite, who opens a curtain, and discovers Volpone’s treasure, being chiefly presents from those who strove to be his heir”; repr. WHALLEY (1756 [2:275n]). REA (1919 [151]): “Probably the curtains shutting off the inner stage are her drawn aside, and Volpone’s treasure-house revealed. There is no reason to suppose that the scene thus disclosed was lacking in splendor and gorgeousness, when we remember that the present play was produced at the same period as J’s magnificent court-masques. Volpone’s couch, with its rich hangings, to which he later retires, is part of this shrine revealed on the inner stage. Possibly with the first line of the scene, immediately on the entrance of Volpone and Mosca, another curtain was drawn back, supposedly to let in the daylight through a window; this seems to me to be the implication of the first line, taken in connection with the second. The play that begins thus with a blaze of morning light on gold and jewels is to end fittingly in the gathering dusk of the court-scene”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:689]). ADAMS (1979 [5n]): “There is no need to posit an inner stage for this: any alcove or discovery space would do.”

GIFFORD (1816 [3:170n]), after Volpone’s “see my Saint,” adds the SD: “Mosca withdraws the curtain, and discovers piles of gold, plate, jewels, &c.”; rpt. NEILSON (1911 [286]), GASSNER (1960 [205]), ADAMS (1979 [5]), HARP (2001 [5]). KERNAN (1962 [38]) here inserts SD “[Mosca opens a curtain disclosing piles of gold.]” DONALDSON (1985 [7]): “[Mosca reveals the treasure].” PARKER (1999 [88n]): “[Mosca draws a curtain to disclose Volpone’s treasure].”

my Saint (393) PARKER (1999 [88n]): “The blasphemous worship of gold perverts both Christian matins and the Pythagorean belief that the first act of the day should be directed to the Highest Ideal of which the mind is cognizant [see PYTHAGORAS (1929 [23])]. For an element of self-conscious parody in it, see PARKER 1999 [34]; and cf. the less complex invocation to gold of Jacques de Prie in CaseAlt and the miser’s praise of Pecunia in StapNews 2.1.35–44.”

Hayle the worlds soule, and mine (394) REA (1919 [151–52]): “The pun on sol and soul must not be overlooked. The world’s soul is the sun; Volpone’s soul is gold.” Cf. John Bishop, Marrow of Astrology (1688). Also, “Gold is, in alchemical doctrine, equivalent to the sun, and the astronomical symbol for the sun is used to denote gold. Cf. Chaucer, CanYeo 826: ‘Sol gold is.’” ADAMS (1979 [5n]): “Volpone means the soul of the universe and his own immortal essence, both identified with gold”; rpt. HARP (2001 [5n]). DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “in Platonic and Neoplatonic thought, the divine force animating the universe, Parker & Bevington (1999 [47n]): “(1) the sun (Lat. sol); (2) gold as symbolic of the sun, here worshipped as a deity.” PARKER (1999 [88–89n]): “(a) the sun (punning on ‘sol’), in contrast to the gold that is his own soul; but possibly (b) gold in both cases (cf. 2639–40); in alchemy gold was symbolized by the sun and called the ‘son of Sol’ (cf. 401). Volpone is here appropriating Plato’s anima mundi (Timaeus), the source of all life; cf. MasBeau 374.”

teeming (395) KERNAN (1962 [38n]): “filled with life and ready to bear.”

Peepe through the horns of the Celestial Ram (396) Commonly identified by the editors as a reference to the sun’s springtime alignment with the constellation of Ares, “the celestial ram” of the zodiac, which traditionally coincides with the vernal equinox and the calendar date of 21 March. R. WRIGHT & LAMAR (1970 [26n]); WILKES (1982 [3:3n]); DONALDSON (1985 [619]); PARKER (1999 [89n]). KERNAN (1962 [209]) adds “from this time the ‘teeming’ earth can look forward to increasing light, warmth, and growth,” JAMIESON (1966 [464]) adds “when the ‘teeming earth’ needs sunshine.” HALIO (1968 [142]) adds “the beginning of spring, thus bringing joy to the awakening fertile earth.” ADAMS (1979 [5n]): “The sun peeps through the horns of the constellation ‘Ram’ in the zodiac about the middle of April; cf. Chaucer at the opening of CantTales 5–8”; rpt. HARP (2001 [5n]). PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [47n]): “The sign of Aries in the zodiac, which the sun supposedly enters on 21 March, the vernal equinox, to begin the spring season. (A centuries-long procession of the calendar means that this is no longer strictly accurate).”
Am I, to view thy splendor, darkening his:
That lying here, amongst my other hoordes,
Shew'st like a flame, by night; or like the Day
Strooke out of Chaos, when all darkness fled
Vnto the center. O thou Sonne of Sol,
(But brighter then thy father) let me kisse,
With adoration, thee, and euery rehque
Of sacred treasure, in this blessed roome.
Well did wise Poets, by thy glorious name,
Title that age, which they would have the best;
Thou being the best of things: and far transcending
All stile of joy, in children, parents, friends,
Or any other waking dreame on earth.

They should haue giu’n her twenty thousand Cupids;

Commonly identified by the play’s editors as an allusion to the classical Golden Age as described in Ovid, Met 1.89–112, 15.96ff., and other classical authors. REA (1919 [152]) extends the range of J’s possible sources from Ovid to Seneca and Erasmus, which most tend to follow. H&S (1950 [9:689]) quote Seneca, Epist 115.12, 13; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [619]), with Epist 115.12–14. COOK (1962 [190]): “the imaginary age during which mankind was supposed, according to Greek and Roman poetry, to have lived untroubled, happy and free.” KERNAN (1962 [209]): “a mythical golden age when men lived simpler and more honest lives, and which according to the myth, was distinguished by its lack of precious metals. The discovery of gold and jewels always brings about the transition from the age of gold to the ages of bronze, silver, and, at last, iron. Volpone completely misunderstands the metaphorical meaning of ‘gold’ in the traditional term.” DONALDSON (1985 [619]; yet the Golden Age, as described by Ovid and other ‘wise poets,’ lacked gold.

OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “a mythical time when life was perfect, and men needed no laws or labour to regulate their days.” PARKER (1999 [89n]): “i.e., the mythical Golden Age, when there was no need of precious metals, labour, travel, laws, or judges, and man was vegetarian”; rpt. PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]). HARP (2001 [6n]): “the first and best of the four classical ages; the others were the ages of silver, bronze, and iron.”

KERNAN (1962 [39n]): “argue to be.”

Thou being the best of things … (407–12) Commentators and editors commonly note J’s various debts to classical authors through the following lines, particularly Euripides, Donae; Seneca, Epist 115.12–14; and Athenaeus, Deip. 4.159; they differ in their identification of his immediate sources. OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “an ironic foreshadowing of the selfish pursuit of gold that destroys all the characters’ happiness by the play’s end.” PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “Gold is alchemically the most perfect of all metals, but this materialism foreshadows all the characters’ downfalls at the play’s end.” Cf. app. Sources.

far transcending / All stile of joy, in children (407–8) H&S (1950 [9:689]): “J’s rendering gains in dramatic point from the childlessness of Volpone.”

KERNAN (1962 [39n]): “form.” OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “legal, official, or honorific title or endowment; method or custom of performing actions or functions, especially one sanctioned by usage or law.” PARKER (1999 [90n]): “(a) kind; (b) fashion, mode. (It would be characteristic of Volpone to see joy in terms of aesthetic and personal superiority.)” PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]) add “title.”

Thy looke when they to Venus did ascribe … (410–12) Most editors follow WHALLEY (1756 [2:276n]), who identifies the reference to Venus as “alluding to the epitaph given to her by the Gr. and Lat. poets, Χιυετ Αφροδιτη, and venus aurea,” i.e., Homer’s “golden Aphrodite” (Odyssey 8.337) and the “golden Venus” of Ovid, Heroides 16.35 and Virgil, Aeneid 10.16. REA (1919 [153]) insists that J owes a primary debt to Erasmus, MorEnc 15; PARKER (1999 [90n]) follows REA in nominating Erasmus as J’s most immediate source. Cf. app. Sources.

They should haue giu’n her twenty thousand Cupids (411) REA (1919 [154]): “Numerous Cupids, instead of one, as attendants on Venus are not uncommon in the art and literature of the Alexandrine period and later.” CREASER (1978 [212]): “Volpone says that poets who associated Venus with something as potent as gold should not have made her mother only one child.” ADAMS (1979 [5n]): “Volpone is not satisfied with minting a single golden boy [i.e., Cupid]; he wants a lot of them”; rpt. HARP (2001 [6n]).
Such are thy beauties, and our loves. Deare Saint,
Riches, the dombe God, that giu’st all men tongues;
That canst doe naught, and yet mak’st men doe all things;

The price of soules; euen hell, with thee to boote,
Is made worth heauen. Thou art vertue, fame,
Honor, and all things else. Who can get thee
He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise—

M O S. And what he will Sir. Riches are in fortune

A greater good, then wisedome is in nature.

OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “Gold’s beauty generates more potent and acquisitive pleasures than mere sexual or procreative bliss (Venus). This ‘cupidity’ is inordinate lust for wealth.” PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “i.e., an inordinate ‘cupidity’ for wealth, not just one Cupid representing sexual love.” Cf. app. Sources, Analogues, and Influences.

our loves (412) PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “our adoration of gold.”
the dombe God, that giu’st all men tongues (413) REA (1919 [154]): “Plutus was, according to some accounts, blind; I do not know of any case in which he is represented as dumb.” Most editors follow Rea’s citation of the old proverb “silence is golden”; rf. KERNAN (1962 [39, n22]); WILKES (1982 [3:3n]); OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]). DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “cf. TimAlh 4.3.386.” PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “proverbially, silence is golden, yet gold prompts everyone to be voluble in its praise.”

The price of soules; euen hell, with thee to boote, / Is made worth heauen (415-16) DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “Christians are ‘bought with a price’ (1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23), namely, the sacrifice of Christ, sold by Judas for thirty pieces of silver.” OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “Pure gold represents Christ’s sacrifice (see 1 Cor 6:20).” PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “i.e., the price of everlasting damnation would not be too much to pay for the ‘heaven’ of wealth when you are added into the bargain. Wealth thus replaces Christ’s sacrifice, ‘the price of souls.’”

to boote (412) COOK (1962 [190]): “as part of the bargain.” WRIGHT & LAMAR (1970 [26n]): “in addition.” CREASER (1978 [212]): “into the bargain.” OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “as prize (or booty).”

Thou art vertue, fame, / Honor, and all things else. Who can get thee / He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise (416-18) UPTON (1749 [5]) identified this passage as a trans. of Horace, Sat 2.3.94–98; repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:170–71n]), H&S (1950 [9:689]). REA (1919 [154]) agrees with Upton that “I undoubtedly is translating this passage; but Upton failed to see that he was reminded of it by the following lines from Lucian, Dream (Erasmus, trans.),” DONALDSON (1985 [619]: “cf. UV 3.5ff.” PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “i.e., with wealth one can buy a reputation for virtue and honor.” Cf. app. Imit. & Trans.

Who (417) PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “any person who.”
shall be (418) PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [48n]): “will be accounted.”

what (419) KERNAN (1962 [39n]): “whatever.”

Riches are in fortune / A greater good, then wisedome is in nature (419–20) REA (1919 [154]): “Mosca shows the character of the true parasite in this first speech, by chiming in with what Volpone is saying. I, like the Gr. and Roman dramatists, is careful to introduce his characters to us either before their entry or by their first speech, as here in the case of both Volpone and Mosca. This introductory scene is admirable in its management in every way.” CREASER (1978 [212]): “a distinction between the gifts of nature (qualities of mind and body) and those of fortune (wealth and position) was a commonplace of med. and Ren. lit. (cf. AYLJ 2.2.28ff.). Mosca reverses Proverbs 16:16: ‘How much better it is to get wisdom than gold!’” repr. DONALDSON (1985 [619]). PARKER & BEVINGTON (1999 [49n]): “i.e., to achieve riches through good luck is better than to be naturally wise.”

fortune (419) OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): “luck; also position or prosperity in life. Mosca is philosophically a gambler.”
VOLP. True, my beloved Mosca. Yet, I glory
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
Then in the glad possession; since I gaine
No common way: I use no trade, no venter;
I wound no earth with plow-shares; fat no beasts
To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
Oyle, corne, or men, to grinde 'hem into poulder;
I blow no subtil glass; expose no shippes

**cunning** (422) CORNWALL (1838 [809]): "knowing." SCHELLING (1910 [1:629]): "skillful." OSTOVICH (1997 [77n]): "clever, skilled; perhaps suggesting the conjuring power of a cunningman, or a wizard."

**purchase** (422) CORNWALL (1838 [812]): "a cant term for goods stolen." CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]): "Purchase, as readers of Shakespeare know, was a cant term among thieves for the plunder they acquired, also the act of acquiring it. It is frequently used by J. See 4:150 and 5:86, in both which places Gifford has a note." Repr. REA (1919 [154]). H&S (1950 [9:689]): "winning, acquisition. Cf. EMI 2.5.119: 'purchast.'"

**gaine** (423) KERNAN (1962 [39n]): "make money in."

**common** (424) KERNAN (1962 [39n]): "ordinary." CREASER (1978 [212]): "commonplace."

**I vse no trade, no venter** (424ff) JAMIESON (1966 [464]): "Volpone here lists the various new capitalist and mercantile practices which he himself scorns, including speculative ventures."

**fat no beasts** (425) REA (1919 [154]): "The metre shows that the superfluous I found before fat in some of the copies, us a mere misprint, corrected in the better copies."

**shambles** (426) KERNAN (1962 [39n]): "slaughterhouse."

**no mills for iron, / Oyle, corne, or men, to grinde 'hem into poulder ...** (426-27) REA (1919 [154-55]): "The sentence is rather puzzling. How could oil or iron be ground into powder? Perhaps 'hem' refers only to men; cf. Nevilne 4.4.268: 'His mills, to grind seruants into powder.'" H&S (1950 [9:689]) add: "[(t)he point of the allusion is the waste of timber; see Arthur Standish, The Commons Complaint (1611) and his New Directions of Experience ... for the Planting of Timber And Firewood (1613 [4]): 'the making of Iron and Glass, hath beene, & is the greatest decay of Woods.'"

**pouder** (427) BAMBOROUGH (1968 [57n]): "powder; I preferred this spelling (Lat. pulvis)."

**corne** (427) KERNAN (1962 [39n]): "grain."

**subtil glasse** (428) WHALLEY (1756 [2:276n]): "Venice, where the scene is laid, being famous for its manufactures in glass;" repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:172n]), who adds to Venice the "neighboring island of Murano." H&S (1950 [9:689]), without attribution to Gifford: "Venice, where the scene is laid, [and the neighboring island of Murano,] being famous for [their] manufactures in glass." [H&S = "manufacture of
To threatenings of the furrow-faced sea;

I turne no moneys, in the publike banke;

Nor vsure priuate. M o s . No Sir, nor deouore

Soft prodigails. You shall ha' some will swallow

A melting heire, as glibly, as your Dutch

Will pills of butter, and nêre purge for't;

glass.”] REA (1919 [155]): cf. Fynes Moryson, Itinerary (1617), 1:193: “And howsoever glasse be common
with us on this side of the Alpes, yet it is certaine that the glasse makers of Venice dwelling in the Island Murano, have a more noble matter, and thereof make much better glasse than we can.” ADAMS (1979 [6n]): “Glass was a Venetian specialty, in J’s day as now, but in England it was just staring to be used for glazing”; rpt. HARP (2001 [6n]). DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “intricate. Venetian glass was famous.”


expose no ships / To threatenings of the furrow-faced sea (428-29) ADAMS (1979 [6n]) notes that “in Venice ... long voyages were common mercantile practice”; rpt. HARP (2001 [6n]).


I turne no moneys, in the publike banke (430) ADAMS (1979 [6n]): “take no interest Banking and
money-lending were more important in Venice, where long voyages were common mercantile practice, than in England”; HARP (2001 [6n]).

turne (430) KERNAN (1962 [40n]): “to keep passing in a course of exchange or traffic.” DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “exchange.”

vsure priuate (431) REA (1919 [155]) notes that “usure private” is “[p]robably the object of in, not of the verb turne; this makes usure priuate correspond in construction with publike banke. H&S (1950 [9:690]) regard “usure” as “a by-form of ‘usury.’” HOPPER & LAHEY (1959 [56n]): “no private usury or making personal loans at interest.” KERNAN (1962 [40n]) glosses “private” as “privately.” KERNAN (1962 [209]): “Volpone refers here to the practice of men loaning money at exorbitant rates to individuals in need, particularly to young men of fashion living beyond their means, the “soft prodigals” of [the next line]. This entire passage through [TLN 457] is a catalogue of the various means by which the growing Eliz. mercantile class made their fortunes. Although Volpone disdains these ‘common’ ways of making money, J is not setting all these business practices up as honest ways of life. Many of them are the comparatively new methods of the entrepreneur who, in contrast to the medieval craftsmen, made money by risking money rather than by making a product and then selling it. For a full description of the new economic practices J refers to here and the older medieval practices which are being silently invoked as a standard, see KNIGHTS (1937).” WRIGHT & LAMAR (1970 [28n]): “engage in moneylending.”

priuate (431) HUTSON (1998 [495]): “personal interest.”

deuoure / Soft prodigals ... melting heire (431-33) REA (1919 [155]), per HOLT (1905): cf. John Donne’s Satire 2, 79–80: “And spying heirs melting with luxury, / Satan will not joy at their sins as he.” REA also points toward a parallel passage in StapNews: “Fit. A drench of sack / At a good tavern, and a fine fresh pullet, / Would cure him. / Lick. Nothing but a young heir in white-broth.” KERNAN (1962 [40n]) glosses “prodigals” as “easy spendthrifts.” ADAMS (1979 [6n]): “Loan-sharks swallowed up heirs by lending them money at exorbitant rates against their future inheritance.”

as glibly, as your Dutch / Will pills of butter (433-34) REA (1919 [155]): cf. Fynes Morrison, Itinerary (1617), 3:59: “Touching this peoples diet. Butter is the first and last dish at the Table, whereof they make all saccues, especially for fish, and thareupon by strangers they are merrily called Butter-mouths. They ... passing in boates from City to City for trade carry with them cheese, and boxes of butter for their foode, whereupon in like sort strangers call them Butter boxes, and nothing is more ordinary then for Citizens of good accompt and wealth to sit at their dores, (even dwelling in the market place) holding in their hands, and eating a great lump of bread and butter with a lunchen of cheese.” Rpt. H&S (1950 [9:373-74]), who also cross-reference their note to the folio version of EMI 3.4.42–44, “... they are of a Flemish breed, I am
Teare forth the fathers of poore families
Out of their beds, and coffin them, alioe,
In some kinde, clasping prison, where their bones
May be forth-comming, when the flesh is rotten:
But your sweet nature doth abhorre these courses;

You loath, the widdowes, or the orphans tears
Should washe your pauements; or their pityous cries
Ring in your roofes: and beate the ayre, for vengeance.

V O L P. Right, Mosca, I do loath it. M O S. And besides, Sir,

You are not like a thresher, that doth stand

With a huge flaille, watching a heape of corne,
And, hungry, dares not taste the smallest graine,
But feedes on mallowes, and such bitter herbes;
Nor like the merchant, who hath fill'd his vaults
With Romagnía, and rich Candian wines,
Yet drinks the lees of Lombards vinegar:
You will not lie in straw, whilst mothes, and wormes
Feed on your sumptuous hangings, and soft beds.
You know the vse of riches, and dare giue, now,
From that bright heape, to mee, your poore observer,
Or to your Dwarfre, or your Hermaphrodite,
Your Eunuch, or what other household-trifle
Your pleasure allows maintenance. V O L P. Hold thee, Mosca,
Take of my hand; thou strik'st on truth, in all:
And they are enuious, terme thee Parasite.

Call forth my Dwarf, my Eunuch, and my Foole,
And let 'hem make me sport. What should I do,
But cocker vp my Genius, and liue free
To all delights, my fortune calls me too?
I have no wife, no parent, childe, alie, allie,

To give my substance to; but whom I make,
Must be my heyre: and this makes men observe me.

This draws newe clients, dayly, to my house,

they are enuious, terme thee Parasite (459)] REA (1919 [156]): “And yet every sentence of Mosca’s has shown him a true parasite, of the type so often described in Latin literature! Mosca’s shrewdness and ability to deceive even Volpone himself are indicated clearly in this first scene.”

terme (459)] KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “that term.”

SD (461)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:173]) inserts the SD “[Exit Mos.”] after Volpone’s “let ‘hem make me sport”’


Genius (462)] KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “innate talents.” Also, KERNAN (1962 [6; 6n]): “The word ‘genius’ is not used here in the restricted modern sense of ‘extraordinary ability,’ but in the Latin sense of ‘essential spirit’ or ‘that fundamental quality which makes a thing what it is,’ i.e. soul. For Volpone, the essence of man is, then, the exercise of cunning in order to gain wealth, and the proper life for a man is to nurture, ‘cocke up,’ this essential power.” “Volpone’s ‘cocke up my genius’ is very close to Iago’s declaration of his fundamental purpose, ‘to plume up my will’ (Oth 1.3.393).” HUTSON (1998 [492]): “attendant spirit.”

whom I make (465)] KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “whomever I designate.”

observe (466)] KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “be obsequious to.” HUTSON (1998 [494]): “treat with obsequious reverence.”

but whom I make, / Must be my heyre: and this makes men observe me ... (465ff.)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:174n]), “I had Petronius, Satyr 124 in view: ‘... incidimus in turbam heredipetarum sciscitantium, quod genus hominum aut unde veniremus. Ex praeceptfo ergo consilli commannis exaggerata [verborum volubilitate] unde, aut qui essesum, haud dubie credentibus indicavimus. Qui statim opes suas summo cum certamine in Eumolpum congresserunt. [Certamin] omnes [heredipetae muneribus] gratiam [Eumolpi] sollicitant ...’ [‘we ... fell in with a crowd of fortune-hunters, who inquired what kind of men we were, and where we had come from. Then, as arranged by our common council, a torrent of ready words burst from us, and they gave easy credence to our account of ourselves and our country. They at once quarrelled fiercely in their eagerness to heap on their riches on Eumolpus. The fortune-hunters all competed to win Eumolpus’ favor with presents ...’] (Heseltine, trans., 323, 325).

clients (467)] KERNAN (1962 [209]): “Although Volpone uses the word in the general sense of ‘dependents,’ the word also looks back to the original Latin meaning: free men who, lacking Roman citizenship, placed themselves under the protection of a wealthy Roman who then became their ‘patron.’ Ideally the situation was one of mutual dependence and support, but under the Empire the arrangement degenerated into a nominal relationship between wealthy vanity on one side and servile, flattering poverty on the other. By the use of the word ‘clients’—and Mosca’s frequent use of the word ‘patron’—I evokes
Women, and men, of every sexe, and age,
That bring me presents, send me plate, coine, jewells,
With hope, that when I die, (which they expect
Each greedy minute) it shall then returne,
Ten-fold, vpon them; whilst some, couetous
Above the rest, seek to engrosse me, whole,
And counter-worke, the one, vnto the other,

Contend in gifts, as they would seem, in loue:
All which I suffer, playing with their hopes,
And am content to coyne 'hem into proEt,
And looke on that; still, bearing them in hand,

Letting the cherry knock against their lips,
And, drawe it, by their mouths, and back againe. How now!


plate (469) KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “dishes and utensils made of silver or gold.”

engrosse (473) KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “to absorb entirely.” ADAMS (1979 [7n]): “An engrosser bought up an entire crop of grain, held it for hard times, then sold it at exorbitant prices”; rpt. HARP (2001 [8n]).

to (474) KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “against.”

as they would seem, in loue (475) KERNAN (1962 [41n]): “in order to try to show that they love me.”
suffer (476) KERNAN (1962 [42n]): “allow.”
bearing them in hand (479) GIFFORD (1816 [3:174n]): “i.e., flattering their hopes, keeping them in expectation. ‘You may remember,’ says archbishop King to Swift, ‘how we were borne in hand in my lord Pembroke’s time, that the Queen had passed the grant, &c.’ The phrase occurs perpetually in our old poets. Thus in BARRY (1611 [10:303]), 2.1: ‘Yet will I bear some dozen more in hand, / And make them all my gulls.’” H&S (1950 [9:690]) repr. Gifford’s quot. from Barry, and add the gloss “deluding with false hopes.” KERNAN (1962 [42n]): “leading them on.”

cherry knock against their lips, / And, drawe it, by their mouths, and back againe (480–81) H&S (1950 [9:691]): “An allusion to the game of chop-cherry or bob-cherry, in which one tries to catch with the teeth a suspended cherry. Cf. HERRICK (1648 [193]), ‘Chop-Cherry.’” ADAMS (1979 [7n]): “‘Chop-cherry’ is a country game in which a cherry hung from a string is dangled before a player who tries to catch it with his teeth.” DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “as in the game of bob-cherry”; rpt. HARP (2001 [8n]).

And, drawe it, by their mouths, and back againe (481) REA (1919 [156]): “The construction is hard; draw must be the infinitive depending on content in [477]; that is, parallel with coyne, looke, take, and looke. Drawing would seem more logical, in the same construction as bearing and letting.”

How now! (481) REA (1919 [156]) reprints HOLT (1905): “Volpone’s soliloquy is interrupted by the arrival of his creatures, Nano, Androgyno, and Castrone, whom Mosca summoned in obedience to his patron’s command. The words ‘How now!,’ an involuntary expression of surprise, properly belong in a separate line as Whalley prints them, for this as it stands is metrically too long.”
ACT. I. SCENE. 2.

NANO. ANDROGYNO. CASTRONE.
VOLPONE. MOSCA.

485 Now roome, for fresh Gamsters, who do will you to know,

They do bring you neither play, nor VnuiversH Show;

And therefore do intreat you, that whatsoever they rehearse,

May not fare a whit the worse, for the false pase of the verse.

If you wonder at this, you will wonder more, ere we paffe,

For know, here is inclos'd the Soule of Pithagoras,

That juggler diuine, as hereafter shall follow;

ACT. I SCENE. 2 (482-564)] For a full discussion of this scene, cf. app. Technique.


roome (485) PARKER (1999 [94n]): “the traditional cry of entertainers as they entered an assembly; cf. openings of PleasRec and MasOwls.”

Gamsters (485) DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “actors; playful people.”

neither play, nor VnuiversH Show (486) PARKER (1999 [95n]): “i.e., neither a play from the public theatre nor a learned entertainment such as the Universities favoured.”

VnuiversH Show (486)) UPTON (1749 [10]): “he means such masks and plays, as our Universities used to exhibit to our Kings and Queens; these plays were made, and acted by the Scholars in their Halls.” Reprinted by WHALLEY (1756 [2:278n]) and GIFFORD (1816 [3:174n]), who also regards this scene as “a kind of antimasque or jig, such as is found in many of our old plays.” KERNAN (1962 [210-11]): “Nano is pointing out—in mockingly humble tones—that his entertainment is a small affair and not to be judged by the standards applicable to a play put on in the public playhouses or to one of the learned productions of the students of the universities, where classical plays or strict imitations of the dramas of Seneca, Terence, and Plautus were often performed.” PARKER (1999 [95n]): “The latter remark must have appealed specially to the audiences of Oxford and Cambridge, and the learned parody and dense classical references of the interlude make it, in fact, not unlike many University burlesques.”

rehearse (486) PARKER (1999 [95n]): “recite.”

the false pase of the verse (488) REA (1919 [157]); cf. AYLJ 3.2.119, “This is the very false gallop of verses,” and notes that “[t]he same metre is used in the first scene of DevAss 1.1.44f.” H&S (1950 [9:691]) add: the “loose four-stressed verse such as had been used in the moralities.” KERNAN (1962 [42n]): “referring to the doggerel rhythms and forced rhymes of this speech.” HARP (2001 [8n]) add that the “jog-trot meter that the characters recite is reminiscent of the vices who, in the old morality plays, werebuffoonish figures of evil.” Cf. app. Major Scenes, s.v. “The Intolude.”

here is inclos’d the Soule of Pithagoras (490) Nano’s “here” suggests an implicit SD wherein the dwarf gestures toward Androgyno; rf. UPTON (1749 [8]); H&S (1950 [9:691]); ADAMS (1979 [7n]), et al. Later eds. insert discrete SDS within their texts in conjunction with this line; rf. GASSNER (1960 [207]); “Points to ANDROGYNO”; KERNAN (1962 [42]): “Pointing to Androgyno,” et al. Regarding J’s source for the scene, UPTON notes that “the whole is chiefly borrowed from one of Lucian’s dialogues, entitled The Dream, or The Cock.” For commentary directly related to this scene, see app. Sources and app. Technique.

Pithagoras (490) KERNAN (1962 [42n]): “Gr. philosopher of 6th-c. BC, and founder of a school which had for one of its tenets a belief in transmigration, the passage of the soul from one body to another after
Which Soule (fast, and loose, Sir) came first from Apollo,
And was breath'd into Æthalides; Mercurius his sonne,
Where it had the gift to remember all that euer was done.
From thence it fled forth, and made quicke transmication
To goldy-lockt Euphorbus, who was kill'd, in good fashion,
At the seege of old Troy, by the Cuckold of Sparta.

dead"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [7n–8n]), who adds: “fantastic lineages were a frequent comic exercise in the Renaissance. Nano’s comic story is copied from the life of Pythagoras, by Diogenes Laertius”; rpt. HARP (2001 [8n]). DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “the present humorous account of the transmigration of his own soul is based on Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8.1.4, 5 and Lucian, Dream—whose moral, that poverty is to be preferred to riches, Mosca tactfully suppresses.” HUTSON (1998 [503]): “6th-c. BC ascetic, mathematician, philosopher, who originated the doctrine of metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls.”


fast, and loose (492)] REA (1919 [157]): “the name of a common cheating game, used by gypsies and other vagrants. Nares says of it: ‘It is said to be still used by low sharpeners, and is called pricking at the belt or girdle.’ It is thus described: ‘A leathern belt is made up into a number of intricate folds, and placed edgewise upon a table. One of the folds is made to resemble the middle of the girdle, so that whoever should thrust a skewer into it would think he held it fast to the table; whereas, when he has so done, the person with whom he plays may take hold of both ends and draw it away.’”—Sir John Hawkins. The drift of it was, to encourage wagers whether it was fast or loose, which the juggler could make it as his option.” H&S (1950 [9:690]) reprint Nare’s quotation from Hawkins, qualify this game as “a precursor of the three-card trick,” and add that “[b]ets were made whether the fold was fast or loose. It was a favorite game with the gypsies; see GymMet, 178, 1250.” KERNAN (1962 [211]): “A gambling trick, somewhat like our ‘shell game,’ in which a leather belt was folded cleverly a number of times, and a dagger driven in between the folds. Bets were then made on whether the belt was fast or loose, i.e., around the dagger or free of it.” DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “slippery, shifty (from a betting game played with a belt and dagger).”


And was breath’d into Æthalides; Mercurius his sonne ... (493ff)] UPTON (1749 [11–12]) observes that J’s descriptions derive “from Apollonius, Argonautica 1.640–45,” for which he presents a Lat. trans. of the original Greek, noting that “I had his eye on Apollonius, and has translated his very words,” and then challenges J’s reading of the original Ancient Greek—“The Scholiast will fling a light on our poet.” Also, “The reader may likewise, if he wants to know more of this matter, consult Diogenes Laertius, and Lucian.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:176n]) quotes three partial verses from Apollonius in the original Ancient Greek. REA (1919 [157]) quotes relevant Lat. passages from Diogenes Laertius, Lives. H&S (1950 [9:691]) repr. Upton’s quotation of Apollonius, present the Greek text of Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8:1.4. 5, regarding Pythagoras, and identify Æthalides as “the herald of the Argonauts, who had from his father Mercury the gift of remembering everything.” Cf. app. imit. & Trans.

Æthalides (493)] REA (1919 [157]) “son of Hermes, [and] one of the Argonauts; he was the herald of the expedition, and was famous as a Bowman.” KERNAN (1962 [42n]): “herald for Jason’s Argonauts”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [8n], HARP (2001 [8n]). DONALDSON (1985 [619]): “Herald of the Argonauts; his father, Mercury, had bestowed upon him the gift of perfect memory.”

Mercurius his (493)] KERNAN (1962 [42n]): “a common Eliz. form of third person singular possessive.”
Hermotimus was next (I finde it, in my Chartâ)

To whom it did passe, where no sooner it was missing.

But with one Pirrus, of Delos, it learn'd to go a fishing:

And thence, did it enter the Sophist of Greece.

From Pithagore, she went into a beautifull piece,

Hight Aspasia, the Meretrix; and the next tosse of her

**Euphorbus, who was kill'd, in good fashion, At the seige of old Troy (496–97)** Upton (1749 [12]), quoting Homer's description of Euphorbus in both Ancient Gr. and Lat. trans., notes that "these, and the following verses in Homer, Pythagoras was so charmed with, that he set them to music, and sung them on his lyre." Gifford (1816 [3:176n]) identifies allusions to Euphorbus and Menelaus ("the cuckold of Sparta") in Lucian, Dream. REA (1919 [158]) cites Lat. trans. of Diogenes Laertes, De Philosophorum Vitis 569C and Lucian, Dream 246C, 249B–C., noting that "Euphorbus was the Trojan who first wounded Patroclus, as told in the Iliad 17. His shield hung, with others, in the Argive temple of Here, and Pythagoras proved that he had once been Euphorbus by picking out this shield from the rest." H&S (1950 [9:692]) repr. and augmt. Gifford's Greek quotations of Lucian and cite additional allusions from the Dream. Cf. app. Imit. & Trans. Later editors typically follow Upton and Gifford's identifications; rf. Kernan (1962 [43n]); Donaldson (1985 [619]). Adams (1979 [8n]) adds: "Pythagoras specifically claimed to have been Euphorbus, and to recall the event"; rpt. Harp (2001 [8n]). Hutson (1998 [500]), Euphorbus: "courageous Trojan who wounded the Greek Patroclus but was subsequently killed by Menelaus; Pythagoras claimed to have been Euphorbus in a past life."

**goldy-lockt Euphorbus (496)** Upton (1749 [12]): "Euphorbus is called goldy-lockt, from Homer [Iliad 17.52]." REA (1919 [158]): "might more correctly be divided gold-ylockt, I suppose." Cf. app. Imit. & Trans.

**the Cuckold of Sparta (497)** Gifford (1816 [3:176n]): "Menelaus, King of Sparta and husband of Helen." Kernan (1962 [43n]): "Menelaus, whose wife, Helen, was stolen by Paris." Adams (1979 [8n]): "Menelaus, 'the cuckold of Sparta.'"

**Hermotimus (498)** REA (1919 [158]): cf. Diogenes Laertes, Lives 570A. Kernan (1962 [43n]): "a Gr. philosopher of Clazioneme who lived about 500 BC." Adams (1979 [8n]): "Hermotimus is indeed mentioned in Nano's 'charta,' i.e., the text of Diogenes Laertius, but hardly anywhere else." Hutson (1998 [501]): "... philosopher whose soul, separated from his body, was reputed to have both travelled widely and prophesied." Cf. app. Imit. & Trans.

**Chartâ (498)** Kernan (1962 [43n]): "paper; either the part he is reading or the source of his information, Lucian's 'Dialogue of the Cobbler and the Cock.'" Adams (1979 [8n]): "i.e., the text of Diogenes Laertius"; rpt. Harp (2001 [9n]). Donaldson (1985 [619]): "perhaps, Lucian."

**with one Pirrus, of Delos, it learn'd to go a fishing (500)** The identity of Pyrrhus has been generally glossed, per his given description in Diogenes Laertes, as a Gr. fisherman and philosopher from Delos; rf. Kernan (1962 [43n]), et al. Holt (1905a [166–67]) first identified J's source for the soul's transmigration from Apollo to Hermotimus, Pyrrhus, and Pythagoras as Diogenes Laertius. Lives 8.4–5. Since REA (1919 [158]): "Cf. Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8.5: 'Ubi autem et Hermotimus vita functus est, rursus in Pyrrhum Delium piscatorem migrasse'" ["When Hermotimus died, he became Pyrrhus, a fisherman of Delos" (Hicks, trans., 2:325)]. Perhaps not to be confused with the skeptic Pyrrho of Elis (ca. 360–270 BCE).


**Sophist (501)** Kernan (1962 [43n]): "philosopher."

From Pithagore ... Aspasia (502–3) REA (1919 [158]): "Cf. Lucian, Dream 19: 'MIC. ... Verum ubi Pythagoram exveras, quem post eum induisd? / GAL. Aspasiae Miletensem illum meretricem'" ["MICYLLUS. But after you put off the part of Pythagoras what other did you assume? / COCK. Aspasia, the courtesan from Miletus" (Harmon, trans., 2:211)].
Was, againe, of a Whore, she became a Philosopher.

Crates the Cynick: (as it selfe doth relate it)

Since, Kings, Knights, & Beggars, Knaues, Lords & Fools gat

Besides, Ox, and Assse, Cammel, Mule, Goat, and Brock,

In all which it hath spoke, as in the Cobblers Cock.

But I come not here, to discourse of that matter,

Aspasia, the Meretrix (503) H&S (1950 [9:692]): “famous as the mistress of Pericles.” KERNAN (1962 [43n]): “the mistress of Pericles, leader of Athens in the 5th-c. BC.” ADAMS (1979 [8n]): “whore; but Aspasia was simply the mistress of Pericles (ca. 495–429 BCE), Athenian statesman”; rpt. HARP (2001 [9n]). DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “Pericles’ mistress.” HUTSON (1998 [499]): “Mistress of the great Athenian statesman Pericles; neither an Athenian herself nor legally married, she was unsuccessfully slandered as a prostitute.”

Meretrix (503) H&S (1950 [9:692]): “John Martiall, A Treatise of the Crosse (1564 [139]), had used this Lat. word before, but it was not acclimatized, in spite of quibbles on ‘merry tricks.’” H&S (1950 [9:381]), n. on trick in EMJ 4.2.88–97: “The word [tricks] acquired an equivocal meaning from punning on the Latin meretrix; cf. William Bullein, A Dialogue Bothe Pleasant and Pitefull (1573 [26]) : ‘a kinde hearted woman, and full of meretrix, ha, ha, ha’; and HEYWOOD (1562 [124–25]), “A Merie Woman,” 7–9: ‘Madame, ye make my hert lyght as a kyx, / To see you thus h ill of your mgrefrix. / This tricke thus well tricked in the latine phrase, / Brought to this tricker nother muse nor mse, / She nought perceiuyng, was no whit offended....’ Glossed variously as “courtesan,” “whore,” or “prostitute.”

Whore, (504) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]), noting the comma after “Whore”: “There should be no comma in the middle of this line.”


as it selfe doth relate it (505) REA (1919 [159]): “I.e., in the form of the cock who is telling the story in Lucian’s dialogue.”

it selfe (505) KERNAN (1962 [43n]): “the neuter pronoun suggests that Nano may here point to Androgyno who is playing the part of the soul.” DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “the ‘charita’ of [498]; or the soul in Androgyno.”

From Pithagore ... Brock (502–7) GIFFORD ([1816] 3:176n) quotes the first few lines of Lucian, Dream 19–20, which was later repr. in full by REA (1919 [159]) and H&S (1950 [9:692])—each editor proving his point about J’s classical learning by printing the untranslated text in either the original Gr. (Gifford, H&S) or the secondary Lat. (Rea). The Eng. trans. of this passage reads: “But after you put off the part of Pythagoras what other did you assume? COCK. Apasia, the courtesan from Miletus. ... MICILUS. But what man or woman did you become after Aspasia? COCK. The Cynic Crates. MICIL. Twin brethren! what ups and downs! First a courtesan, then a philosopher! COCK. Then a king, then a poor man, and soon a satrap [i.e., a petty tyrant]; then a horse, a jackdaw, a frog, and a thousand things besides; it would take too long to enumerate them all. But of late I have often been a cock, for I liked that sort of life” (Harmon, trans., 2:211–13).”

Brock (507) SCHELLING (1910 [1:627]): “badger (term of contempt).”

Or his One, Two, or Three, or his great Oath, by Quater,

His Musicks, his Trigon, his golden Thigh,

his One, Two, or Three (510) UPTON (1749 [13]): "‘Tis well known how this greatest of all philosophers, (always excepting Socrates) reasoned by analogy, from numbers and mathematical theories, to the order and economy of the universe, and to the all-wise governor of it. His disciples were all initiated into mathematical sciences: Euclid (a Pythagorean) divulged his mathematics, but concealed his one, two, three &c. Such as Lucian in particular, whom our poet follows." WHALLEY (1756 [2:280n]): "alluding to the doctrines of Pythagoras, and his manner of reasoning from analogy, and mathematical theories, and numbers." REA (1919 [159]): "Cf. Diogenes Laerti, Lives 8:1.25: ‘Refert Alexander in Successionibus philosophorum, et ista se in Pythagoricis Commentariis notasse, Principium quidem omnium esse unitatem. Porro ex unitate indefinite dualitatem velut materiam autori unitati subieciesse. Ex monade vero ac indeterminate dualitate numeros gigni, ex numeris puncta, ex punctis lineas, ex quibus planae figureae consistunt. Ex planis autem solidus gigni, ex solidis figurae corporea, quorum et quatuor elementa esse, ignem, aquam, aerem, quae per omnia se mutent ac vertant’ [‘Alexander (Polyhistor) in his Successions of Philosophers says that he found in the Pythagorean memoirs the following tenets as well. The principle of all things is the monad or unit: arising from this monad the undefined dyad or two serves as material substratum to the monad, which is cause; from the monad and the undefined dyad spring numbers; from numbers, points; from points, lines; from lines; plane figures; from plane figures, solid figures, from solid figures, sensible bodies, the elements which are four, fire, water, earth, and air; these elements interchange and turn into one another ...’ (Hicks, trans., 2:341–43)].

great Oath, by Quater (511) UPTON (1749 [13]): “mentioned in the Golden Verses, as they are called, written by one of Pythagoras’s scholars: ‘Per eum certè qui nobis tradidit quatemarium, / Fontem perennis naturae’ [‘This by his Name I swear, whole sacred Lore / First to Mankind explain’d the Mystick FOUR, / Source of Eternal Nature and Almighty Pow’r” (Rowe, trans., 9)]. WHALLEY (1756 [2:280n]): “Pythagoras’] swearing by the tetractys, or number four. Mention is made of this in what is called the Golden Verses, written by a disciple of Pythagoras. The difficulty is to know what was included in his great oath by the tetractys; Crux ingeniorum per multa saccla [i.e., loosely, “a mystery of the wise through the ages”], as BURNET (1692) calls it.... Some moderns have imagined, it was the same with the tetragrammaton of the Jews”; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:177n]), who considers that the Golden Verses is a work “containing more wisdom, perhaps, than his master taught,” and adds: “It would perhaps have puzzled Pythagoras himself, ‘juggler’ as he was, to explain this empty jargon. His scholars have written innumerable volumes upon it, more to their own satisfaction, I believe, than the edification of their readers; for, while it was thought worth contending about, no two of them were agreed upon any part of the subject.” REA (1919 [159]): “Here the source is no longer Lucian, or Diogenes Laerti, but Erasmus, MorEnc 11: [‘There is the true sacred fount from which everything draws its being, not the quaternion of Pythagoras’ (Radice, trans., 76)]. […] On the nature of this quaternio or tetrakys see BURNET (1892 [102–3]): ‘In later days there were many kinds of tetrakys, but the original one, that by which the Pythagoreans swore, was the “tetrakys of the dekad.” It was a figure like this

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and represented the number ten as the triangle of four. It showed at a glance that I + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10.’” H&S (1950), per Bang (1:2.26): “from Plutarch, De Placitis Philosophorum 1:877. And Lucian, Vitiarum Auctio (or, ‘Philosophies for Sale’), in the dialogue between Pythagoras and a purchaser: ‘[PYTHAGOREAN. Then, in addition to this, in counting. BUYER. I know not how to count now. PYTH. How dost thou count? BUY. One, two, three, four— PYTH. Lo! what thou thinkest four is ten, and a perfect triangle, and our oath. BUY. Well, by your greatest oath, by Four, I never heard diviner doctrines or more esoteric’ (Harmon, trans., 2:455–57)].

His Musicks, his Trigon (511) REA (1919 [159]), via Lat. trans.: cf. Diogenes Laerti, Lives 8:1.12: ["We are told by Apollodorus the calculator that he offered a sacrifice of oxen on finding that in a right-angled triangle the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the squares on the sides containing the right angle"]
Or his telling how Elements shift: but I
Would ask, how of late, thou hast suffered translation,
And shifted thy coat, in these days of Reformation?

And. Like one of the Reformed, a Foole, as you see,

Counting all old Doctrine heresie:

NAN. But not on thine owne meates hast thou venter’d?

And. On fish, when first, a Carthusian I enter’d.

NAN. Why, then thy dogmatically Silence hath left thee?

(Hicks, trans., 2:331). H&S (1950 [6:692]), per Bang: “In the Pythagorean system, number was regarded as the principle of harmony of the universe and of mortal life. The τετραγωνος ("tetraktys") was a trigon (τρίγωνον, "triangle") which represented the number ten as a triangle of four [as in the above diagram]."

his golden Thigh (511) UPTON (1749 [13]): “This is a subject of ridicule frequently in Lucian; mention too is made of this strange story in Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8.11, the original of which is difficult to trace.” WHALLEY (1756 [2:280n]): “This is as little understood as the former; but it has been the subject of ridicule both to ancient and modern wits.” REA (1919 [159–60]), via Lat. trans.: cf. Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8.11: ["There is a story that once, when he was disrobed, his thigh was seen to be of gold" (Hicks, trans., 2:331)]. “I perhaps took the suggestion from Lucian, Dream 18,” via Lat. trans.: ["... and I have also heard that you were thought to have come to life again after dying, and that you once showed them that your thigh was of gold. But, look here, tell me how it occurred to you to make a law against eating either meat or beans?" (Harmon, trans., 2:209)]. “J refers again to the golden thigh of Pythagoras in Alch 2.1.92: ‘Such was Pythagoras’ thigh.’”

his telling how Elements shift (512) UPTON (1749 [13–14]): “Ovid, Met 15.252–55, gives an account of this shifting of the elements; and, considering him as a wit and unbeliever, represents Pythagoras’s mysterious doctrines very fairly: ‘rerumque novatrix / ex aliis alias reparat natura figuras: / nec perit in toto quicumque, mihi credite, mundo, / sed variat faciemque novat’ [“Nature, the great renewer, ever makes up forms from other forms. Be sure there’s nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form” (Miller, trans., 2:383)]. H&S (1950 [9:692]): cf. Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8:1.25.

translation (513) KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “change, transmigration.”

these days of Reformation (514) KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “i.e., the Protestant Reformation.” DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “I was still a Catholic at this time.”

Reformed (515) KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “Puritans.” HARp (2001 [9n]): “recent Puritan reformers, not those of the 16th-c. reformation.”

Counting all old Doctrine heresie (516) WHALLEY (1756 [2:280n]): “By old doctrine, he means the doctrines commonly received before the reformation; which was at first opprobiously called the new learning. It is not improbable that J, when he wrote this, was a convert to church of Rome; and might design in this place to sneer at zealots of the establishment, as he does soon after the puritans.” H&S (1950 [9:693]): “pre-Reformation teaching as distinct from the new learning.” This was written in J’s Catholic days.” HARp (2001 [9n]): “Catholic and Anglo-Catholic theology.”

not on thine owne forbid meates hast thou venter’d? (517) REA (1919 [160]): cf. Lucian, Dream 4, via Lat. trans.: [“... if you are Pythagoras, you have broken the law and committed as great an impiety in eating beans as if you has eaten your father’s head” (Harmon, trans., 2:181)], which is noted as an allusion to the pseudo-Pythagorean verse, “It is just as wrong for you to eat beans as to eat the heads of your parents” (Ibid., 2:181n). KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “forbidden foods—the Pythagoreans did not eat fish.”

On fish, when first, a Carthusian I enter’d (518) REA (1919 [160]): “On the prohibition of the eating of fish among the Pythagoreans, cf. Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8.17: ‘Piscis item non gustandos eos qui sacri sunt’ [“Above all, he forbade as food red mullet and blacktail” (Hicks, trans., 2:337)]. The point of the line is that even Carthusians, who were exceedingly strict in their rules, allowed fish to be eaten, and so were less rigorous than the Pythagoreans.” KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “a religious order famed for the severity of its
AND. Of that an obstreperous Lawyer bereft mee.

NAN. O wonderfull change! when S' Lawyer forsooke thee,

For Pithagore's sake, what body then tooke thee?

AND. A good dull Moyle. NAN. And how? by that meanes,

Thou wilt brought to allow of the eating of Beanes?

AND. Yes. NAN. But, from the Moyle, into whom did't thou passe?

AND. Into a very strange Beast, by some Writers cal'd an Asse;

By others, a precise, pure, illuminate Brother,

Of those deououre flesh, and sometimes one an other:

And will drop you forth a libell, or a sanctified lie,

Betwixt every spooneful of a Natiuety Pie.

NAN. Now quit thee, for Heauen, of that profane nation;

diet." ADAMS (1979 [8n]): "As a Carthusian monk (of a particularly strict sect), he learned to eat fish, which as a Pythagorean was forbidden to him."
dogmaticall Silence (519)] REA (1919 [160]), via Lat. trans.: cf. Lucian, Dream: ["... you (i.e., the Cock) are very noisy and loud-voiced, whereas he recommended silence for five whole years, I believe" (Harmon, trans., 2:181)]. The silence for five years enjoined upon the disciples of Pythagoras is mentioned in Diogenes Laertius, Lives 8.10: 'Quinquennium item totum silebat, solum quae dicenter audientes' ["For five whole years they had to keep silence, merely listening to his discourses without seeing him" (Hicks, trans., 2:329)]. It will be noticed that in the next line obstreperous is borrowed from the passage from Lucian just quoted. This is one of many similar evidences that J was using the Lat. of Erasmus’ trans., not the original Gr." H&S (1950 [9:693]): rf. Disc 384–87 for a “serious reference to the five years’ silence enjoined on the Pythagoreans”; also rf. Athenaeus, Deip 7:308.c: ["Is it because of their silence? They regard silence, in fact, as divine" (Gulick, trans., 3:385–87)].

Of that an obstreperous Lawyer bereft mee (520)] ADAMS (1979 [8n]): "Having taken a vow of silence as a Carthusian, he became a lawyer and learned to blabber"; rpt. HARP (2001 [9n]). Cf. fn. 519 and 3138.

obstreperous (520)] KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “in the Lat. sense, ‘to make a noise.’” HUTSON (1998 [495]): “clamorous.”

Moyle (523)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]): “Here, and invariably throughout this play, I wrote moyle for mule. KERNAN (1962 [44n]): “mule”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [494]).

Moyle ... Beanes (523–24)] UPTON (1749 [14–15]): “From the Lawyer, he says, he went into the Lawyer’s Mule. The Lawyers used formerly among them particularly, to ride to Westminster Hall, with great state, on their Mules, on solemn and set days: to this [Mosca] alludes presently after [quoting 590–93], speaking of the Lawyer Voltoire, with reference to the Eng. manners [rf. n. 593 below]. The mentioning the Lawyer’s Mule naturally leads him to ridicule Pythagoras’ interdiction of eating beans”; rpt. WHALLEY (1756 [2:281n]), SCHELLING (1910 [1:635]). ADAMS (1979 [9n]): “Pythagoras forbade the eating of beans. All these prohibitions and special observances were supposed to have occult or mystical meaning”; rpt. HARP (2001 [9n]). Diogenes Laertius, Lives records the Pythagorean prohibition in 8.19, and especially in 8.24, as “To abstain from beans because they are flatulent and partake most of the breath of life; and besides, it is better for the stomach if they are not taken, and this again will make our dreams in sleep smooth and untroubled” (Hicks, trans., 2:341).

Into a very strange Beast, by some Writers cal’d an Asse; / By others, a precise, pure, illuminate Brother, / Of those deououre flesh, and sometimes one an other: / And will drop you forth a libell, or a sanctified lie, / Betwixt every spooneful of a Natiuety Pie (526–30)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:178n]): "The puritans, who are here ridiculed, affected to shrink with horror, from the mention of the popish word mass,
And gently, report thy next transmutation.  

And, To the same that I am.  

And (what is more then a Foole) an Hermaphrodite?

Now 'pray thee, sweet Soule, in all thy variation,
Which Body wouldst thou choose, to take vp thy station?

And. Truth, this I am in, euen here would I tarry.

Nano. 'Cause here, the delight of each Sexe thou canst varie?

And. Alas, those pleasures be stale, and forsaken;

No, tis your Foole, wherewith I am so taken,
The onely one Creature, that I can call blessed:
For all other formes I have proud'ed most distressed.

This learned opinion we celebrate will,

Fellow Eunuch (as behoues vs) with all our wit, and arte,
To dignifie that, whereof our selues are so great, and special a part.

Vol. Now very, very pretty: Mosca, this
Was thy inuention? Mos. If it please my Patron,
Not else. Volp. It doth, good Mosca. Mos. Then it was S'.

habes, age dilucide mihi narrato, quae sint peculiara divitum ad vitae rationem, quae pauperum propria: quo videlicet cognoscas, vere ne isthuis affirmes, me divitius esse feliciorem'" ["Well then, cock, as you have tried almost every existence and know everything, please tell me clearly about the life of the rich and the life of the poor, each by itself, so that I may learn if you are telling the truth when you declare that I am happier than the rich." (Harmon, trans., 2:215)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]) quote the original Gr. text that J "adapted from Lucian, Gallus 20." REA (1919 [161]), regarding Androgyne's response: "This is probably suggested by Lucian, Dream 15: 'GAL. Ausculta, hoc tantum praemunGus, me neminem feliciorem vita, quam tu sis, unquam vidisses. MICYL. Quam ego sim, o galle? Hanc felicitatem tibi ipsi imprecor. Nam videre me tibi ridendum proponere'" ["Cock. Listen; but first let me tell you thus much, that I have never seen anyone leading a happier life than you. / Micylus. Than I, cock? I wish you no better luck yourself! You force me to curse you, you know" (Harmon, trans., 2:203)].

to take vp thy station (536)] Cunningham (1875 [3:498]) notes Gifford's alteration: "J has take up instead of keep up." Kernan (1962 [45n]): "to stay in." Hutson (1998 [497]): "borrow, purchase."
Truth (537)] Kernan (1962 [45n]): "in truth."

state (539)] Cornwall (1838 [812]): "to make cheap, common."

tis your Foole ... (240ff.) Adams (1979 [9n]): "I am drawing here on one of the wellsprings of Ren. thought, Erasmus' mock-oration, MorEnc, which was spoken by Dame Folly in praise of herself."
as (543)] F (1616 [454]) reads "as." Booksellers (1716-17 [2:11]) reads "it." Whalley (1756 [2:282]) reads "as." Whalley (1756 [2:282n]) claims that "either of the expressions is sense."
that (546)] Kernan (1962 [45n]): "i.e., folly."

This learned opinion ... and special a part (543-45)] REA (1919 [161]): "Here we again have Erasmus, MorEnc 2: 'Horum studium erat, Deorum ac fortium virorum laudes encomitis celebrare. Encomium igitur audieatis, non Herculis, neque Solonis, sed meum ipsius, hoc est, STULTITIE'" ["Their (i.e., the Sophists') concern was to provide eulogies in praise of gods and heroes, so it's a eulogy you are going to hear now, though not one of Hercules or Solon. It's in praise of myself, namely, FOLLY" (Radice, trans., 64)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]), albeit "suggested by Erasmus."
SONG.

Fool, they are the only Nation
Worth mens envy, or admiration;
Free from care, or sorrow-taking.
Themselves, and others merry making:
All they speake, or do, is sterling.
Your Foole, he is your great mans dearling,
And your Ladies sport, and pleasure;

SONG (550) GIFFORD (1816 [3:179]) replaces this title with the sd “NANO and CASTRONE sing”; rpt. GASSNER (1960 [209]); ADAMS (1979 [9]), HARP (2001 [10]). HUTSON (1998 [227]) adds the marginal sd “[NANO].”

Fool, they are the only Nation ... (551-65) Most modern editors follow REA (1919 [161–62]), who first observed how “This whole song follows Erasmus closely. For the theme and the first lines, note MorEnc 35: ‘Ac per Deos immortals, est ne quidquam felicius isto hominum genere, quos vulgos moriones, stultos, fatuos, ac bileatos appellant, pulcerrimos, ut equidem opinor, cognominibus?’” [“Heavens above, doesn’t the happiest group of people comprise those popularly called idiots, fools, nitwits, simpletons, all splendid names according to my way of thinking?” (Radice, trans., 116)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]); ADAMS (1979 [9n]), DONALDSON (1985 [620]), HARP (2001 [10]). KERNAN (1962 [45n]): “Volpone and Mosca may join the three grotesques in this song, or the latter may sing it alone as a conclusion to their entertainment.”

Nation (551) HUTSON (1998 [494]): “sect.”

Free from care, or sorrow-taking (553) REA (1919 [162]): “Perhaps if I had been writing prose, he would have said care-taking or sorrow. Or are we to read as if there were a hyphen after care? For the thought cf. MorEnc 35: ‘In summa, non dilacerantur millibus curarum, quibus haec vita obnoxia est’” [“in short, they are untroubled by the thousand cares to which our life is subject” (Radice, trans., 117)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]).

Themselves, and others merry making (554) REA (1919 [162]): “Cf. MorEnc 35: ‘Adde huc, quod non solum ipsi perpetuo gaudent, ludunt, cantillant, rident, verum etiam caeteris omnibus quocumque esse vererint, voluptatem, jocum, lusum, rígumque adferunt’” [“Add the fact that they’re always cheerful, playing, singing and laughing themselves, and also wherever they go they bring pleasure and merriment, fun and laughter to everyone else” (Radice, trans., 117)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]).

All they speake, or do, is sterling (555) REA (1919 [162]): “Cf. MorEnc 35: ‘Impune permittant, quidquid vel dixerint, vel fecerint’” [“(they are) allowed to say or do anything with impunity” (Radice, trans., 117)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]).

sterling (555) KERNAN (1962 [46n]): “excellent.” HARP (2001 [10n]): “of good value; originally, a ‘sterling’ was an Eng. silver penny.”

Your Foole, he is your great mans dearling (556) REA (1919 [162]): “Cf. MorEnc 36: ‘Quid quod summis etiam Regibus adeo sunt in deüis, ut nonnulli sine his neque prandere, nec ingredi, nec omnino vel homam durare possint’” [“They are moreover the favorites of kings, so much so that many great rulers can’t eat a mouthful or take a step or last an hour without them” (Radice, trans., 117)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]).

dearling (556) GIFFORD (1816 [3:179]) reads “darling.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]) notes Gifford’s alteration: “I wrote dearling not darling,” which Gifford also changed in his ed. of EMI (1816 [1:57]), which reads: “A witty child! can’t swear? the father’s darling!” REA (1919 [162]): “In his EngGram (ch. 11), I cites as examples of the diminutive termination iling: ‘goose, gosling; duck, duckling’; and adds: ‘So from the adjective, dear, dearling.’” KERNAN (1962 [46n]): “darling.”

And your Ladies sport, and pleasure (557) REA (1919 [162]): “Cf. MorEnc 36: ‘Illisdem ferme de causis hoc hominum genere mulieres gaudere solent impensius, utpote ad voluptatem et nugas natura.
Tongue, and Bable are his treasure.
His very face begetteth laughter,
And he speaks truth, free from slaughter;

 propensiores'" ["It is also the reason why these people give so much pleasure to women, who are naturally more inclined to amusement and frivolity" (Radice, trans., 119)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]). DONALDSON (1985 [620]): "proverbial: TILLEY (1950). F528."

Tongue, and Bable are his treasure (558) HOLT (1905b [167]): cf. Disc 392–93: "The pleasure of a fool is always in his tongue (said the witty comick Poet)..." In a n. upon this, Schelling in his ed. writes: 'I cannot identify this passage in Plautus, Terence, Menander, or other "witty comic poet."
The reference is, perhaps to Plautus, Poenulus 625–26: 'Istic est thensaurus stultis in lingua situs, / Ut quaestui habeant male loqui melioribus' ["A fool's funds being in his tongue..." (Nixon, trans., 4:63)]. REA (1919 [162]): cf. Poet ApolDial 182: "And use the treasure of the fool, their tongues."

Bable (558) KERNAN (1962 [46n]): "bauble, the mock scepter carried by a jester or professional fool—also slang for the male organ. The word also suggests 'babble.'" DONALDSON (1985 [620]): "(i) mace; (ii) phallos; (iii) talk, babble (Q, F 'bable')."

His very face begetteth laughter, / And he speaks truth, free from slaughter (559–60) WHALLEY (1756 [2:282n]): "i.e., free from hurting any one. But, as Mr. Sympson observes, the poet seems to have made his reason trickler to his rhyme, slander being seemingly the word designed." GIFFORD (1816 [3:180n]): "i.e., he is indulging in speaking truth, without being punished, or being accounted for it. This impertinence, however, if it really existed, did not long survive the period of this song; as Mass Stone, who is mentioned in the second act, found to his sorrow" [rf. 1069–71]. Also, "J makes slaughter rhyme to laughter; it seems however, to have been considered as improper, and to have excited some degree of disapprobation. In the Faune, which appeared shortly after this comedy, Marston speaks of two critics, one of which 'had lost his flesh with fishing at the measure of Plautus' verses, and the other had vowed to get the consumption of the lungs, or to leave to posterity the true pronunciation and orthography of laughing.' Sh., MND 2.1.54–55 spells the word loffe [i.e., laugh] to accommodate it to cough; and it is not improbable but that he, as well as J, might be in Marston's thoughts: not that our great bard was in much danger of a consumption from his abstruse studies for the benefit of posterity. To do him justice, few cared less about these matters than himself." SMALL (1899 [116]): "Aronstein says (Eng. Stud. xx. 385) that 'Another has vowed to get the consumption of the lungs, or to leave to posterity the true orthography and pronunciation of laughing' [in Marston, Parasitaster, or The Faune (1606), 4.209–11] is a satiric reference to J's Volp.... In my opinion, on the contrary, the reference [in Marston] is to a dispute among grammarians as to the pronunciation of the word [i.e., laughter]," for which SMALL supplies a line-up of equally suitable candidates and examples. REA (1919 [162]): "Whalley thinks this means that his speeches hurt no one; Gifford says: 'He is indulging in speaking truth, without being punished or called to account for it.' Gifford is right, as the author evidently had in mind the following from MorEnc 36: 'Sed tamen hoc ipsum mire in fatuis me usu verbt, ut non vera modo, verum edam aperta convida cum voluptate audiantur, adeo ut idem, dictum, quod si a s^ientG ore proGciscatur, c^itale fuerat futurum: a morione profectum, incredibüem voluptatem paiiat' ["... but the outcome of this is extraordinary for my fools. They can speak truth and even open insults and be heard with positive pleasure; indeed, the words which would cost a wise man his life are surprisingly enjoyable when uttered by a clown" (Radice, trans., 119)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:693]). REA (1919 [162–63]) repr. Gifford and adds: 'For a similar pronunciation of daughter, see EastHo 5.5.92–93: 'Nor ever thought what would come after, / As did, alas! his youngest daughter.' In the Fool's song in King Lear, 1.4, occurs an extraordinary series of rhymes: caught her, daughter, slaughter, halter and after." H&S (1950 [9:694]): "a lax way of saying 'with impunity.' For the rhyme laughter and slaughter, see John Marston, Parasitaster, or The Faune (1606), and its comment on the pedant who 'has vowed to get the consumption of the lungs, or to leave to posterity the true orthography and pronunciation of laughing' (4.209–11). It was an unsettled point. J rhymes 'daughters' with 'laughters' in EntAlthorp 72–73, and MercVind 229–30; but the rhyme of 'laughter' and 'after' (in various forms) is found in Volp ProL 35–36; EntAlthorp 242–43; EntHighgate 259–60; HonWales, 291–92; Epig 73.7, 8. In Sh., MND 2.1.54–55, both quartos and folios print 'coffe' and 'loffe' for cough and laugh; and George Chapman, Enthymiae Rupis (1609 [B4]), rhymes 'aloft' with 'nought, and ['aloft'] with 'thought' in The Georgicks of Hesiod (1618 [2]). BURTON (1621–52)
He's the grace of every feast,
And, sometimes, the cheepest guest:
Hath his trencher, and his stoole,
When Wit shall wai/e upon the Foole:

O, who would not be
Hee, hee, hee?

V O L P. Who's that? away, looke Mosca. M O S. Foole, be go,
'Tis Signior Voltoire, the Advocate,
I know him, by his knock. V O L P. Fetch me my gowne,

has 'Sanguine are soon cohe,' i.e., 'caught' (p. 545). It is a pity J did not discuss the point in his EngGram: KERNAN (1962 [48n]): "without fear of consequences." Also [211]: "The rhyme 'laughter-slaughter' is a somewhat unusual one, and shortly after Volp was played, Marston who had long engaged in satirical exchanges with J, commented in his play The Fawne on the foolish critic who 'vowed to get the consumption of the lungs, or to leave to posterity the true pronunciation and orthography of laughing' (4.1). For a discussion of the various possibilities of rhyming these words, see KÖKERITZ (1953 [183–84])."

BLOSTEIN (1978 [183n]): "Bullen suggests that this is 'probably a hit at Ben J,' who rhymed 'laughter' with 'slaughter' in Volp, though Wood points out that The Fawn was probably earlier than Volp. ... But Donald is talking about laughing, not 'laughter'; Marston may not be referring here to rhyme, but to the transcription of the noise made in the act of laughing."

slaughter (560)] DONALDSON (1985 [620]): "retribution."

trencher (563)] HUTSON (1998 [497]): "plate."

SD (566–68)] F (1616 [454]) adds the marginal SD "One knocks | without.," which corresponds to TLNS 567–68; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [227]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:283]) inserts the marginal SD "One knocks without" between Nano's "Hee, hee, hee?" and Volpone's "Who's that?"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [46]).


Who's that? ... (567ff.) UPTON (1749 [16]): "The interlude is interrupted by a knocking at the door: Volpone expected visits from those who lay in wait for his estate; and prepares himself to receive them."

REA (1919 [163]): "I now turns from the happy life of fools to a picture of those usually considered wiser and happier. In exactly the same way, Erasmus, after giving the advantages of the fool over other mortals (the passages cited above as the basis of the fool's song are typical), turns directly to a contrasting view of those who are usually accounted wise. Erasmus, MorEnc 37: 'Eamus nunc, et quenvis etiam sapientem cum huius morionis sorte conferamus. Finge quad huic opposas exemplar sapientiae, hominem qui totam pueritiam auge adolescentiam in perdiscendis disciplinis contriverit, et suavissimam vitae partem, perpetuus vigiliis, curis, sudoribus perdiderit, ne in reliqua quidem omni vita vel tantum volupatis degustari, semper parcus, pauper, tristes, triticus, sibi ipsi iniquus ac durus, alis gravis et inavis, palliore, macie, valetudine, lippitudine, confectus senio, caniteque multo ante diem contracta, ante diem fugiens e vita' ['Let's now compare the lot of a wise man with that of this clown. Imagine some paragon of wisdom to set up against him, a man who has fretted away all his boyhood and youth in acquiring learning, has lost the happiest part of his life in endless wakeful nights, toil and care, and never tastes a drop of pleasure even in what's left to him. He's always thirsty, impoverished, miserable, grumpy, harsh and unjust to himself, disagreeable and unpopular with his fellows, pale and thin, sickly and bleary-eyed, prematurely white-haired and senile, worn-out and dying before his time' (Radice, trans., 119)]. Cf. esp. the last lines of this quotation with the description of Volpone at the end of the scene."

V O L P. Who's that? away, looke Mosca. M O S. Foole, be go ... (567–69 + SD] UPTON (1749 [16]): "But there is an error in the printed books, and we should thus distinguish the speakers: 'VOLP. Who's that?
My furres, and night-caps; say, my couch is changing:
And let him intretaine himselfe, a while,
Within i' th' gallery. Now, now, my clients
Beginne their visitation; Vulture, Kite, 
Rauen, and gor-Crowe, all my birds of prey,
That think me turning carcasse, now they come:
I am not for 'hem yet. How now? the newes?

Huge,
Massie, and antique, with your name inscrib'd,
And armes ingrauen. V O L P. Good. And not a Foxe
Stretch'd on the earth, with fine delusive sleights,
Mocking a gaping Crow? ha, Mosca? M O S. Sharpe, Sir.
V O L P. Giue me my furres. Why dost thou laugh so, man?
M o s . I cannot choose, Sir, when I apprehend

What thoughts he has (within) now, as he walks:
That this might be the last gift, he should give;
That this would fetch you; if you died to day,
And gave him all, what he should be to morrow;
What large return would come of all his venters;
How he should worshipp'd bee, and reverence'd;
Ride, with his furies, and foote-cloths; waited on
By heardes of Fooles, and clients; haue cleare way
Made for his moyle, as letter'd as himselfe;

Why dost thou laugh so, man? (584)] DUNCAN (1970 [27]): “Mosca breaks out into anticipatory laughter, and the nature of that laughter is important because it sets the tone for our reaction to the scenes that are to follow.”

I cannot choose, Sir, when I apprehend ... (584ff.)] Editors have located the source of Mosca’s speech here in Lucian, Dream 12. REA (1919 [164]) reproduces the Lat. text; H&S (1950 [9:694]) the Gr.: [“Now listen to my dream. I thought that Eucrates himself had somehow become childless and lay dying, and that, after sending for me and making a will in which I was heir to everyth...” (Harmon, trans., 2:195)]. DUNCAN (1970 [27–28]): Mosca “gives his reasons for deriding Voltore by drawing first [584–94] on the Dream and secondly [596–99] on MorEnc.” MCDONALD (1988 [118]): “Mosca imagines what the vulture must be imagining.... Although Mosca is contemptuous of Voltore, the fly will indulge in such speculation on his own behalf. Anything may be. The limitations of mortality will be forgotten, quotidian cares banished, the grandest desires for self and state easily gratified. Or so the imagist sees things.” Cf. app. /n/ZoeMcej.

gift (586)] PARKER (1999 [328]) documents this compositorial error as “gift,” though it should be noted that the second letter in this word reflects an accidentally inverted “i” and not an exclamation point.

large (589)] SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]): “abundant.”

venters (589)] KERNAN (1962 [47n]): “business enterprises; specifically here, the gifts he has given Volpone.” Cf. n. 424.

furre (591)] ADAMS (1979 [11n]): “the furs would be for the lawyer”; rpt. HARP (2001 [12n]).


moyle (593)] UPTON (1749 [14–15]): “speaking of the Lawyer Voltore, with reference to the Eng. manners.” [Rf. Upton, n. 523–24, re: Eng. lawyers and their mules.] Also, “this explains a passage in EMO 2.3.15–17 CARL. ... well, make much of him; I see he was neuer borne to ride vpon a moile. ‘I.e., to be become a Sargeant, or a great Lawyer. And this will fling a light on a passage in Chaucer’s character of the Sargeant at Law, GenPro/ 328: ‘He rood Aar Aoom/y in a medlee cote.’ Eat Aomely, considering the dignity he rode with at other times, on his Moyle with his foot-clothes, and trappings.” H&S (1950 [9:694]): “For a lawyer’s mule, see EMO 2.3.15–17: “ride upon a moile, as judges and serjeants at law did.” H&S (1950 [9:435]): “Dugdale, Origines Juridicales (1666), states that John Whiddon, justice of the Court of King’s
Be called the great, and learned Advocate:

And then concludes, there's nought impossible.

V O L P . Yes, to be learned, Mosca; M O S . O no: rich
Implies it. Hood an ass, with reverend purple,
So you can hide his two ambitious ears,
And, he shall pass for a cathedral Doctor.

V O L P . My caps, my caps, good Mosca, fetch him in.

M O S . Stay, Sir, your ointment for your eyes. V O L P . That's true;
Dispatch, dispatch: I long to have possession
Of my new present. M O S . That, and thousands more,
I hope, to see you lord of. V O L P . Thanks, kind Mosca.

Bench, 1 March, 'was the first of the Judges who rode to Westminster Hall on a Horse or Gelding: for before that time they rode on Mules' (p. 3; as quoted in Gifford, ed.). Cf. Warner, Albions England (1612), 14:91.369: 'I knew when men-judicial rode on sober Mules, whereby / They might of Suters, these, and they ask, Answere, and Replie.'”

Hood an ass, with reverend purple, / So you can hide his two ambitious ears, / And, he shall pass for a cathedral Doctor (597-99)

UPTON (1749 [19]): “This is true satire, and very elegantly expressed”; repr. WHALLEY (1756 [2:284n]), GIFFORD (1816 [3:182n]), and REA (1919 [165]). ADAMS (1979 [11n]): “The power of money to make the stupid wise, the ugly beautiful, and, in general, black white had been a satiric commonplace since antiquity”; rpt. HARP (2001 [12n]).

ambitious (598) UPTON (1749 [19]): “used according to its original meaning in the Lat. language”; repr. WHALLEY (1756 [2:284n]), GIFFORD (1816 [3:182n]), and REA (1919 [165]). CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]): “When Gifford adopted Upton’s note, he ought to have told less learned readers what ambitious originally meant in Latin. This will be best explained by an example, COOPER (1565): ‘Amnis ambitious, a river that hath a great compass or circuit.’ <Lat. ambitre, “to go around, encircle, entreat, solicit, court”; ambitious, “winding, entwining; publicity-conscious, eager for popularity.”> REA (1919 [165]) adds: “Gifford adopts [Upton’s] note, and Cunningham explains the Lat. meaning of the word by quoting from Cooper,” but notes: “It is quite true that the word might be used of a river of great circuit; but it certainly could not be applied to large ears—unless we are to understand that they were wrapped around the ass’s head! The explanation of the passage and of the word is, as so often, to be found in Erasmus, MorEnc 5, Folly speaks: ["I am myself wherever I am, and no one can pretend I’m not—especially those who lay special claim to be called the personification of Wisdom, even though they strut about like ‘apes in purple and asses in lion-skins.’ However hard they try to keep up the illusion, their ears stick up and betray the Midas in them" (Radice, trans., 67-68)]. At this point in most editions is a drawing by Holbein, showing very clearly the two ambitious ears, appearing in spite of the hood. This phrase is suggested not merely by the prominentes auriculae of the lines just quoted, but still more definitely a few lines below [in MorEnc 6]: ["... and the more pretentious among them have to laugh and clap their hands and ‘twitch their ears’ like a donkey does" (Radice, trans., 69)]. H&S (1950 [9:694]) gloss “ambitious” as “towering. So ‘ambitious fire’ [1365].

Hood (597) KERNAN (1962 [47n]): “the purple hood worn on the academic gown by Doctors of Philosophy.”

cathedral Doctor (599) ADAMS (1979 [11n]): “a doctor of theology (with the implication that he’s not only the most pompous but the most stupid of the lot).”

ointment for your eyes (601) KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “to make them look rheumy.”

Dispatch, dispatch (602) KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “hurry.”
MOS. And that, when I am lost in blended dust,
And hundred such, as I am, in succession—
VOLP. Nay, that were too much, Mosca. MOS. You shall liue,
Still, to delude these Harpies. VOLP. Louing Mosca,
'Tis well, my pillow now, and let him enter.

Now, my fain'd Cough, my Phthisick, and my Goute,
My Apoplexie, Palsy, and Catarrhe,
Helpe, with your forced functions, this my posture,
Wherein, this three yeare, I haue milk'd their hopes.
He comes, I heare him (vh, vh, vh, vh) δ.

in succession (606)] KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “following me, i.e., other servants to Volpone.”
when I am lost in blended dust / And hundred such, as I am, in succession— (605–6)] H&S (1950
[9:694]): “A subtle touch of insincerity inserted thus to give a first hint of the dénouement.”
Still (608) KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “always.”
delude (608)] HUTSON (1998 [491]): “make a mockery of.”
Harpies (608)] HUTSON (1998 [493]): “avaricious birds with the faces of women.” HARP (2001 [12n]):
“Predatory birds with the faces of women in Gr. mythology.”
my pillow now ... (609ff.) KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “Volpone is sadsGed with the make-up and costume he
has, like an actor, been donning. He now setdes into his sick bed.” Also, KERNAN (1962 [211]):
“Throughout the remainder of this scene Volpone remains in bed. The bed might have been placed in a
small curtained space at the rear of the platform stage, but since most of the action takes place around the
bed it would seem more likely that it was placed somewhere toward the front, where the facial expressions
of the “sick man” could have been seen and his low, faltering words heard. To meet this dramatic problem
a bed could have been set up on the stage proper or within a small tent, or ‘mansion,’ placed forward of the
tiring-house wall. For a description of these mansions and a discussion of their uses, see C. Walter Hodges,
The Globe Restored (1954), 58–61. See also A. M. Nagler, Shakespeare’s Stage (1958).”
SD (609) GIFFORD (1816 [3:182]) applies the SD “[Exit Mosca.]” to Volpone’s “Louing Mosca.”
Phthisick (609)] KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “consumption.” HARP (2001 [12n]): “various throat or lung
diseases.”
Goute (609)] HARP (2001 [12n]): “inflammation of the joints.”
Apoplexie (611)] HARP (2001 [12n]): “loss of blood supply to the brain, as in a stroke.”
Palsy (611)] HARP (2001 [12n]): “shaking or trembling.”
Catarrhe (611)] HARP (2001 [12n]): “discharge of mucus from the nose or throat.”
posture (612)] KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “imposture”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [620]).
this three yeare (612)] KERNAN (1962 [48n]): “for three years.”
Now ... hopes (609–12)] KERNAN (1962 [211]): “These more lines constitute a mock invocation. Where
the poet or petitioner usually calls on the gods for inspiration, Volpone, abusing poetry as he abuses other
ACT. I. SCENE. 3.

MOSCA. VOLTORE. VOLPONE.

You still are, what you were, Sir. Onely you
(Of all the rest) are he, commands his loue:
And you do wisely to preserve it, thus,

With early visitation, and kinde notes

Of your good meaning to him, which, I know,
Cannot but come most gratefull. Patron, Sir.

Here's Signior Voltore is come— Volp. What say you?

Mos. Signior Voltore is come, this morning,

To visit you. Volp. I thanke him. Mos. And hath brought
A piece of antique plate, bought of S. Marke,
With which he here presents you. V O L P. He is welcome.

Pray him, to come more often. M O S. Yes. V O L T. What saies he?
M O S. He thankes you, and desires you see him often.

V O L P. Mosca. M O. My Patron? V O L P. Bring him neare, where is he?

I long to feele his hand. M O S. The plate is here S'.
Where is the plate? mine eyes are bad. V O L T. I am sorry,

To see you still thus weake. M O S. That hee is not weaker.
V O L P. You are too munificient. V O L T. No S', would to heauen,
I could as well giue health to you, as that plate.
V O L P. You giue S', what you can. I thanke you. Your loue
Hath tast in this, and shall not be vnansw'erd.

I pray you see me often. V O L T. Yes, I shall S'.
V O L P. Be not far from mee. M O S Do you obserue that S'?
V O L P. Hearken unto mee, stl. It will concerne you.

S'. Marke (626) GIFFORD (1756 [3:183n]) “The great mart of Venice. Whalley supposed the allusion to be to the treasury in St. Mark's church; he did not know, perhaps, that this celebrated edifice was surrounded with shops of all kinds, particularly goldsmiths.” REA (1919 [165-66]) adds: “An interesting contemporary account of St. Mark is to be found in Fynes Morison, Itinerary (1617). CORYAT (1611 [206-16]) too, was deeply impressed, and gives a long description.” H&S (1950 [9:695]): “i.e., at a goldsmith’s shop in the market-place.” CORRIGAN (1961 [10n]): “St. Mark’s place.”

What saies he? (628) KERNAN (1962 [49n]): “throughout this scene Volpone speaks in a very low voice, and pretends that he can neither see nor hear very well.”

Mo. (630) F (1616 [456]): Mos.
SD (632) KERNAN (1962 [50]) inserts the SD “[directing Volpone’s groping hands.]” between Mosca’s SP and his “The plate is here S’.”
SD (634) GIFFORD (1816 [3:184]) inserts the SD “[putting it into his hands.]” between Voltore’s SP and his “I am sorry”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [50]), ADAMS (1979 [12]), HARP (2001 [13]).
SD (635) GIFFORD (1816 [3:184]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside. to Mosca’s “That hee is not weaker”;
rpt. KERNAN (1962 [50]) and ADAMS (1979 [12]), DONALDSON (1985 [14]), HARP (2001 [13]), who each insert the same SD between Mosca’s SP and this line.
SD (636) DONALDSON (1985 [14]) inserts the SD “[Grasping plate]” between Volpone’s SP and his “You are too munificent.”

Your loue / Hath tast in this (638-39) KERNAN (1962 [50n]): “this (the plate) gives an idea of how much you love me.”

Hath tast (639) DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “can be sampled.”
vanswer’d (639) KERNAN (1962 [50n]): “unrewarded.”

Mosca’s abbreviated SP here lacks its period in Q.
Mos. You are a happy man S', know your good.

Volp. I cannot now last long. Mos. You are his heyre S'.

Vol. Am I? Volp. I see me going, (vh, vh, vh.)

I am sayling to my port, (vh, vh, vh, vh?)

And I am glad, I am so neere my hauen.

Mos. Alas, kinde gentleman, well, we must all go.

Vol. But, Mosca. Mos. Age will conquer. Vol. 'Pray thee,

heare mee.

Am I inscrib'd his heire, for certaine? Mos. Are you?

I do beseech you S'. you will vouchsafe

To write me i'your family. All my hopes,

Depend vpon your worship; I am lost,

Except the rising Sunne do shine on me.

Vol. It shall both shine, and warme thee, Mosca. Mos. S'.

I am a man, that haue not done your loue

All the worst offfices, here I weare your keys,

SD (641) [Kernan (1962 [50]) inserts the SD "[to Voltore.]" between Mosca's SP and his "Do you observe that S'?"; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [14]).

know your good (643 + SD) H&S (1950 [9:695]): "I am fond of ringing the changes on Virgil, Georg 2.458-59: 'O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint / agricolas!' ("O happy husbandmen! too happy, should they come to know their blessings!") (Fairclough, trans., 1:149) Cf. Volp [878]; GypMet 1457-58; Und 64.1.2. Donaldson (1985 [14]) inserts the SD "[To Voltore]" between Mosca's SP and his "You are a happy man S'...."

SD (644) [Donaldson (1985 [14]) inserts the SD "[To Voltore]" between Mosca's SP and his "You are his heyre S'...."

write me i'your family (653) Upton (1749 [19]): "This is a latin manner of expression borrowed from Horace, Epist 1.9.13: 'scribe tui gregis hunc'" ("enroll him in your circle") (Fairclough, trans., 311.) Gifford (1816 [3:184–85n]) "This, as Upton says, is borrowed from Horace.... It may be so; though it is quite as probable that it was 'borrowed' from the poet's own times; when it was the custom for the names and offices of the servants and retainers of great families, to be entered in the Household Book: of this practice many proofs yet remain. The conduct of this scene is above all praise." Rea (1919 [166]) adds: "Family here, it may be necessary to remind the reader, means members of the household, i.e., servants; its ordinary meaning in Latin, as in the often misunderstood 'paterfamilias.'" H&S (1950 [9:695]): "a reference to the 'Household Book,' in which the names of servants and retainers were entered. Cf. Disc 621–23: "Poetry in this latter Age, hath prov'd but a meane Mistresse, to such as have ... given them names up to her family." Family, household (Lat., familia)." Kernan (1962 [51n]): "make me a member or your family." Adams (1979 [12]): "inscribe me on your list of servants."

I am a man, that haue not done your loue / All the worst offices (657ff.) Rea (1919 [166]): "Mosca's speech is probably suggested by the following lines from Horace's satire on legacy-hunting, Sat 2.5.47-49: 'leniter in spem / adrepe officiosus, ut et scribare secundus / heres'" ("by your attentions worm your way to the hope that you may be named as second heir") (Fairclough, trans., 203).

See all your coffers, and your caskets lockt,
Keepe the poore inuentorie of your jewels,
Your plate, and moneys, am your Steward S'.
Husband your goods here. V O L T. But am I sole heyre?

M O S. Without a partner S', confirmde this morning;
The waxe is warme yet, and the inke scarce dry
Upon the parchm ent: V O L T. Happy, happy mee!
By what good chance, sweete Mosca? M O S. Your desert Sir;
I know no second cause. V O L T. Thy modesty
Is loath to know it; well, we shall requite it.
M O S. He euer lik'd your course S', that first tooke him.

M e n of your large profession, that could speake

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**Husband (662)** ADAMS (1979 [13n]): “safeguard”; rpt. HARP (2001 [14n]).

**Thy modesty / Is loath to know it (667–68)** UPTON (1749 [20]): “i.e., to acknowledge it, to make it known. So in Sh.'s Temp 1.2.355–58: ‘When thou didst not, Savage, / Know thy own meaning, but would'st gabble like / A thing most brutish, I endow'd thy purposes / With words to make them known’; i.e., didst not make thy own meaning known, cause it to be known, cause it to be known. The late editors here, not understanding him, alter Sh.'s words.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:185]) reads “Thy modesty / Is not to know it.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:499]): “F reads, ‘Thy modesty is loth to know it,’ which of course is right.”

**Men of your large profession, that could speake / To every cause ... (671ff.)** REA (1919 [166–67]): “This is suggested by the following lines in Horace, Sat 2.5.33–34: ‘tibi me virtus tua fecit amicum; / ius anceps novi, causas defendere possum’ ["your worth has made me your friend. I know the mazes of the law; I can defend a case"] (Fairclough, trans., 201) But this suggestion from Horace J has amplified by borrowing the whole of Mosca’s speech from AGRIPPA (1530 [343]): ‘Iuris autem adhuc alius id est exercitium, quam artem vocant placitatoriam sive advocatoriam ut aiunt, maxime necessarium, ars vetustissima et fraudulentissima suasorio cooperimento subdole adorna. Quæ non est alia, quam scire iudicem persuasione demulcere, et ad omne arbitrium uti, scire iuribus vel inventis glossis, ac commentis leges quascunque pro libidine fingere et fingere [cf. turne, / And re-turne (674–75)], vel iniquis quibusque diversiculis illas subterfugere, aut fraudulentam litem prorogare, sic citatere leges, ut pervertatur aestas, sic glossatorum adstruere voluntatem, ut subvertatur sensus legis, mensque legislatorum. In hac arte plurimum momenti habet alium vociferari, audacemque, et in litigando clamorem et improbum esse; ... sed et quamvis causam alteri iudicatorum praestiguis præparre, ac vera et iusta isto modo dubia et iniqua facere, iustitiamque ipsam suam armis prostrigare, pervertere, prostrare, apud quis justitiae nihil est nisi publica merces: at iudex in causa qui sedet, empta probet’” ["There is yet an other exercise of the law, which they terme the Arte Placitatorie, or els Aduocatori, as they sale, very necessarie, a most auncient Arte, and full of deceptes, craftely set out with a coulour of perswasion. Which is nothing els, but to know how to entrate the iudge gently with perswasion, and to know howe to vse the lawes at theire fantasie, or els inuenting Gloses, and commentaries, to make and vmake all lawes accorindg to their pleasure, or to auoid them with all manner of subtil flights, or to prolonge a deceitful controverserie, to entangle the authoritie of the glossers in such sorte, that the meaninge of the lawe, and the minde of the lawemaker is subverted. To crie out with a loude voice, to be shamelesse, presumptuouse, and clamorous and obstinate in pleadinge is in this Arte of greate importaunce.... (He) can make one cause better then another with the
To euery cause, and things mere contraries,
Till they were hoarse againe, yet all bee Law;
That, with most quicke agility, could turne,
And returne; make knots, and vndoe them;
Giue forked counsell; take prouoking gold
On eyther hand, and put it vp: These men,
He knewe, would thrive, with their humility.
And (for his part) he thought, he should be blest
To haue his heyre of such a suffering spirit,
So wise, so grave, so perplex'd a tongue,
And loud with all, that would not wag, nor scarce
Lie still, without a fee; when every word
Your worship but lets fall, is a Cecchine.

Who is that? One knockes, I would not have you seen Sir,
And yet—pretend you came, and went in haste;
Ile fashion an excuse. And, gentle Sir,
When you do come to swim, in golden lard,
Vp to the armes, in honey, that your chin
Is borne vp stiffe, with fatness of the flood,

perplex'd (681) H&S (1950 [9:695]): "involved in doubt." KERNAN (1962 [52n]): "intricate (in the sense of being double, speaking on either side); rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [620]), HUTSON (1998 [495]).
that would not wag ... without a fee (682-83) REA (1919 [167]): "cf. AGrippa (1530 [343]): 'Nam ut nullus eorum loquitur, nisi ad mercedem, tia nec tacet nisi ad præmium'" ["for as none of them speaketh without his fee, so he holdeth not his peace without rewarde" (Sandford, trans., 343)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:695]).


When you do come to swim, in golden lard, / Vp to the armes, in honey (688-89) WHALLEY (1756 [2:288n]): posits an unadopted correction, for "honey, "as money was the thing, it might possibly be the word intended." GIFFORD (1816 [3:186n]): “Upton was too busy with his trite classical imitations to notice this bold and beautiful adoption of the eastern metaphor for a state of prosperity.” REA (1919 [167-68]): “Whalley thought that money should be substituted for honey. Gifford finds a chance for an attack on Upton [as repr. above]. Both Whalley and Gifford would have omitted their notes on the passage if they had had in mind a sentence from MorEnc sec. 31: ‘In summis interim versantur delitiis, totasque sese melle perungunt.’ This Sir Thomas Chaloner (1549 [43]) translates: ‘But yet doe these my oldgurles not a little lyke them selues herein, takyng it for a singuler and onely delight, as if they swamme vp to the chinnes in a sea of hony.’ A note on the passage in Latin reads: ‘Graecum proverbium est, in eos qui se totos immergunt delitiis, ut mellei sint undique.’ The commentator refers the reader to Erasmus’ Adagia. The passage is interesting because it is evident that both J and Chaloner are translating from the note, rather than from what Erasmus wrote. A natural trans. for the totos immergunt would be ‘swim up to the armes’; but one would not be at all likely to make this out of Erasmus’ [MorEnc sec. 31], totasque sese melle perungunt ‘they’re pleased with themselves, lead a life of supreme delight suffused with sweet fantasy’ (Radice, trans., 110), or the equivalents in the Adagia: ‘In melle te ipsum obvolvis, oblinesque.’ The proverb refers not to swimming, but to anointing.” H&S (1950 [9:695-96]): “Perhaps this over-wrought image is meant to emphasize Mosca’s insincerity. Lard, liquid gold, and honey are clotted fluids for a swimmer. Simpler form of the expression are in Thomas Dekker, Old Fortunatus (1600), 3.1.342-50: ‘Vnlesse he melt himselfe to liquid gold, / ... He cannot raine such shewers: ... / ... His soule (by infernall covenants) has he sold, / Alwaies to swimme vp to the chin in gold.’ And Sir Thomas Chaloner’s trans. of
Thinke on your vassall; but remember mee:
I ha'not beene your worst of clients. V O L T. Mosca——
M O S. When will you haue your inuentory brought, S'.
Or see a coppye of the Will? Anone,
695  Ile bring 'hem to you Sir. Away, be gon,
Put businesse i' your face. V O L P. Excellent Mosca!
Come hither, let me kisse thee. M O S. Kepe you still Sir.
Here is Corbaccio. V O L P. Set the plate away,

The Vulture's gone, and the old Rauen's come.

ACT. I. SCENE. 4.

MOSCA. CORBACCIO. VOLPONE.

B etake you, to your silence, and your sleepe:
Stand there, and multiply. Now, shall we see

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The Praise of Folie (1549 [43]): 'takyng it for a singuler and onely delight, as if they swanme vp to the chinnes in a sea of hony'—a loose rendering of the Erasmus original, MorEnc 31, totasque sese nelle perungunt, 'they anoint themselves all over with honey.'
borne (690) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:499]) notes Gifford's "borne": "The folio has 'borne up stiff.'"
but (691) KERNAN (1962 [52n]): "simply."
SD (694) KERNAN (1962 [52]) inserts the SD "[Calling out to the one knocking.]" between Mosca's "see a coppye of the Will?" and his "Anone"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [13]), HARP (2001 [15]), each with SD "[Knocking again.]

Anone (694) GIFFORD (1816 [3:186n]): "In the margin of Whalley's copy, a note in the hand-writing of Mr. Waldron gives this expression to Voltoire. It belongs, however, to Mosca, who pretends to speak to some one without, in order to quicken the advocate's departure"; repr. REA (1919 [168]). ADAMS (1979 [13n]): "Said in response to a sharp rap at the door; a modern Mosca would say, 'Coming!'"; rpt. HARP (2001 [15n]). ADAMS (1979 [13n]) adds: "See the game played by Prince Hal and Poins with a waiter who says nothing but 'Anon!' in 1H4 2.4.38ff.." H&S (1950 [9:696]): "Addressed to the caller (in this case Corbaccio) who has knocked within."

Put businesse i' your face (693) H&S (1950 [9:696]): "cf. Epig 28.7; 'H'has tympanies of businesse, in his face"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [620]). KERNAN (1962 [52n]): "look as if you were here on a matter of business."
SD (696) GIFFORD (1816 [3:186]) inserts the SD "[springing up.]" between Volpone's SD and his "Excellent Mosca!"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [14]), HARP (2001 [15]).
The Vulture's gone, and the old Rauen's come (699) WHALLEY (1756 [2:288n]): "In allusion to their different names. Corbaccio, in It., signifies an old raven. The poet chose these names to express their greediness after Volpone's supposed wealth"; repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:187n]), REA (1919 [168]): "Voltore and Corbaccio, respectively."
A wretch, who is (indeed) more impotent,

Then this can fayne to bee; yet hopes to hop

Ouer his graue. Signior Corbaccio,

Yo’are very welcome, Sir. CORB. How do’s your Patron?

MOS. Troth as he did, Sir, no amends. CORB. What? Mendes hee?

MOS. No, Sir: he is rather worse. CORB. That’s well. Where is hee?

MOS. Vpon his couch Sir, newly fall’n a sleepe.

CORB. Do’s hee sleepe well? MOS. No winke, Sir, all this night,

Nor yesterday, but slumbers. CORB. Good. He should take

Some councell of Physitians: I haue brought him

An Opiate here, from mine owne Doctor—

MOS. He will not heare of drugs. CORB. Why? I my selfe

Stood by, while’t was made; saw all th’ingredients:

And know, it cannot but most gently worke.

My life for his, ’tis but to make him sleepe.

VOLP. I, his last sleepe, if he would take it. MOS. Sir.
He ha's no faith in Physick: CORB. 'Say you? 'say you?

Mos. He has no faith in Physick: He do's thinke

Most of your Doctors are the greater danger,

And worse disease, 'scape. I often haue

Heard him protest, that your Physitian

Should never be his heyre. CORB. Not I his heyre?

Mos. Not your Physitian, Sir. CORB. O, no, no, no,

I do not meane it. Mos. No Sir, nor their fees

He cannot brooke: He sayes, they flea a man,

Before they kill him. CORB. Right, I conceive you.

Mos. And then, they doe it by experiment;

For which the Law not onely doth absolue 'hem,
But gives them great reward: And, he is loath
To hire his death, so. CORB. It is true, they kill,
With as much license, as a judge. MOS. Nay more;
For he but kills, Sir. where the Law condemnes,
And these can kill him, too; CORB. I, or mee:
Or any man. How do’s his Apoplexe?

Is that strong on him, still? MOS. Most violent.
His speech is broken, and his eyes are set,
His face drawne longer, then t’was wont— CORB. How? how?
Stronger, then he was wont? CORB. No, Sir: His face
Drawne longer, then t’was wont. CORB. O, good. MOS. His

mouth
Is euer gaping, and his eye-lids hang. CORB. Good.
MOS. A freezing numnesse stiffens all his ioynts,
And makes the colour of his flesh like lead. CORB. ’Tis
good.

MOS. His pulse beats slow, and dull. CORB. Good symptomes,
still.
MOS. And, from his braine— CORB. Ha? how? not from his
braine?
MOS. Yes, Sir, and from his braine— CORB. I conceive you, good.

by experiment (727)] KERNAN (1962 [54n]): “by trying out various remedies on the patient.”
Apoplexe (739)] SYMONDS (1886 [76]): “Mosca paints a fancy picture of his master’s disorders—apoplexy, palsy, vertigo, loathsome affections of the mucous membrane. Old Corbaccio recognises and ticks of the symptoms. They are familiar to himself.” REA (1919 [168–69]): “According to Hippocrates, Aphorism 43, there are two sorts of apoplexy, strong and weak; the former of these cannot be cured, the latter not easily. An ed. of the Aphorisms appeared in 1601, with a commentary by I. Heurnius. One of Heurnius’ notes on this aphorism is probably what J has in mind here…. With these distinctions in mind, note particularly … And, from his brain, etc. [752ft.]. This is the symptom that Corbaccio has been waiting eagerly to hear. Cf. Hippocrates, De Morbis 1.2: ‘If the disease in the head is protracted and intense, and does not go away when the head is cleaned out, you must either incise the patient’s head, or cauteterize the vessels all around it. For, of the possible measures that remain, only these offer a hope of recovery’ (Potter, trans., 5:9–11)]. Also see n. 611.
CORB. (743)] F (1616 [458]) corrects the SP to “MOS.”
from his braine (752)] KERNAN (1962 [212]): “Drainage of fluid from the brain was believed to be one of the final stages of the disease, strong apoplexy, which Mosca is describing so carefully, symptom by symptom. Corbaccio’s excited interruption at this point shows that he is fully aware of the significance of this symptom, and that he now believes his dearest hope is about to be realized.”
M O S. Flowes a cold sweat, with a continuall rheume,
Forth the resolued corners of his eyes.

C O R B. Is't possible? yet I am better, ha!
How do's he, with the swimming of his head?
M O S. O, Sir tis past, the Scotomy; he, now,
Hath lost his feeling, and hath left to snort:
You hardly can perceiue him, that he breaths.

C O R B. Excellent, excellent, sure I shall outlast him:
This makes me yong againe, a score of yeares.

M O S. I was a coming for you, S'. C O R B. Has he made his Wil?
What has he giu'n me? M O S. No, Sir. C O R B. Nothing? ha?
M O S. He has not made his Will, Sir. C O R B. Oh, oh, oh. [C2^]

But what did Uoltore, the Lawyer, here?

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CORB. Ha? how? not from his | braine? / MOS. Yes, Sir, and from his braine— (752-54) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:499]) notes the omission of this exchange in both Whalley and Gifford: “The editors have allowed two speech-lets to drop out.” REA (1919 [169]): “Cunningham restored the two short speeches of Corbaccio and Mosca (Ha? ... brain—) which the earlier editors had allowed to drop out.”

a continuall rheume / Forth the resolued corners of his eyes (755-56) WHALLEY (1756 [2:291n]): “What are the resolued corners of the eyes? The expression should be explained. It is taken from that infirmity of old age, by which the eyes are glued up by a rheum which flows from them; the corners only being open, from whence the humour <i.e., fluid, not comic effect> issues. Resolve has a similar sense in Ham 1.2.129-30: “O that this too too sallied flesh would melt, / Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!” DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “Mosca describes what were popularly thought to be the terminal symptoms of a fatal illness.”


left to snort (760) REA (1919 [169]): “On the significance of this as a sign of approaching death, see the note on line 36 above ["How does his apoplexy?"]”

left (760) KERNAN (1962 [55n]): “ceased.”

perceive him, that (761) KERNAN (1962 [56n]): “perceive that.”

This makes me yong againe, a score of yeares (763) KERNAN (1962 [56n]): “This news makes me feel twenty years younger.”

But what did Uoltore, the Lawyer, here? (767) WHALLEY (1756 [2:292n]): “It seems that a syllable is wanting here; I would add the epithet old, which would lengthen out the verse ... and ...suit too the
M o s . He smelt a carcasse Sir, when he but heard
My maister was about his Testament;
770 As I did verge him to it, for your good—
C o r b . He came vnto him, did he? I thought so.
M o s . Yes, and presented him this peece of plate.
C o r b . To be his heire? M o s . I do not know Sir. C o r b . True,
I know it too. M o s . By your owne scale, Sir. C o r b . Well,
775 I shall preuent him, yet. See Mosca, looke,
Here, I haue brought a bag of bright Cecchines,
Will quite weigh downe his plate. M o s . Yea marry, Sir.
This is true Physick, this your sacred Medicines,
No talk of Opiates, to this great Elixir.
780 C o r b . 'Tis Aurum palpabile, if not potabile.
M O S .  It shall be minister’d to him, in his boulte?
C O R B .  I, doe, doe, doe.  M O S .  Most blessed Cordiall,
This will recouer him.  C O R B .  Yes, doe, doe, doe.
M O S .  I thinke, it were not best, Sir.  C O R B .  What?  M O S .  To
785 recouer him.
C O R B .  O, no, no, no; by no meanes.  M O S .  Why, Sir. this
Will worke some strange effect, if he but feele it.
C O R B .  Tis true, therefore forbeare; Ile take my venter:
Giu me’t againe.  M O S .  At no hand, pardon mee;
790 You shall not doe your selfe that wrong S'.  I
Will so advise you, you shall haue it all.
C O R B .  How?  M O S .  All S'. 'tis your right, your own; no man
Can claime a part: 'tis yours, without a rivuall,
Decre’d by destiny.  C O R B .  How? how, good Mosca?
795 M O S .  Ile tell you S'. This fit he shall recouer;
C O R B .  I do conceiue you.  M O S .  And, on first aduitantage
Of his gain’d sense, will I re-importune him
Unto the making of his Testament:
And shew him this.  C O R B .  Good, good.  M O S .  'Tis better yet,
800 If you will heare, Sir.  C O R B .  Yes, with all my heart.

cordial medicine.' Cf. George Baker’s trans. of Conrad Gesner, The Newe Jewell of Health, wherein is
74 contained ... the use and preparation of Antimonie, and potable Gold (1576)." CORRIGAN (1961 [16n]):
"potable (medicinal) gold." KERNAN (1962 [57n; 212]: "potable: drinkable." Also, "Medicine having gold
as its principal ingredient was believed to be a sovereign remedy for all diseases, and it is this compound
which Mosca and Corbaccio discuss in the following lines." ADAMS (1979 [16n]): "aurum potabile, or
drinkable gold, was the elixir"; rpt. HARp (2001 [18n]). DONALDSON (1985 [620]): "drinkable gold ...
drunk medicinally."
Cordiall (782) KERNAN (1962 [57n]): "a medicine which stimulates the heart."
venter (788) KERNAN (1962 [57n]): "i.e., the bag of gold" rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [620]). Cf. nn. 424,
789 fit (795) HUTSON (1998 [492]): "moment, short period."
recovery (795) KERNAN (1962 [57n]): "recover from."
first advantage (796) KERNAN (1962 [58n]): "first opportunity."
gain’d (797) KERNAN (1962 [58n]): "regained."
SD (799) GIFFORD (1816 [3:191]), et al., applies the marginal SD "[Pointing to the money." to Mosca’s
"shew him this."
Mos. Now, would I counsell you, make home with speed;
There, frame a Will; whereto you shall inscribe
My maister your sole heyre. Corb. And disinherit
My sonne? Mos. O, Sir, the better: for that colour

Shall make it much more taking. Corb. O, but colour?
Mos. This Will Sir, you shall send it vnto me.
Now, when I come to inforce (as I will do)
Your cares, your watchings, and your many prayers,
Your more then many gifts, your this dayes present,

And, last, produce your Will; where (without thought,
Or least regard, vnto your proper issue,
A sonne so braue, and highly meriting)
The streame of your diuerted loue hath throwne you
Vpon my maister, and made him your heyre:

He cannot be so stupide, or stone dead,
But, out of conscience, and mere gratitude—
Corb. He must pronounce me, his? Mos. 'Tis true. Corb. This
plot
Did I thinke on before. Mos. I do beleeeue it.

Corb. Do you not beleeeue it? Mos. Yes Sir. Corb. Mine

own project.
Mos. Which when he hath done, Sir. Corb. Publish'd me his

heire?

frame (802) Kernan (1962 [58n]): “devise.”
whereto (802) Kernan (1962 [58n]): “wherein.”
taking (805) Kernan (1962 [58n]): “attractive.” ADAMS (1979 [17n]): “The circumstances or appearance (‘color’) will make the trick more effective.”
O, but colour? (805) Corrigan (1961 [17n]): “only a pretense.”
proper issue (811) SCHELLING (1910 [1:637]). proper: “of good appearance, handsome; own, particular,” Kernan (1962 [58n]): “true child.”
mere (816) SCHELLING (1910 [1:635]): “undiluted; absolute, unmitigated.” Kernan (1962 [58n]): “complete.”
plot (818) SCHELLING (1910 [1:637]): “plan.”
Mos. And you so certaine, to suruie him. Corb. I.

Mos. Beeing so lusty a man. Corb. 'Tis true. Mos. Yes Sir. Corb. I thought on that too. See, how he should be
The very organ, to express my thoughts!
Mos. You haue not onely done your selfe a good,
Corb. But multiplied it on my sonne? Mos. 'Tis right, Sir.

Corb. Still, my inuention. Mos. 'Lasse Sir, heauen knowes,
It hath bee ne all my study, all my care,
(I'ee ne grow grey withall) how to worke things—
Corb. I do conceiue, sweet Mosca. Mos. You are he,
For whom I labour, here. Corb. I, doe, doe, doe:

Ile straight about it. Mos. Rooke go with you, Rauen.
Corb. I know thee honest. Mos. You do lie, Sir. Corb. And--
Mos. Your knowledge is no better then your eares, Sir.

Corb. I do not doubt, to be a father to thee.

Mos. Nor I, to gull my brother of his blessing.
CORB. I may ha’ my youth restor’d to mee, why not?

MOS. Your worship is a precious asse. CORB. What sai’st thou?

MOS. I do desire your worship, to make hast, Sir.

CORB. ’Tis done, ’tis done, I go. VOLP. O, I shall burst;

Let out my sides, let out my sides—MOS. Containe

Your fluxe of laughter, Sir; you know, this hope

Is such a baite, it couers any hooke.

VOLP. O, but thy working, and thy placing it!

I cannot hold; good rascal, let me kiss thee:

I neuer knew thee, in so rare a humor.

MOS. Alas Sir, I but do, as I am taught;

Follow your graue instructions; giue ’hem words;

Powre oyle into their eares: and send them hence.

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my brother of his blessing (839) REA (1919 [170]): “HOLT (1905) quotes Gen. 27:35: ‘And he said, Thy brother came with guile, and hath taken away thy blessing.’” KERNAN (1962 [60n: 212): “my brother: Corbaccio’s son.” Also, “There is a glancing but significant reference here to the biblical story (Gen. 27) in which Jacob defrauds his brother Esau of Isaac’s blessing by disguising himself in the skin of a goat.”

gull (839) KERNAN (1962 [60n]); “cheat.”

SD (839) DONALDSON (1985 [21]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Mosca’s SP and his “Nor I, to gull my brother of his blessing.”

SD (841) DONALDSON (1985 [21]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Mosca’s SP and his “Your worship is a precious asse.”


SD (844) GIFFORD (1816 [3:193]) inserts the SD “[leaping from his couch.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “O, I shall burst”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [18]), HARP (2001 [20]), KERNAN (1962 [60]): “[Leaping up.]”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [21]).

fluxe (832) KERNAN (1962 [60n]): “flood—the word also means ‘dysentery.’”

this hope (846) KERNAN (1962 [60n]): “i.e., to inherit Volpone’s wealth.”

this hope / Is such a baite, it couers any hooke (846-47) REA (1919 [170]) repr. UPTON’s note (1749 [loc. cit.]) “Cf. Horace, Sat 2.5.24-25: ‘si vafer unus et alter / Insidiatorem praeorso fugerit hamo’” (“though one or two shrewd ones escape your wiles after nibbling off the bait” (Fairclough, trans., 201).

rare (850) KERNAN (1962 [60n]): “excellent.”

humor (850) KERNAN (1962 [60n]): “fanciful mood.”

graue (852) KERNAN (1962 [60n]): “wise.”

giue ’hem words (852) UPTON (1749 [21]): “do verba, as in Horace, Sat 1.3.21-23: <Maenius absentem Novium cum carpert, ’hues tu’ quidam ait, ‘ignoras te,> an ut ignotum, dare nobis verba putas?’ <‘egomet mi ignosco’ Maenius inguit’> [“When Maenius once was carping at Novius behind his back, ‘Look out, sir,’ said someone, do you not know yourself? Or do you think you impose on us, as one we do not know?’ ‘I take no note of myself,’ said Maenius” (Fairclough, trans., 35); repr. WHALLEY (1756 [2:295n]), who adds: “a Latinism; deceive or impose on them”; repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:193n]), but adds “This is Upton’s remark. That dare verbas signifies to cajole, to impose upon, is certain; such, however, is not the sense of
The expression here. By *give them words*, Mosca simply, or rather artfully, means, that he clothes the ‘grave instructions’ of his patron in fitting language. He speaks of Volpone, not of Corbaccio and the rest, who are distinctly noticed in the next line [853]. The glimpse of a classical allusion is a perfect *ignis fatuus* [i.e., “fool’s fire”] to Upton, who is sure to blunder after it at all hazards.” REA (1919 [170]): “Upton gives the right meaning of *give *them words, i.e., deceive, and quotes Horace, 1.3. But Gifford protests....

Gifford is, of course, wrong. *Give words and pour oil into their ears* are both proverbial, and both have the same meaning here. Erasmus gives both proverbs in his *Adagia*. quoting for the first Persius, Terence, and Ovid, and for the second Martial. He cites Aristophanis: ‘*Aures aqua infusa oGenduntur, oleo non item*’; and for the opposite process, Persius, *Sat*. 1.107–8 *‘Auriculas teneras mordaci radere vero’*” [MorEnc 36: “harsh truths which will grate on his delicate ear” (Radice, trans., 118)]. H&S (1950 [9:696–97]): “deceive them, like the Latin *dire verba* [i.e., “to cheat (someone)”. Cf. Edward Guilpin, *Skiasetaia* (1598), epig. 5, ‘Of Matho’: ‘Matho in credite bound to pay a debt, / His word engaged him for, doth still replie, / That he will aunswere it with sophistrie, / And so deferres daily to aunswer it: / Experience now hath taught me Sophistrie, / He gave me is word; that is, he coussend me.’” DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “spin them a tale (Lat. *dire verba*).”

*Power oyle into their ears* (839)] UPTON (1749 [21–22]): “i.e., give them pleasant and soft words, as smooth as oil; fallacious and deceitful, rather than what are true and wholesome: for truth is grating to the ear, as the Stoic [i.e., Persius] observes, *Sat*. 1.107–8: ‘[But why rasp people’s tender ears with biting truths?’ (Ramsay, trans., 327). Smooth as oil is an expression used by Plato in *Theatetus* 144B: ‘(this boy advances toward learning and investigation smoothly …) like a stream of oil that flows without a sound’ (Fowler, trans., 2:13]). H&S (1950 [9:697]): “of fulsome compliment, cheat in a plausible manner.” KERNAN (1962 [61n]): “flatter them with soft, easy words.”

*What a rare punishment / Is avarice, to it selfe* (854–55]) H&S (1950 [9:697]): “Seneca, *Epist* 115.16: ‘*Nulla enim avaritia sine poena est, quamvis satis sit ipsa poenarum*’ [“For one must must pay the penalty for all greedy act; although the greed is enough of a penalty in itself” (Gummere, trans., 3:329)].” ADAMS (1979 [18n]) adds: “Volpone is liberated, at least intellectually, from the vices on which he plays.” KERNAN (1962 [16n]): “Volpone comments on the ironic way Corbaccio’s greed leads him to the loss of the very gold he so desperately seeks. J’s method is simply to expand the meaning of this conventional description of the nature of sin by allowing greed not only to defeat itself by its own efforts but to condemn itself from its own mouth.”

*So many cares, so many maladies ...* (856–71]) GIFFORD (1816 [3:194n]): “In this fine speech J has again laid the fragments of the Greek drama under contribution; Lucian and Juvenal, however, had set him the example.” REA (1919 [170]): “This speech is from *MorEnc 31*”: “[‘And I do so with such effect that men are reluctant to leave life even when their thread of destiny has run out and life has long been leaving them. The less the reason they have for having to stay alive, the more they enjoy living—so far are they from feeling at all weary of life. Thanks to me you can see old men everywhere who have reached Nestor’s age and scarcely still look human, mumbling, senile, toothless, white-haired or bald—or rather, in the words of Aristophanes, ‘dirty, bent, wretched, wrinkled, hairless, toothless, sexless.’ Yet they’re still so pleased with life and eager to be young that one dyes his white hair, another covers up his baldness with a wig, another wears borrowed teeth taken from some pig perhaps, while another is crazy about a girl and outdoes any young man in his amorous silliness” (Radice, trans., 109)]. H&S (1950 [9:697]): “From *Pliny, NatHist* 7:167–68: ‘[…all the diseases, all the fears, all the anxieties, with death so often invoked that this is the commonest of prayers…. The senses grow dull, the limbs are numb, sight, hearing, gait, even the teeth and alimentary organs die before we do…” (Rackham, trans., 2:619)].

78
Their senses dull, their seeing, hearing, going
All dead before them; yea, their very teeth,
Their instruments of eating, failing them:
Yet this is reckon'd life! Nay, here was one,
Is now gone home, that wishes to live longer!

Feel not his gout, nor palsy, faines himselfe
Young, by scores of yeares, flatters his age,
With confident belying it, hopes he may
With charmes, like Æson, haue his youth restor'd,
And with these thoughts so battens, as if Fate

Would be as easily cheated on, as he,
And all turns ayre! Who's that, there, now? a third?

M O S . Close, to your couch againe: I heare his voice.
It is Coruino, our spruce merchant. V O L P . Dead.

ACT. I. SCENE. 5.

[C4°]

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Corvino! come most wisht for! O,
   How happy were you, if you knew it, now!
    come, Sir.
Corv. He is not dead? Mos. Not dead, Sir, but as good;
He knowes no man. Corv. How shall I do then? Mos. Why
    Sir?
Corv. I haue brought him, here, a Pearl. Mos. Perhaps, he has
    So much remembrance left, as to know you, Sir;
He still calls on you, nothing but your name
Is in his mouth: Is your Pearl orient, Sir?
Corv. Venice was neuer owner of the like.
    Coruino.
Mos. 'He calls you, step and give it him. H'is here, Sir,
And he has brought you a rich Pearl. Corv. How doe you
    Sir?
Tell him, it doubles the twelde Caract. Mos. Sir,
    He cannot vnderstand, his hearing's gone;
And yet it comforts him, to see you— Corv. Say,
I have a Diamant for him, too. Mos. Best shew't Sir, 
Put it into his hand; 'tis only there 
He apprehends: He has his feeling, yet.

See, how he grasps it! Corv. 'Lasse, good gentleman! 
How pittifull the sight is! Mos. Tut, forget Sir. 
The weeping of an heir should still be laughter, 
Vnder a visor. Corv. Why am I his heir? 
Mos. Sir, I am sworne, I may not shew the Will, 
Till he be dead: But, here has beene Corbaccio,
Here has beene Voltore, here were others too,
I cannot nombre 'em, they were so many,
All gaping here for legacyes; but I, 
Taking the vantage of his naming you,

(Signior Coruino, Signior Coruino,) tooke 
Paper, and pen, and ynke, and there I ask'd him, 
Whom he would have his heir? Coruino: Who 
Should be executor, Coruino: And, 
To any question, he was silent too,
I still interpreted the noddes, he made,
(Through weakenesse) for consent: and sent home th’others,
Nothing bequeath’d them, but to crie, and curse.

CORV. O, my dear Mosca. Do’s he not perceiue vs?
MOS. No more then a blinde harper. He knowes no man,

Nothing bequeath’d them, but to crie, and curse.

Cf. Juvenal, Sat 10.236-38: ['Yes, by a cruel will he cuts off his own flesh and blood and leaves all his estate to Phiale—so potent was the breath of that alluring mouth' (Ramsay, trans., 211)].

continually.

This is from Horace, Sat 2.5.68-69, ... to which our poet is so much indebted: 'invenietque / nil sibi legatum praeter plorare suisque' ['and read them (i.e., the tablets of his father-in-law’s will) to himself, and shall find that nothing is left to him and his but—to whine’ (Fairclough, trans., 205)].

This satire, which bears some affinity to dramatic poetry, is the model which our poet chose to copy after.” REA (1919 [171]) adds: “Cf. also Lucian, Dialogues of the Dead 9,” for which he quotes the Lat. trans. of “Simylus and Polystratus”: “I would keep saying in public that I had left each of them as my heir, and each would believe me, and show himself more assiduous than ever in his flattery; but all the time my real will was different and I left them—instructions to go to the devil one and all” (Macleod, trans., 7:99). H&S (1950 [9:697]) counter with the Gr. text.

Volpone faintly murmurs Signior Corvino! [889–90] while his fingers shut upon the jewel [i.e. pearl]. This raises Corvino’s suspicion. Can he talk freely in the bedchamber?”

Playing the harp and singing ballads to it were traditional devices of blind beggars; but blindness in poets is sometimes accompanied by second sight, and Mosca knows that Volpone sees the situation clearly.”

The description in the foregoing speech of Mosca is as close an imitation from a passage in the tenth satire Juvenal.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:197n]): “Upton also points out the allusions to Juvenal; but they are too well known to call for particular notice.”

The symptoms that Mosca observes in this scene seem much like the following description from Hippocrates, De Morbis 2.21: “Sanum derepente invadit dolor circum caput, et statim vox intercipitur, et sterit, et os hiat: et si quis ipsum vocet aut moveat, solum suspirat, nihil autem intelligit, et multum mingit, et mingere se non sentient. […] Huismodi vero morbus senioribus maxime fit, et magis quam juunioribus” ['Pain suddenly seizes the head in a healthy person, and he at once becomes speechless, breathes stertorously, and gases with his mouth; if anyone calls to him or moves him, he moans; he comprehends nothing: he passes copious urine, but is not aware of it...']
Who't was that fed him last, or gaue him drinke:
Not those, he hath begotten, or brought vp
Can he remem ber. C O R V. Has he children? M O S. Bastards,
Some dozen, or more, that he begot on beggars,
Gypseys, and I ewes, and Black-moores, when he was drunke.
Knew you not that Sir? 'Tis the common fable.
The Dwarfe, the Foole, the Eunuch are all his;
H' is the true father of his familie,
In all, saue mee: but he has giu'n 'hem nothing.
C O R V. That's well, that's well. Art sure he does not heare vs?
M O S. Sure Sir? why looke you, credit your owne sense.
The Poxe approach, and adde to your diseases,
If it would send you hence the sooner, Sir.
For, your incontinence, it hath deseru'd it
Throughly, and throughly, and the Plague to boot.
(You may come neere, Sir) Would you would once close
Those filthy eyes of yours, that flowe with slime,
Like two frog-pits; and those same hanging cheekes, 
Couver’d with hide, in stead of skinne: (nay helpe, Sir) 

That looke like frozen dish-clouts, set on end. 

CORV. Or, like an old smoak’d wall, on which the raine 
Ran downe in streaus. MOS. Excellent, Sir, speake out; 

You may be lowder yet: A Culuerings, 
Discharged in his eare, would hardly bore it. 

CORV. His nose is like a common sewre, st ill running; 
MOS. Tis good: and, what his mouth? CORV. A very 
draught. 

MOS. O, stop it vp— CORV. By no meanes; MOS. ’Pray you 
let mee.

frog-pits (938)] KERNAN (1962 [64n]): “stagnant puddles in which frogs live.”
those same handing cheekes / Couver’d with hide, in stead of skinne (938-39)] UPTON (1749 [24]): “From Juvenal, [Sat 10.191-95]: ‘[deformem et tærum ante omnia vultum / dissimilæque sui] deformem pro cute pellem / pendentisque genas] et talis aspice rugas / quales, umbriæros ubi pandit Thabraca salus, / in vetula scalpit iam mater simia bucca’” [“Look first at the misshapen and ungainly face, so unlike its former self; see the unsightly hide that serves for skin; see the pendulous cheek and wrinkles like those which a matron baboon carves upon her aged jaws where Thabraca spreads her shaded glades” (Ramsay, trans., 207-9)]. Most editors reference or reprint the allusion to Juvenal identified by Upton, together with passing comments: WHALLEY (1756 [2:299n]); GIFFORD (1816 [3:197n]): “Upton also points out the allusions to Juvenal; but they are too well known to call for particular notice”; CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]) quotes GIFFORD’s (1803 [II. 285-87]) trans.: “A ghastly visage to themselves unknown, / For a smooth skin, a hide with scurf o’ergrown, / And such a a cheek as many a grandma ape / In Tabraca’s thick woods is seen to scrape.” REA (1919 [172]); H&S (1950 [9:698]). DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “Juvenal, Sat 10.191-95.” 


SD (941)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:198]) inserts the SD “[aloud.]” between Corvino’s sp and the line “Or, like an old smoak’d wall....” 


You may be lowder yet ... bore it (943-44)] H&S (1950 [9:698]): “Juvenal, Sat 10, 214-15: [quid refert, magni sedeat qua parte theatr i / qui vix cornucines exaudiet atque tubarum / concentus? clamor opus est, ut sentiat auris / quem dicit venisse puer, [quot suntiet horas]’ [“What matters it in what part of the great theatre he sits when he can scarce hear the horns and trumpets when they all blow together? The slave who announces a visitor, or tells the time of day, must needs shout in his ear if he is to be heard” (Ramsay, trans., 209)].” DONALDSON (1985 [620]): “Juvenal, Sat 10.214-15.” 

Faith, I could stifle him, rarely, with a pillow,
As well, as any woman, that should keepe him.
CORV. Do as you will, but I will be gone. MOS. Be so;
It is your presence makes him last so long.
CORV. I pray you, use no violence. MOS. No, Sir? why?
Why should you be thus scrupulous? 'pray you, Sir.
CORV. Nay, at your discretion. MOS. Well, good Sir, be gone.
CORV. I will not trouble him now, to take my Pearle?
MOS. Puh, nor your Diamant. What a needlesse care
Is this afflicts you? Is not all, here, yours?
Am not I here? whom you haue made? your creature?
That owe my beeing to you? CORV. Gratefull Mosca:
Thou art my friend, my fellow, my companion,
My partner, and shalt share in all my fortunes.
MOS. Excepting one. CORV.Whats that? MOS. Your gallant
wife, Sir.
Now, is he gone; we had no other meanes,
To shoote him hence, but this. VOLP. My diuine Mosca!
Thou hast to day out-gone thy selfe. Who is there?

SD (948) KERNAN (1962 [65]) inserts the SD “[Starting to smother him.]” after Mosca’s “O, stop it vp.”
rearely (950) KERNAN (1962 [65n]): “excellently.”
As well, as any woman, that should keepe him (951) ADAMS (1979 [21n]): “i.e., I could smother him as
wells as a nurse.”
scrupulous (955) KERNAN (1962 [65n]): “overly nice.”
I will not trouble him now, to take my Pearle? (957) GIFFORD (1816 [3:198n]): “i.e., to wrest it from
Volpone, who, in his supposed state of insensibility, had closed his hand upon it.” H&S (1950 [9:698]):
“which is tight in Volpone’s clutch.”
MOS. Excepting one. CORV. Whats that? MOS. Your gallant
wife, Sir.
Now, is he gone; we had no other meanes,
To shoote him hence, but this. VOLP. My diuine Mosca!
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“which is tight in Volpone’s clutch.”
SD (958) KERNAN (1962 [65]) applies the marginal SD “[Taking the jewels.]” to Mosca’s “Puh, nor your
Diamant.”
Am not I here? whom you haue made? your creature? (960) GIFFORD (1816 [3:198]) overrides the
authority of Q, F, and Whalley, and renders this line as: “Am not I here, whom you have made your
creature?” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]), re: Gifford’s alteration: “How Gifford has taken the spirit out of
this line!” REA (1919 [172]): “Cunningham very justly protests against the way Gifford had taken the spirit
out of this line by changing the punctuation: ‘Am not I here, whom you have made your creature?’ The
same protest would apply to many other lines as punctuated by Gifford.”
SD (965) GIFFORD (1816 [3:199]) adds the marginal SD “[Exit Corv.” after Mosca’s “Your gallant wife,
(1962 [66]): “[Exit Corvino hurriedly].”
SD (968) F (1616 [463]) adds the marginal SD Another knocks. which corresponds to 968. WALLEY (1756
[2:300]) adds the same SD between Volpone’s “Who is there?” and “I will be troubled with no more”; rpt.
I will be troubled with no more. Prepare

Me musicke, dances, banquets, all delights;
The Turk is not more sensual, in his pleasures,
Then will Volpone. Let me fee, a Pearle?
A Diamant? Plate? Cecchines? good mornings purchase;
Why, this is better then rob Churches, yet:

Or fat, by eating (once a mon'th) a man.
Who is 't? M O S. The beauteous Lady Would-bee, Sir.

Wife, to the English Knight, Sir Politique Would-bee, [D1*]
(This is the stile, Sir, is directed mee)
Hath sent to know, how you haue slept to night,

And if you would be visited. V O L P. Not, now.
Some three houres, hence— M O S. I told the Squire, so much.

V O L P. When I am high with mirth, and wine; then, then.

'Fore heauen, I wonder at the desperate valure
Of the bold English, that they dare let loose
Their wiues, to all encounters! M O S . Sir, this Knight
Had not his name for nothing, he is politique,
And knowes, how ere his wife affect strange ayres,
She hath not yet the face, to be dishonest.
But, had she Signor Coruino's wiues face—
V O L P . Has she so rare a face? M O S . O Sir, the wonder,
The blazing Starre of Italy; a wench
O' the first yeare, a beauty, ripe, as harvest!
Whose skinne is whiter then a Swan, all ouer!
Then siluer, snow, or lillies! a soft lip,
Would tempt you to eternity of kissing!
And flesh, that melteth, in the touch, to bloud!
Bright as your gold, and lovely, as your gold!

VOLP. Why had not I knowne this, before? MOS. Alas, Sir.

My selfe, but yesterday, discouer'd it.

VOLP. How might I see her? MOS. O, not possible;

Shee's kept as warily, as is your gold:

Neuer do's come abroad, neuer takes ayre,
But at a windore. All her lookes are sweet,

As the first grapes, or cherries; and are watch'd

As neare, as they are. VO LP. I must see her— MOS. Sir.

There is a guard, of ten spies thick, vpon her;

All his whole houshold: each of which is set
Vpon his fellow, and haue all thier charge,

When he goes out, when he comes in, examin'd.

VO LP. I will go see her, though but at her windore.

MOS. In some disguise, then? VO LP. That is true, I must

H&S (1950 [9:698]) add: “the correct reading here is ‘loto cycno,’ but J’s ‘all ouer’ shows that he adopted the reading ‘loto.’” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): cf. Und 2.4.21-30.
to bloud (996) KERNAN (1962 [67q]): “to blushes.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “passion.”
abroad (1003) KERNAN (1962 [67q]): “out of the house.”
neare (1006) KERNAN (1962 [67a]): “closely.” As the first grapes, or cherries; and are watch'd / As neare, as they are (1005-6) H&S (1950 [9:699]): “Catullus, Verongifk fJber 17.15-16: ‘et pueüa teneüulo delicatior haedo, /  asservanda nigerrimis diligendus uvis’” (“a girl too, more exquisite than a tender kidling, one who ought to be guarded more diligently than ripest grapes” (Cornish, trans., 25)).
There is a guard, of ten spies thick, vpon her (1007) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]): “I prefer that J wrote [i.e., the line as it appears here in Q and F, in contrast to Gifford’s “There is a guard of spies ten thick upon her”].
set / Vpon (1008-9) KERNAN (1962 [68n]): “set to watch.”
charge (1009) KERNAN (1962 [68n]): “responsibility.”
he (1010) KERNAN (1962 [68n + 212]): “Corvino.” Also, “On entering and leaving his house Corvino questions his guards on each particular of their instructions. He has, the passage suggests, turned his house into a fortress to guard his wife.”
Maintaine mine owne shape, still, the same: wee'll thinke.

**ACT. 2. SCENE. I.**

**POLITIQUE WOULD-BEE. PEREGRINE.**

Sir, to a wise man, all the world's his soile.

It is not *Italy*, nor *France*, nor *Europe*,

That must bound me, if my *Fates* call me forth.

Yet, I protest, it is no salt desire

Of seeing *Countries*, shifting a *Religion*,

Nor any dis-affection to the *State*

Where I was bred, (and, vnto which I owe

My dearest plots) hath brought me out; much lesse,

*Maintaine mine owne shape* (1013)

SCHELLING (1910 [1:639]), *shape*: "a suit by way of disguise."

KERNAN (1962 [212]): "In a play in which changing shape—i.e., appearance—is a leading theme, this line is thoroughly ambiguous; but Volpone's surface meaning is that he agrees with Mosca that he must wear a disguise when he goes out, for if the bilking of the fools is to succeed he must always be thought of as a dying man." DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "physical appearance (*OED*, 6b); Volpone's disguise and role (*OED*, 7, 8) will vary." HUTSON (1998 [496]): "(a) costume; (b) appearance." HARP (2001 [25n]): "My own disguise as an invalid."

**SD (1013)***


**SD (1014–15)***

GIFFORD (1816 [3:201]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD "ACT II. SCENE I. | St. Mark's Place; a retired corner before Corvino's House. | Enter Sir Politick Would-be, and Peregrine."; rpt. at 2.1 by KERNAN (1962 [69]): "[The Public Square, before Corvino's House.], ADAMS (1979 [23]): "St. Mark's Place, before Corvino's house | [Enter Sir Politick Would-be, and Peregrine]"; rpt. HARP (2001 [25]). DONALDSON (1985 [26]): "[A secluded corner of the Piazza, before Corvino's house] | [Enter Sir Politick Would-be and Peregrine]." HUTSON (1998 [243]): "[Enter Sir Politick and Peregrine]." For commentary specifically related to this scene and others that constitute the sub-plot, cf. app. *Technique.*

**to a wise man, all the world's his soile (1016)***


soile (1016) KERNAN (1962 [69n]): "country."

**protest (1019)***

See n. 726.


**dis-affection to (1021)***

KERNAN (1962 [69n]): "dissatisfaction with."

My dearest plots (1023)

REA (1919 [173]): "Sir Politique's plots are his most valued possession; there could, therefore, be no higher expression of gratitude to his native land."

plots (1023) SCHELLING (1910 [1:637]): "plan[s]." KERNAN (1962 [69n]): "schemes, projects"; ADAMS (1979 [23n]): "projects, notions"; rpt. HARP (2001 [26n]).
That idle, antique, stale, grey-headed project

Of knowing mens minds, and manners, with Vlisses:

But, a peculiar humour of my wiuues,

Layd for this height of Venice, to observe,

To quote, to learme the language, and so forth—

I hope you trauell, Sir, with licence?  P E R. Yes.

stale (1024) See n. 539.

project (1024) REA (1919 [173]): “To a maker of projects, as the speaker is, Ulysses would certainly appear as a fellow projector.”

Of knowing mens minds, and manners, with Vlisses (1025) GIFFORD (1816 [3:201n]): “The triumph of Sir Politick over poor Ulysses is an excellent trait of character.” REA (1919 [173]): “This reference to the first lines of the Ody is a commonplace. Ulysses was again and again referred to as the typical traveller. Cf. GUAZZO (1574 [11]): ‘And you who have eaten much salt out of your own house, are well able to judge how wise and discreet your travaille hath made you, and howe much you differ from those who neuer heard the ringing of other belles then these here. And therefore to shew the valour and wisdome of great Vlysses, with good reason it was said (and to his immortal praise): ‘That many Countries he had seene, And in theG maimers well was seene.’” REA (ibid.) adds: “It is evident that the speaker’s reason for travel is quite different from that of Ulysses, for which he expresses such contempt: he travels because his wife makes him, through a peculiar humour of her own, explained in these lines.” H&S (1950 [9:699]): “A reference to Ody 1.3, for which they quote the Gr. text: “Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose mind he learned” (Murray, trans., 1:2)], and its trans. in Horace, ArsPoet, 142: “(the man) who saw the wide world, its ways and cities all” (Fairclough, trans. 463). KERNAN (1962 [212]): “Ulysses is described in the opening lines of Ody as a man who ‘roamed the wide world and saw the cities of many peoples and learned their ways.’ He became for the Ren. the prototype of the curious traveler and a model for the young men of fashion who completed their education with a journey abroad. Their purpose was, of course, to know ‘men’s minds and manners,’ and Sir Politic reveals his own lack of sense in his scorn for this project.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “cf. Horace, Epist 1.2; I, Epig 128.2.”

peculiar (1026) HUTSON (1998 [495]): “private.”
humour (1026) KERNAN (1962 [69n]): “passion.”

Layd for this height (1027) H&S (1950 [9.699]): “Tomkis, Albumazar (1615), 1.5: ‘My Almanack, made for th’ Meridian / And height of Japan, giu’ th’ East India company.’” KERNAN (1962 [69n]): “aimed for the latitude. Sir Politic uses an elaborate manner of speech, and avoids the plain word whenever he can.” ADAMS (1979 [23n]): “The ‘humor’ of Sir Politic’s wife was exactly calculated, he thinks, to bring her to Venice.”


I hope you trauell, Sir, with licence (1029) REA (1919 [174]), per HOLT (1905): “Holt says that this means ‘travel freely, travel much; I hope that you are a man broadened by much travel.’ But this is not the meaning. Cf. SMITH (1907 [1:8–9]): ‘These young travellers, whether or not they were supported by the Queen, were not absolutely free, but by their licences (and without a licence to travel no one could go abroad) they were restricted to certain countries, and to certain periods of time.’ There is a passage very similar to the present scene at the beginning of WOTTON (1657 [2]): ‘And although his License forbade him to converse with any Fugitives, yet hearing (by common and credible report) that I was not so malicious as
POL. I dare the safer conversate — How long, Sir,


You ha’not beene with my Lord Ambassador?

P E R. Not yet, Sir. P O L. ’Pray you, what newes, Sir, vents our
climate?

I heard, last night, a most strange thing reported

By some of my Lords followers, and I long

To hear, how’t will be seconded! P E R. What was’t, Sir?

P O L. Marry, Sir, of a Rauen, that should build

In a ship royall of the Kings. P E R. This fellow

the rest of my Country-men, but lived only for my conscience abroad, he adventured now and then to use my company, and with me, and in my hearing, to use greater liberty of speech then with any other of our Nation. Whereupon I presurmed, that as I was trusted, so I might trust him again; and as he did conceal nothing from me, so I might adventure to reveal to him the secret projects of my inward cogitations.” H&S (1950 [9:699]): “Cf. HOWELL (1618 [1:10]): ‘I have got a warrant from the Lords of the Council to travel for three years anywhere, Rome and St Omer excepted.’ As late as 1765 Sir William Blackstone [in Commentaries on the Laws of England] noted that the King might prohibit any of his subjects from going into foreign parts without a license.”

licence (1029) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “passport.” ADAMS (1979 [23n]): “i.e., special permission to travel abroad.”

PER. Yes. / P O L. I dare the safer conversate (1029–30) BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:140]) accidentally drops this line. WHALLEY (1756 [2:302n]) notes this omission, which he has “restored ... from the old books.”

Lord Ambassador (1032) GIFFORD (1816 [3:202n]): “The celebrated Sir Henry Wotton. CORYAT (1611) found ‘his lordship’ here, he says, in 1608, and experienced ‘much kindness at his hands.’ He was introduced to Sir Henry by Mr. Richard Martin (the person to whom J dedicated Poet) in a letter which plays upon the simple vanity of our traveler, in a most arch and entertaining manner.” H&S (1950 [9:699]): “Wotton ... was at Venice from 1604 to 1612 and for two later periods.” KERNAN (1962 [213]): “Wotton, King James’ ambassador at Venice, was himself a noted intriguer.” See app. Genre, s.v. “Personal Satire.”

vents our climate (1033–34) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “comes from our country. Another of Sir Pol’s circumlocutions.” ADAMS (1979 [23n]): “i.e., ‘What news does our climate give off?’”

vents (1033) SCHELLING (1910 [1:641]): “vend(s), sell(s), give(s) outlet to.” H&S (1950 [9:699]): “publishes. Cf. Dise 58: ‘venting newes.’ Very common from about 1600 to about 1750 (OED),”


seconded (1037) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “confirmed.”

a Rauen that should build / In a ship royall of the Kings (1038–39) WHALLEY (1756 [2:303n]), per ed. asst. Zachary Grey: “Dr. Grey thinks this is probably an allusion to the swallows that built in Cleopatra’s admiral ship. See Plutarch, Life of Antony and Shakespeare, AntCleo 4,12.3–4”; repr. REA (1919 [174]).

H&S (1950 [9:699]): “WILSON (1927 [3]): ‘About the year 1477 a raven bred on Charing Cross, the harbinger of a mighty plague that lasted three years.’ Fenland Notes and Queries vol. 1, p. 206: On 29 Sept 1860 a cormorant lodged in the steeple of Boston church; this was ominous because the Lady Elgin, with the member for Boston and his son on board, were lost at sea that morning. The swallows on Cleopatra’s ship before Actium are recorded as ominous by Plutarch and by Sh.”

Rauen (1038) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “bird of ill omen.”

that should build (1038) H&S (1950 [9:699]): “The ‘should’ marks reported speech. Cf. Holinshed’s account of King Alfred’s burial at Winchester, Chronicles (1586 [1.16.149]): ‘The bodie of King Alured was first buried in the bishopes church: but afterwards, because the Canons raised a fond tale that the same

91

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Do’s he gull me, trow? or is gull’d? your name, Sir?

POL. My name is Politique Would-be. PER. O, that speaks him.

A Knight, Sir? POL. A poore Knight, Sir. PER. Your Lady

Lies here, in Venice, for intelligence

Of tires, and fashions, and behauiour,

Among the Curtizans? the fine Lady Would-be?

POL. Yes; Sir; the spider, and the bee, oft times,

Suck from one flower. PER. Good Sir Politique!

should walke a nights, his sonne king Edward remoued it into the new monasterie which he in his life time had founded.” KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “used here to mark reported speech.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “is said to have built.”

SD (1039–40) GIFFORD (1816 [3:202]) applies the SD “[Aside.]” to Peregrine’s “This fellow / Do’s he gull me, trow? or is gull’d?”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [70]), DONALDSON (1985 [27]), who insert the SD between Peregrine’s SP and his line.

gull (1040) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “fool.” ADAMS (1979 [23n]): “to ‘gull’ is constantly used in the sense of to fool to deceive.”

trow (1040) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “a mild expletive.” ADAMS (1979 [23n]): “do you think?”

speaks (1018) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “defines,” HARV (2001 [26n]): “identifies his character.”

Your Lady / Lies here, in Venice, for intelligence / Of tires, and fashions, and behauiour, / Among the Curtizans? (1042–45) REA (1919 [174]): “cf. Thomas Dekker, Gull’s Hornbook (1609), ch. 7: ‘a Country gentleman, that brings his wife up to learn the fashion, see the Tombs at Westminster, the Lyons in the Tower, or to take physicke.’” H&S (1950 [9.699]): “Cf. EMI (F), 2.5.44–46: ‘Well, I thanke heauen, I never yet was he, / That travaill’d with my sonne, before sixteene, / To shew him, the Vencrion correzofir.’”

lies (1043) KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “stays.”

intelligence (1043) SCHELLING (1910 [1:633]): “secret information, news.” KERNAN (1962 [70n]): “knowledge.”


Curtizans (1045) KERNAN (1962 [71n]): “fashionable prostitutes. Venice was famous for its courtesans.” ADAMS (1979 [24n]): “Venetian prostitutes were for hundreds of years reputed to be the most desirable in Europe, perhaps because Pietro Aretino advertised them so flatteringly in his pornographic poems.” DONALDSON (1985 [621; 716]): “of interest to Eng. visitors: cf. UV 10.18–19 + n.: “‘A punk here pelts him [i.e., Coryat] with eggs. How so? / For he did but kiss her, and so let her go.” “Coryate took a scholarly interest in the courtesans of Venice; he visited one in order to ‘view her own amourous person, hear her talk, observe her fashion of life’; but no more (1611 [271]).”

the spider, and the bee, oft times, / Suck from one flower (1046–47) REA (1919 [175]): “Sir Pol is unfortunately a little ambiguous in his choice of words; at first reading it seems that the spider is compared to himself, instead of to the courtesans, as he intends. The expression is a commonplace, found again and again among Eliz. writers. Cf. Arthur Golding, Ovid’s Metamorphosis (1565), ‘To the Reader,’ 163–65: ‘Then take these works as fragrant flowers most full of pleasant juice, / The which the bee, conveying home, may put to wholesome use / And which the spider, sucking on, to poison may convert.’ Or DAVISON (1602 [2:5]): ‘The Bee and Spider by diuerse power, / Sucke Hony’ & Poyfon from the self fame flower.’”

H&S (1950 [9.699]) note this expression as “proverbial; cf. B&F (1647 [2:509]), sc. 4: ‘Sweet poetry’s / A flower, where men, like bees and spiders, may / Bear poison, or else sweets and wax away; Be venom-
I crie you mercy; I haue heard much of you:

Tis true, Sir, of your Rauen. P O L. On your knowledge?

P E R. Yes, and your Lions whelping, in the Tower.

P O L. Another whelpe? P E R. Another, Sir. P O L. Now heaven!

What prodigies be these? The Fires at Berwike!

And the new Starre! these things concurring, strange!

And full of omen! Saw you those Meteors?

drawing spiders they that will; I'll be the bee, and suck the honey still.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “TILLEY (1950), B208.”

crie you mercy (1048) KERNAN (1962 [71n]): “ask your pardon (for not recognizing you).”
your (1050) KERNAN (1962 [71n]): “used indeterminately, or to mean roughly, ‘that you know of.’”

Lions whelping, in the Tower (1050f.) WHALLEY (1756 [2:303n]), per GREY: “Alluding to the lioness, which brought forth a young lion in the tower (5 Aug 1604).” GIFFORD (1816 [3:202–3n]): “The birth of the first is thus gravely recorded by John Stow: ‘Sunday, the fifth of August (1604), a lioness, named Elizabeth, in the Tower of London, brought forth a lions whelp, which lions whelp lived not longer than till the next day.’ The other, which is spoken of here, was whelped, as Stow also carefully informs us, on the 26 Feb. 1606.—As the former had lived so short a time, James ordered this to be taken from the dam, and brought up by hand; by which wise mode of management, the animal was speedily dispatched after his brother. These were the first whelps produced, in a tame state, in this country, and perhaps in Europe.” H & S (1950 [9:700]) reproduce the text from John Stow, The Annals, or, Generall Chronicle of England (1615 [844]), under the year 1604: ‘Sunday the 5. of August, a Lionsse named Elizabeth, in the Tower of London, brought forth a whelp, which lions whelp liued not longer then till the next day.’” Also, under 1604–5 [857]: “The 26. of Febrary was another Lion whelped in the Tower of London by the foresaid Lionesse, which was taken from the Dam as soone as the same was whelped, and brought vp by hand according as the king commanded: but this Lions whelp also dyed about some xvi. days after in the moneth of March. Thus much of these whelpes haue I observed, and put in memory, for that I haue not read of any the like in this land, before this present yeere....” KERNAN (1962 [213]): “A lioness, Elizabeth, was at this time kept in the Tower of London, and she produced cubs in 1604 and again in 1605.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “Cf. JulCaes 2.1.17.”

prodigies (1052) SCHELLING (1910 [1:637]): “monster[s],” KERNAN (1962 [71n]): “strange omens.”

HUTSON (1998 [495]): “ominous portent.” See also 1059.

Fires at Berwike! (1052) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]) notes that this prodigy had been “recorded by James Melville in his Diary” (1604 [569]): repr. REA (1919 [175]). CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]) also notes that “in this same January, 1605, Dudley Carleton writes to Chamberlain of an ‘apparition near Berwick of armies fighting.’” H & S (1950 [9:700]): “Dudley Carleton, Domestic State Paers, James I, 1.12.9, writes to Chamberlain on 15 Jan 1605: ‘We heare of a strange apparition on holydowne hilles [Haldon Hill] neere Barwick of armies and fighting men, and such volies of shott were thought to be heard, that it gave the alaram to both y’ borders.’” KERNAN (1962 [213]): “In 1604 there were reports of ghostly armies fighting at Berwick, on the Scottish border, and Kepler discovered a new star in the constellation Serpensius. Mass hallucinations were very common in England during this period, and there were many reports of battles in the clouds and other ominous sights.” ADAMS (1979 [24n]): “the aurora borealis over Berwick in January 1605 was said to resemble armies of men fighting in the sky”; rpt. HARP (2001 [26a]). DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “reported in Jan 1605.”

the new Starre (1053) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]) notes that this prodigy had also been “recorded by James Melville in his Diary” (1604 [569]): “[The] starre appeirit and cleGly schynit aboune Edinbruche, hard on by the sonne, at ten hours, eleven hours, and at twelve and ane of the clock, in the middel day; prognosticating undouddDe strang alteradounes, and changes in the world’ (506); repr. REA (1919 [175]). H & S (1950 [9:700]): “E. B. Knobel in Shakespeare’s England (1916 [1:455]): ‘On October 17, 1604, Kepler had discovered the new star which had burst out in the constellation Serpentarius, and which
PER. I did Sir. POL. Fearful! Pray you Sir, confirm me,
Were there three Porcpisces seene, above the Bridge,
As they giue out? PER. Sixe, and a Sturgeon, Sir.
POL. I am astonish'd. PER. Nay Sir, be not so;
Ile tell you a greater prodigie, then these—

POL. What should these things portend! PER. The very day
(Let me be sure) that I put forth from London,
There was a Whale discouer'd, in the riuier,
As high as Woolwich, that had waited there

surpassed Jupiter in brightness!” ADAMS (1979 [24n]): “A new star appeared in Oct 1604, and the aurora borealis over Berwick in Jan 1605 was said to resemble armies of men fighting in the sky”; rpt. HARP (2001 [26n]). DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “discovered by Kepler, Oct 1604.”

Metors (1054) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]) notes that “the meteor is very picturesquely described” by James Melville in his Diary” (1604 [569]): “On the seventh day of December about one hour before the sone rose, the moone shyninge cleer two days before the change, in ane clame and pleasant morning, thair wes at ane instant sein gryt inflammanwnes of fyre flauichits in the Eisterne hemisphere, and suddenstie thaireftir thair wes hard a gryt crack, as of a gryt cannon, and sensiblie market a gryt glob or balluat, fyrricculariit, with a mychde quhissilling noyse, quhilk leA behind it a blew traine and draught in the air, most lyk ane serpent in mony foulds and linkit wimples: the head quhairof breathing out flames and smoke, as it wald directlie invade the moone, and swallow it hir up.... Heir was a sujecte for Poyett and Prophett to play upon”; repr. REA (1919 [175-76]). KERNAN (1962 [213]): “Metors, because they are a disrupdon of the ordinary pattern of the heavens, were taken as ominous portenG o f impending social disorder.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “commonly regarded as ill omens.”

three Porcpisces seene, above the Bridge (1056) Most editors reprint or refer to the entry of 1606 recorded in JohnStow, Annales (1615): “The 19 of Jan. a great Propus was taken allie at Westham, in a smalle creeke a mile, & a halfe within the land...”; rf. GIFFORD (1816 [3:203n]), H&S (1950 [9:700]), et al. GIFFORD (1816 [3:203n]) adds: “The references to the remaining prodigies, I have (fortunately for the reader’s patience) mislaid, or overlooked among my notes.” REA (1919 [176]) adds: “John Aubrey, Miscellanies (1696 [157 ed., 41]) records a similar event: ‘A little before the death of Oliver, the Protector, a whale came into the river Thames, and as taken at Greenwich, —— feet long. ‘Tis said Oliver was troubled at it.’” See app. Dates & Contexts.

Porcpisces (1056) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500]) introduces the hyphenated spelling and notes, “I here, as elsewhere, wrote porc-pisces, a way of spelling which would save trouble to etymologists”; repr. REA (1919 [176]). H&S (1950 [9:700]): “For the form ‘porpice,’ cf. Sej 5:622; [for porpuse, cf. EMO, 4.3.82.]”

the Bridge (1056) KERNAN (1962 [71n]): “London Bridge.”
giue out (1057) KERNAN (1962 [71n]): “report.”

PER. Sixe... astonish’d (1057-58) BOOKSELLERS (1716-17 [2:141]) om. this line, later restored by WHALLEY (1756 [2:304; 2:304n]).

Whale discouer’d, in the riuier, / As high as Woolwich (1062-63) WHALLEY (1816 [2:304n]), per Grey, notes the whale-sighting “mentioned by Stow, as happening in Jan 1605.” Also, “In this same January, 1605, Dudley Carleton writes to [John] Chamberlain of a “seal taken in the Thames” (Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603–1624, Jacobean Letters, ed. Maurice Lee, Jr. [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1972]). GIFFORD (1816 [3:203n]): “duly noted by Stow (1615 [881]): ‘The 19th of January (1605) ... and within a few days after, a very great whale came up as high as Woolwich; and when she tasted the fresh water, the land, she returned into the sea.”’ H&S (1950 [9:700]): “John Stow, Annales (1615), under 1606: ‘The 19 of Jan. ... and within few days after, a very great Whale...”
Of the Stode-Fleeete. P O L. Is't possible? B eleeue it, 'Twills either sent from Spaine, or the Arch-duke, Spinola's Whale, vpon my life, my credit;

came vp within 8. mile of London whose bought was scene diuers times aboute water, and judged to exceede the length of the longest ship in the riever, and when she tasted the fresh water and sented the land she returned into the Sea' (ed. Howes, 880). For the portent Sir Politic finds in the whale, cf. Chamberlain's letter to Carleton on 19 Nov 1602, SPD, Elizabeth, cclxxv:59: 'Our Commissioners and the Danes are met at Breme; the Queenes ship that carried them, coming backe with other in her companie, met with a huge number of whales on the coast of Holland, that indured many shot and plaid many gambols. The like number hath not been seene together, specially in these parts, for they say above two hundred <years>. Here is much descanting what they should portend more then the tempest that followed.'" KERNAN (1962 [213]): "A whale did come up the Thames at this time, within eight miles of London, and the fearefull believed that it intended to pump all the water from the river onto the land." DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "On 19 Jan 1606 a porpoise was taken at West Ham, 1.5 miles up river; a few days later, a whale was seen in the Thames eight miles from London. J may be indirectly satirizing John Stow, who records such 'monstrous observations' as these in his Chronicle: see ConvDrum 599-600": "John Stow had monstrous observations in his Chronicle and was of his craft a Tailour." H&S (1925 [1:174]): "I ridicule [Stow's records in Volp] in the character of Sir Politic Would-be."

**Stode-Fleeete (1065)** WHALLEY (1756 [2:304n]): "We should now perhaps say, the Hamburg-fleet; Stode is about twenty miles distant from Hamburg, on the other side of the Elb"; repr. REA (1919 [176]): H&S (1950 [9:700])": "Stode, now Stade, at the mouth of the Elbe, twenty-two miles north-west of Hamburg." KERNAN (1962 [72n]): "Stade: city at the mouth of the Elbe." ADAMS (1979 [24n]): "The Stade fleet was the Danish fleet at the mouth of the Elbe river. How a whale in the Thames could subvert it is not very clear."

**Arch-duke (1066)** F (1616 [465]) Arch-dukes. H&S (1950 [9:700]), with reference to the plural form of F: "the title given to the Infanta Isabella and her husband Albert when the Spanish Netherlands were ceded to them before the death of Philip II of Spain." KERNAN (1962 [72n]): "ruler of the Spanish Netherlands." DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "the Infanta Isabella and her husband Albert of Austria, rulers of the Spanish Netherlands."

**Spinola's Whale (1067)** REA (1919 [176]) quotes HOLT (1905): "Ambrosio Spinola, Marquis de Spinola (1569–1630), was a general in the service of Spain, at this time operating in the Netherlands. In 1604 he forced Ostend to surrender, and his fame as a general was increasing with every post. He was popularly thought to be the patron and inventor of all kinds of wonderful devices for the destruction of hostile forces. Especially in StadNews 3.2.87–94, when his fame was even greater, does J ridicule the wide spread belief in his being the originator of novel and impossible schemes: 'But what if spinola have a new Project: / To bring an army ouer in corke-shooes, / And land them, here, at Harwich? all his horse / Are shod with corke, and fourscore pieces of ordinance, / Mounted vpon cork-carriages, with bladders, / In stead of wheels, to runne the passage ouer / At spring-tide'"; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:700–1]), who add: "cf. Charles Herle, Wordly Policy and Moral Prudence (1654 [27]), the cock-and-bull story of 'Spinola's Whale that should have been hir'd to have drown'd London, by snufing up the Thames and spouting it upon the City.'": CORRIGAN (1961 [26n]), Spinola: "a Spanish general (1569–1630)." KERNAN (1962 [213]), Spinola: "The Spanish general in the Netherlands at this time. He was extremely successful and was believed by the gullible in England to be fantastically clever in devising cunning schemes and 'secret weapons.' ADAMS (1979 [24n]): "Sir Politic's suggestions about the origins of the whale all involve Spa[n], the enemy of England. It comes either from Spain itself, or from the Archduke Albert, ruler of the Spanish Netherlands in the name of the Spanish king Philip II, or from Ambrosio Spinola, general of the Spanish armies in Holland"; rpt. HARP (2001 [27n]). DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "Rumoured 'secret weapon' of the Spanish commander in the Netherlands." HUTSON (1998 [503]): "contemporary commander of the Catholic forces in the Netherlands."
Will they not leave these projects? Worthy Sir,

Some other newes. P E R. Faith, Stone, the Foole, is dead;

And they do lack a tauerne-Foole, extremely.


You thought him not immortall? O this Knight

(Were he well knowne) would be a precious thing

To fit our English Stage: He that should write

But such a fellow, should be thought to faine

Extremely, if not maliciously. P O L. Stone dead?

Stone, the Foole (1069) GIFFORD (1816 [3:204n]): “I have already alluded to the castigation of Mass Stone [rf. n. 559-60] the following passage relating to him is curious. On the expensive preparations for the Earl of Northampton’s embassy to Spain, Sir Dudley Carlton thus write to Mr. Winwood: ‘My Lord Admiral’s number is 500, and he swears 500 oaths he will not admit of one man more. But if he will stand to that rule, and take in one as another will desire to be discharged, in my opinion, all men’s turn will be served. There was great execution done lately upon Stone the fool, who was well whipped in Bridewell, for a blasphemous speech, “that there went sixty fools into Spaine, besides my Lord Admiral and his two sons.” But he is now at liberty again, and for this unexpected release, gives his lordship the praise of a very pittiful lord. His comfort is, that the news of El Senor Piedra (i.e. Seignior Stone) will be in Spaine before our ambassador’ (Winwood’s Memorials, 2:52); repr. REA (1919 [177]). H&S (1950 [9:701]): “Two anecdotes of him survive. (1) Carleton writes from Greenwich to Winwood, 10 March 1605, on the Earl of Nottingham’s voyage to Spain as ambassador, Memorials, 2:52: [printed by GIFFORD above]; (2) John Selden, Table-Talk, ed. Reynolds, 62–63: ‘A gallant is above ill words. An example we have in the old lord of Salisbury, who was a great wise man. Stone had called some lord about court, fool, the lord complained, and has Stone whipped: Stone cries, I might have called my lord of Salisbury fool often enough, before he would have had me whipped.’” KERNAN (1962 [213]): “A well-known London clown who had been flogged not long before Volp was written for making mocking speeches about the Lord Admiral.” ADAMS (1979 [25]): “Stone the fool was an actual figure, about whom various anecdotes survive”; rpt. HARP (2001 [27n]). DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “His death-date is unknown; he was alive—and whipped—in March 1605.”

Mas’ (1071) GIFFORD (1816 [3:204n]): “In the margin of his copy, Whalley has written ‘Mass, an abridgement of Master.’ The thing scarcely deserved a note; but he is wrong: Mass is an abridgment of Messer, an old It. word, familiarly applied to a priest, or a person above the lower rank of life.” CORNWALL (1838 [810]): “an abbrev. of the It. Messer, applied as the title of a gentleman.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:500–1]): “Gifford is certainly wrong about Mass being a contraction of Messer. In StaphNews we find ‘Mas. Broker’ three times; in NF, ‘Mas. Bartholomew Burst,’ and in Tub, ‘Mass Constable’ and ‘Mass Basket.’” SCHELLING (1910 [1:6341]: “abbrev. for master.” REA (1919 [176–77]): “Upton [sic] comments correctly that MASS’ is a contraction for Master; but Gifford protests that it is rather from the It. Messer. Cf. the following lines from Robert Greene, FrBacon (1594 [826 + 865]): ‘Indeed, mas doctor’; ‘And yet, maister doctor.’” H&S (1950 [9:701]) per the OED: “‘A vulgar or jocular shortening of Master, usually followed by a proper name or an official title.’ So J often uses it.”

SD (1072–76) GIFFORD (1816 [3:204]) applies the SD “Aside.” to Peregrine’s “O this Knight ...”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [72]), DONALDSON (1985 [28]), who insert the SD between Peregrine’s SP and the beginning of this aside.

To fit our English Stage (1074) H&S (1950 [9:701]): “cf. TwelNight 3.4.127–28, Fabian of Malvolio: ‘If this were play’d upon the a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.”
PER. Dead, Lord! how deeply Sir you apprehend it?
He was no kinsman to you? POL. That I know of.
Well! that same fellow was an vnknowne Foole.

PER. And yet you know him, it seemes? POL. I did so, Sir,
I knew him one of the most dangerous heads
Living within the State, and so I held him.
PER. Indeed Sir? POL. While he liu'd, in action.
He has receiu'd weekly intelligence,
Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,
(For all parts of the world) in cabages;
And those dispens'd, againe, to Ambassadors,
In oranges, musk-melons, apricocks,
Limons, pome-citrons, and such like: sometimes,
In Colchester-oysters, and your Selsey-cockles.

apprehend (1077) KERNAN (1962 [72n]): “both ‘feel’ and ‘understand.’”
He was no kinsman to you? (1078) REA (1919 [177]): “This seems to have furnished a suggestion for
brother. My half brother he is, no nearer upon Honour. / Mira. Then ’tis possible he may be but half a
fool.’”
That (1078) KERNAN (1962 [72n]): “not that.”
vnknowne (1079) KERNAN (1962 [73n]): “misinterpreted.”
dangerous heads (1081) KERNAN (1962 [73n]): “subversive persons.”
action (1083) KERNAN (1962 [73n]): “doing—i.e., he was an active spy, not merely passively unfriendly
to the state.”
He has receiu’d weekly intelligence ... in cabages (1084–86) Whalley (1756 [2:305n]): “This is not
an expression thrown out at random, or by chance. Cabbages were not originally the natural growth of
England; but about this time they were sent to us from Holland, and so became the product of our kitchen-
gardens. I mention this circumstance, trifling as it seems, because it serves to point out that propriety and
decorum, which so strongly mark the character of J”; repr. Gifford (1816 [3:205n]), who then cites John
Evelyn, Acetaria: A Discourse of Sallets (1699 [17]): “‘Tis scarce an hundred years since we first had
cabbages out of Holland, Sir Arth. Ashley, of Wiburg St. Giles, in Dorsetshire, being, as I am told, the first
who planted them in England.” REA (1919 [177]) repr. Whalley and Gifford, but adds: “in DevAss
(2.1.166–67), Fitzdottrel makes a remark that seems reminiscent of Sir Pol’s theory: ‘Much knavery may
be vented in a pudding, / Much bawdy intelligence: They are shrewd ciphers.’” H&S (1950 [9:701]) repr.
Donaldson (1985 [621]): “Then regularly imported from Holland.”
intelligence (1084) Schelling (1910 [1:633]): “secret information, news.”
apricocks (1088) Cunningham (1875 [3:501]): “When the folio has apricotes [and Whalley reads
“apricots”], as we should call the fruit now, I see no reason for altering to an older form” [as Gifford does,
per Q].
Limons (1089) Cunningham (1875 [3:501]), as with the archaic apricocks in 1088, objects to Gifford’s
Devass 4.4.25; in use from the 16th to the 18th c.”
PER. You make me wonder! POL. Sir, vpon my knowledge.

Nay, I, haue obseru’d him, at your publique Ordinary,
Take his advertisement, from a Traveller
(A conceald States-man) in a trencher of meate;

And, instantly, before the meale was done,
Conuay an answere in a tooth-pick. PER. Strange!
How could this be, Sir? POL. Why, the meate was cut
So like his character, and so layd, as he
Must easily read the cipher. PER. I haue heard,
He could not read, Sir. POL. So, ’twas giuen out,
(In pollitie,) by those, that did implo[y him:

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**Colchester-oysters (1090)** Rea (1919 [177]) quotes Holt (1905): “Colchester is a sea-port of Essex, England. It early acquired fame for its oyster-fisheries, and among the city plate is a silver oyster, which is used as a standard of size in regulating the fishery.” H&S (1950 [9:701]): “famous from Roman times. Howell (1615 [1:139]): ‘I have sent for your welcome home (in part) two barrels of Colchester oysters which were provided for my Lord of Colchesta himself, therefore I presume they are good and all green finned.’” Adams (1979 [25n]): “The oysters and cockles specified here [and below] were the best shellfish to be had in England and were often served to royalty”; rpt. Harp (2001 [28n]).

**Selsey-cockles (1090)** Rea (1919 [177–78]) reproduces Holt’s notes: “Selsey (or Selsea) is a large village on the shore of Sussex, England, eight and one half miles south of Chichester. It is still noted for its fine sands and has a considerable crab, lobster, and prawn fishery.” H&S (1950 [9:701]) per The Egerton Papers (1840 [352]): In the list of presents to Lord Ellesmere to enable him to entertain Queen Elizabeth at Harefield in 1602, Mr. Robert Sackville sends ‘Sellsie Cocelles, xij.’”

Nay, I, haue obseru’d him, at your publique Ordinary (1092) H&S (1950 [9:701]) note the line as an Alexandrine: EMI 2.1.87. So 3.7.15 [i.e., 1938].

**Ordinary (1092)** Hutson (1998 [495]): “tavern offering fixed-price meals.”


**Conceal States-man (1071)** Kernan (1962 [73n]): “disguised agent.”

**States-man (1071)** Donaldson (1985 [621]): “agent.”


**Weekly Intelligence ... Tooth-pick (1061–73)** Kernan (1962 [213]): “All of Sir Politic’s descriptions of plots, spies, and methods of espionage are burlesques not of genuine activities but of those imagined by the foolish and timorous in the days immediately after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot…” See app. Dates & Contexts.

**Meate was cut / So like his character (1097–98)** H&S (1950 [9:701]): “Serving up meat cut in fantastic shapes was a fashion of the time; rf. Cym 4.2.49: ‘But his neat cookery! he cuts our roots in characters’; Fletcher (1637 [10:255]), 4.1: ‘never knew a blade above a penknife, / And how to cut his meat in characters.”

But he could read, and had your languages.
And to't, as sound a noodle—PER. I have heard, Sir,
That your Baboons were spies; and that they were
A kinde of subtle Nation, neare to China:
P O L. I, I, your Mamuluchi. Faith, they had
Their hand in a French plot, or two; but they
Were so extremely giuen to women, as
They made discovery of all: Yet I
Had my aduises here (on wensday last)
From one of their owne coat, they were return'd,

polltie (1101) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:501]) notes, as with the other archaic spellings retained by Gifford and changed in later editions, that "policy" had been altered "as required by rhythm." KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "policy: craft." ADAMS (1979 [25n]): "For political reasons, as part of his cover story;"

had your languages (1102) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "was a skilled linguist."

to't (1103) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "in addition."

noddle (1103) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "head, intelligence."

Baboons (1104) REA (1919 [178]): "With the remarks here on baboons and their characteristics, cf. TOPSELL (1607 [9]): '... it is the error of vulgar people, to think that Baboons are men, differing only in the face or visage. ...' They will imitate all humane actions, loving wonderfully to wear garments, and of their own accord they clothe themselves in the skins of wild beasts they have killed, they are as lustful and venereal as Goats, attempting to defile all sorts of women.... There was such a beast brought to the French King, his head being like a Dogs, and his other parts like a mans, having legs, hands and arms naked like a man, and a white neck: he did eat food, and eat it in his hands, and putting it to his mouth, that any man would think he had underfoot humane conditions: he flood upright like a man, and sat down like a man. He discerned men and women, and above all loved the company of women, and young maidens....'" H&S (1950 [9:701-2]): "cf. Anon., Sir Giles Goosecappe (1606), 1.1: 'A my worde (Will) is the great Baboone, that was to be seene in Southwarke'; Alch 5.1.14: 'Baboons.'"

subtle (1105) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "cunning and devious"; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [497]).

Mamuluchi (1106) H&S (1950 [9:702]): "The plural of Mameluks follows the It. form. According to Sir Politic, these Egyptians live 'neere to China.'" KERNAN (1962 [213]): "Plural form of 'Mameluke,' former Christian slaves of the Turks who became rulers of Egypt during the 13th c. Sir Pol is simply seizing on any rare word to support his pretense of knowing all about every matter of state." ADAMS (1979 [26n]): "the It. form of mamelukes, a group of slaves and warriors originally from Circassia, in Asia Minor, who held or controlled the throne of Egypt for many years"; rpt. HARP (2001 [29n]). DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "Mamelukes, Caucasian slaves who seized power in Egypt in 1254 and became the ruling class (they were not baboons, and not from China)."

giuen to (1108) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "fond of."

discovery (1109) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "disclosure."

aduises (1110) H&S (1950 [9:702]): "dispatches; the word has a diplomatic ring. MagLad, 1.7.41: 'Avises.'" KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "dispatches"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [621]).

wensday (1110) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:501]) notes, as with other archaic spellings retained by Gifford and changed in later editions, that "Wednesday" had been contracted "as required by rhythm."

From one of their owne coat (1111) REA (1919 [178]): "I suppose this is a reference to Sir Henry Wotton's pet ape." For commentary directed related to J's use of Sir Politic as a satiric caricature of Sir Henry Wotton, cf. app. Genre, under "Personal Satire."

coat (1111) KERNAN (1962 [74n]): "party, faction"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [621]).
Made their relations (as the fashion is)
And now stand faire, for fresh imployment. P E R. 'Hart!
This Sir Poll: will be ignorant of nothing.

It seemes Sir, you know all? P O L. Not all Sir. But,
I have some generall notions; I do loue
To note, and to observe: Though I liue out,
Free from the actiuе torrent, yet I’d marke
The currents, and the passages of things,

For mine own priuate use; and knowe the ebbes,
And flowes of State. P E R. Beleeue it, Sir, I hold
My selfe, in no small tie, vnto my fortunes,
For casting mee thus luckily, vpon you;
Whose knowledge (if your bounty equaile it)

May do me great assistance, in instruction
For my behauiour, and my bearing, which
Is yet so rude, and raw— P O L. Why? came you forth
Empty of rules, for traueyie? P E R. Faith, I had

relations (1112)] KERNAN (1962 [74n]): “reports.”
stand faire (1113)] KERNAN (1962 [74n]): “are ready.”
'Hart! (1113)] KERNAN (1962 [74n]): “God’s Heart; curses were frequently formed in this manner, e.g.,
'swounds, God’s wounds.”
SD (1113–14)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:204]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.” to Peregrine’s “’Hart! / This Sir Poll: will be ignorant of nothing”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [74]), ADAMS (1979 [26]), DONALDSON (1985 [30]), HARp (2001 [29]), each with the SD between Peregrine’s SP and his aside.
I do loue / To note, and to observe (1116–17)] REA (1919 [178]): “Another reference to the famous collection of notes. With the expression of his ideal of life as here given by Sir Pol compare the following lines from a short poem to Sir Henry Wotton, entitled His Altoria, included in Henry Peacham’s Minerva Britannia (1612): ‘You, you, that ouer-looke the clouds of care, / And smile to see a multitude of Antes, / Vpon this circle, striuing here and there, / For thine and mine, yet pine amid their wantes; / While yee yourselves, sit as spectatms hee, / From action, in their follies tragedie.’”
note ... observe (1117)] UPTON (1749 [48]): “Note and quote are synonymous words.” Cf. nn. 1028 and 2450–51.
Though I liue out, / Free from the actiuе torrent (1117–18)] KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “though I am not actively engaged in political affairs.”
in no small tie (1122)] KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “much obliged.”
casting (1123)] SCHELLING (1910 [1:627]), cast: “flight of hawks.”
if your bounty equaile it (1124)] KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “if you are as generous as you are wise.”
rude (1127)] See n. 78.
Some common ones, from out that vulgar Grammar,

Which hee, that cri’d Italian to mee, taught mee.

Why, this it is, that spoiles all our braue blouds,

Trusting our hopeful gentry vnto Pedants,

Fellowes of out-side, and mere barke. You seeme

vulgar Grammar (1129)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:501]): “Robert Southey, Southey’s Common-place Book (1876 ed.?, [4:325]), regrets that the commentators have not looked for that grammar and its rules. Most likely it was not in print.” H&S (1950 [9:702]): “The first It. grammar in Eng. was William Thomas’s Principal Rules of Italian Grammar, with a Dictionaries (1550); it was followed by Henry Grantham’s trans. of Scipio Lentulo’s An Italian Grammar (1575); Desainlieu’s (Claude Holyband), The Italian Schoolemaister: Contayning Rules for the Perfect Pronouncing of the Italian Tongue (1597); John Sandford, A Grammar to the Italian Tongue (1605).” KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “ordinary grammar book.”

Which hee, that cri’d Italian to mee, taught mee (1130) F (1616 [466]) and BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:143]) read “cry’d.” WHALLEY (1756 [2:307n]), per his ed. ass. Symson, suggests an unauthorized correction to read, with reasons following. “I doubt the truth of cry d; if chiamare had been used in the sense of indottrinare, I should have liked it much, but it is not so. What if we should alter it then to ‘He that read Italian to me’ (Symson).” Whalley continues: “The same correction stands in the margin of Mr. Theobald’s copy; but if the reader does not acquiesce in the conjecture of these learned gentlemen, we may imagine the expression was humourously designed to imitate the tone, or whining manner of the teacher. Amongst the old Romans, the proper tuning and measuring the words, was usually taught to children by their first masters; and this first reading Macrobius, Saturnalia 1.24, calls by the name singing: ‘Videris enim mihi ita adhuc Vegilianos habae versus, quahter eos pueri, magistris praelegentibus, canere’ (“for it seems to me that for you Vergil’s verse is, still, what it was for the rest of us in boyhood, when our masters would read it to us and we would recite (Lat. canere: “to sing”) it to them” (Davies, trans.,154–55]). I think it therefore not improbable that the poet here intended the pedant’s manner in teaching his scholar the proper accent.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:207n]): “Some learned gentleman,” proposed, (as Mr. Whalley informs us,) to ‘correct’ the text here, and alter cried to read. “If chiamare (says one of these “learned gentlemen,” who appears to be poor Symson) ‘had been used in the sense of indottrinare, I should have liked it much!’ This is not a bad specimen of the manner in which notes on our old poets are sometimes composed. utterly unaquainted with the style and idiom of foreign languages, the commentators run to their dictionaries, and with great labor pick out just enough to expose their own ignorance, and mislead the unlearned reader. Symson knew that clamare was “to cry”; but he wanted the It. synonym, he therefore turns to chiamare, and boldly produces it at once, as an equivalent to the Eng. word cry, though it merely means “to call”! We have too many Symsons now-a-days. To return to Jonson. He had certainly heard enough of it, to be sensible that it was read with a kind of musical intonation; and this is just what he means. Peregrine’s language is purposefully affected, to set off the simplicity of Sir Politick.” CORNWALL (1838 [808]): “to speak it as It. poetry is generally read, in a musical cadence.” SCHELING (1910 [1:629]): “speak in a musical cadence; intone or declaim; cry up.” H&S (1950 [9:702]): “Sir Politick’s affection for ‘taught,’ suggested by the variations of pitch in pronouncing Italian.” KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “cried: pronounced, i.e., taught.” ADAMS (1979 [26n]): “Chanted; i.e., taught.” REA (1919 [178]) adds: “Bark was not uncommon in the meaning of outward appearance, or
To be a gentleman, of ingenuous race—
I not profess it, but my fate hath beene
To be, where I have beene consulted with,
In this high kinde, touching some great mens sonnes,
Persons of bloud, and honor—PER. Who be these, Sir?

ACT. 2. SCENE. 2.

MOSCA. POLITIQVE. PEREGRINE.
VOLPONE. NANO. GREGE.

Vnder that windore, there't must be. The same:

POL. Fellowes, to mount a banke! Did your instructer
In the deare Tongues, neuer discourse to you

Of the Italian Montebankes? PER. Yes, Sir. POL. Why,
Here shall you see one. PER. They are Quack-saluers,

clothing.” KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “mere show and pretense—‘bark’ seems also to be a poor pun going back
to ‘cried’ [1130].” ADAMS (1979 [26n]): “Superficial and ignorant teachers.”
ingenuous race (1134) KERNAN (1962 [75n]): “noble lineage.”
ingenuous (1134) SCHELLING (1910 [1:633]): “generous.”
I not profess it (1135) KERNAN (1962 [76n]): “It (the education of high-born young men) is not my
profession.”
high kinde (1137) KERNAN (1962 [76n]): “important matter.”
touching (1137) KERNAN (1962 [76n]): “bearing on.”
bloud (1138) KERNAN (1962 [76n]): “nobility.”

SD (1138) GIFFORD (1816 [3:208]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with
the SD “[Enter MOSCA and NANO disguised, followed by persons with materials for erecting a Stage],”
which he inserts between Would-be’s “Persons of bloud, and honor” and Peregrine’s question, “Who be
these, Sir?” ADAMS (1979 [26]) inserts the SD “[seeing people approach]” between Peregrine’s SP and his
“How be these, Sir?”, rpt. HARP (2001 [30]). HUTSON (1998 [247]): “[Enter MOSCA and NANO.]”
SD (1140-41) KERNAN (1962 [76]) replaces the original mass entry with the SD “[Enter MOSCA and Nano,
disguised as Mountebank’s attendants, with materials to erect a scaffold stage. A crowd follows them.]”; rpt.
at 2.2 by ADAMS (1979 [26]) with: “[Enter MOSCA and NANO disguised, followed by persons with
materials for erecting a stage]”; rpt. HARP (2001 [30]). DONALDSON (1985 [30]): “[Enter Mosca and Nano
disguised as mountebank’s attendants; they proceed to erect a stage].”

Fellows, to mount a banke! (1143) FLORIO (1611 [321]), s.v. Ménta in báncó: “a Mountibanke.” UPTON
(1749 [25]): “plainly alluding to the etymology of mountebank (lt., montar in banco.) So presently after
[1175], ’I who was ever wont to fix my bank in the face of the public piazza....’”; rpt. WHALLEY (1756
statuaries originally came from Italy, and banco, a bench, is still preserved in the banker of a sculptor’s
studio, the bench on which the the marble is fixed for carving.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “lt. monta in
banco; Venetian mountebanks touted their wares from a banco or platform. They are described in detail by
CORVAT (1611 [272ff.]).
dear (1144) KERNAN (1962 [76n]): “esteemed.” DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “noble.”
Fellowes, that lie by venting oyles, and drugs?

P. O. L. Was that the character he gave you of them?


They are the only-knowing men of Europe,

Great, generall Schollers, excellent Phisitians,

Most admir’d States-men, profect Favorites,

And cabinet-Counsellors, to the greatest Princes:

The only Languag’d-men, of all the world.

P. E. R. And, I haue heard, they are most lewd impostors;

Made all of termes, and shreds; no lesse beliers

Of great-mens fauors, then their owne vile med’cines;

---


Pittie his ignorance. / They are the only-knowing men of Europe ... (1149ff.) Rea (1919 [179]): “With this speech compare ... Erasmus, MorEnc 54: ‘Et tamen inveniunt hi quoque, mea nimium opera, qui cum hos audiant, Demosthenes meros, ac Cicerones audire se putant’” [“Even so, thanks to me, they find people who’ll listen to them and believe they hear a genuine Demosthenes or Cicero...” (Radice, trans., 173)].

cabinet-Counsellors (1153) Kernan (1962 [77n]): “close advisers.”

The only Languag’d-men, of all the world (1154) Adams (1979 [27n]): “The best talkers”; rpt. Harp (2001 [30n]).


Made all of termes, and shreds (1156) Rea (1919 [179]) repr. Smith (1912 [4n]), who cites Nicolò Barbieri, La Supplica (1634), ch. 8: “The actors study to adorn their memories with a great provision of things such as sententious remarks, figures of speech, love discourses, rebukes, desperations [sic] and ravings, in order to have them ready at need; and their studies are appropriate to the kind of part they represent”; and refers readers to Benedetto Croce, “Un repertorio della commedia dell’arte,” GSlI 31 (1893): 458ff., which provides “a description of a MS. collection dated 1734, of a ‘wealth of rags and literary scraps’ in the form of prologs, sketches for plots, lazzis, poems, monologs, for the Doctor’s role, etc.”

termes (1156) Kernan (1962 [77n]): “technical expressions.”

shreds (1156) Kernan (1962 [77n]): “bits and pieces of language such as proverbs, quotations from the classics.”

beliers / Of great-mens fauors (1156–57) Kernan (1962 [77n]): “men who lie about the esteem in which they are held by the great.”
Which they will utter vpon monstrous othes:

Selling that drug, for two pence, ere they part,

Which they have valew’d at twelue Crownes, before.

P O L. Sir, calumnies are answer’d best with silence;

Your selfe shall judge. Who is it mounts, my friends?

M O S. Scoto of Mantua, Sir. P O L. Is’t hee? nay, then

Ile proudly promise, Sir, you shall behold

Another man, then has beene phant’sied to you.

I wonder, yet, that hee should mount his banke

Here, in this nooke, that has beene wont t’appeare

In face of the Piazza! Here, he comes.


---


Selling that drug, for two pence, ere they part (1159) REA (1919 [179]): “Coryat, like all travellers to Venice, found these mountebanks interesting, and he gives a good account of them, too long to quote here in full. Cf., however, CORYAT (1611 [275.4–9]): ‘... I have observed this in them, that after they have extolled their wares to the skies, having set the price of tenne crownes vpon some one of their commodities, they have at laft descended fo low, that they have taken for it foure gazets, which is something lesse then a groat.”

Scoto of Mantua (1163ff.) SMITH (1912 [189n]): “Scoto was a real person, an It. juggler who was in England about this time, as Gifford notes.” For commentary directly related to either the historical figure or Volpone’s role of Scoto of Mantua in this scene, see app. Influences, s.v., “Historical Figures and Allusions,” app. Characters, s.v. “Volpone,” and app. Major Scenes, s.v. “The Mountebank Scene.”

phant’sied (1165) KERNAN (1962 [77n]): “fancied, presented to the imagination.” ADAMS (1979 [27n]): “Described to you.” HARP (2001 [31n]): “described.”

In face of the Piazza (1168) FLORIO (1611 [379]), s.v. Piazza: “any market-place, a chief street or broad way in any Cittie or Towne. Alfo an open court, a caffle-yard, a court before great mens howses where people walke. Alfo an open place or fett of luflence. Alfo any holde or fort or firong place.” H&S (1950 [9:702]) per CORYAT (1611 [272–73]): “The principall place where they act, is the firft part of Saint Marks street that reacheth betwixt the Weft front of S. Marks Church, and the oppoſite front of Saint Geminiants Church. In which, twice a day, that is, in the morning and in the afternoone, you may fee flue or fixe feueral flages erected for them...” KERNAN (1962 [77n]): “in the face of: “in the front, or main, part.”

SD (1168) GIFFORD (1816 [3:209]) adds the SD “Enter VOLPONE disguised as a mountebank Doctor, and followed by a crowd of people” after Would-be’s “Here, he comes”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [27]), HARP (2001 [31]). KERNAN (1962 [77]), with “[Enter Volpone, disguised as a Mountebank.” DONALDSON (1985 [31]): “[Enter Volpone as a mountebank, followed by a crowd].” HUTSON (1998 [248]): “[Enter VOLPONE and GREGE.]”

SD (1169) GIFFORD (1816 [3:209]) applies the SD “[to Nano.]” to Volpone’s “Mount, Zany”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [77]), ADAMS (1979 [27]), DONALDSON (1985 [31]), HARP (2001 [31]), each with the SD between Volpone’s SP and his line.

Zany (1169) ADAMS (1979 [27n]): “from the It. name Giovanni; a generic term for a fool, clown, performer.”

Follow, follow, follow, follow (1169) ADAMS (1979 [27n]): “The speech of the crowd is intended to mimic a confused hubbub.”
POL. See how the people follow him! hee's a man
May write 10000. Crownes, in Banke, here. Note,
Marke but his gesture; I do vse to obserue
The state hee keepes, in getting vp! PER. Tis worth it, Sir.

VOLP. Most noble Gent: and my worthy Patrons, it may seeme strange, that I, your
Scoto Mautuano, who was ever wont to fixe my bank in face of the publike Piazza, neare
the shelter of the portico, to the Procuratia, should, now (after eight months absence, from
this illustrious City of Venice) humbly retire my selfe, into an obscure nooke of the Piazza;

POL. Did not I, now, obiect the same? PER. Peace, Sir.

VOLP. Let me tel you: I am not (as your Lombard Prouerbe sayth) cold on my feete, or
content to part with my commodities at a cheaper rate, then I accustomed; looke not for it.
Nor, that the calumnious reports of that impudent detractor, and shame to our

SD (1171) Gifford (1816 [3:210]) correlates the marginal SD “[Volpone mounts the Stage.]” to Sir Pol’s
“Note”; rpt. Adams (1979 [27]), Harp (2001 [3]). Kernan (1962 [77]) inserts the same SD after the
Grege’s “follow, follow” [1169].

State (1173) Kernan (1962 [78n]): “formality of bearing.”

Mautuano (1175) Parker (1999 [329]) documents this compositorial error as the misspelled “Mautuano”
later corrected in five other quarto copies and F as “Mantuano.” It should be noted though that this
“mispeuing” may also be the result of an inverted “n” which accidentally appears as the letter “u.” See n.
586.

The portico, to the Procuratia (1176) Rea (1919 [180]): “Holt proposes omitting the comma, taking the
meaning to be ‘the portico of the procuratia.’ The residence of the procurator, who had charge of St.
Mark’s.”

Portico (1176) Florio (1611 [392]), s.v. Pórtico: “any kind of porch before a gate. Alfo an open gallery
or walking place vnderfset with pillers as before their houses they have in Italy to walke in the shade. Alfo a
portal.” Hutson (1998 [495]): “colonnade.”

The Procuratia (1176) Florio (1611 [402]), s.v. Procuratúa: “a Proctorship, the office or charge of a
Procurator.” Also, Procuratóre: “a procurer, a proctor, a solicitor, an attornie, an obtainer, a factor, an
agent, or administrator for another.” H&S (1950 [9:704]): “The Procuratie Vecchie with an arcade of fifty
arches running along the north side of Piazza di San Marco. It was built in 1517 as a residence for the
Procurators of St. Mark, important state officials from whose ranks the Doge was usually chosen.” Adams
(1979 [28n]) adds that J “takes great pains to make his Venetian details specific and accurate.”

Object (1179) Kernan (1962 [78n]): “bring before the eyes, visualize—another of Sir Pol’s extravagant
words.”

I am not (as your Lombard Prouerbe sayth) cold on my feet (1180) Holt (1905b [167]): “Volpone,
acting the mountebank, in excusing himself for his supposed absence from his customary haunts.... I am
indebted to Dr. Kenneth McKenzie for the discovery of this proverb in Cherubini’s Vocabolario Milanese-
Italiano (Milan, 1814 [2:28]), s.v. Pe (Milan is, of course, in Lombardy): ‘Ave o ave minga i pee frecc....
(Avere [o non avere] i piedi freddi) vale essere o non esser ricco di danaro, di beni di fortuna.’ J must have
heard it from some of his traveled friends.”

Cold on my feet (1180) Florio (1611 [226]), s.v. Hauér fréddo a piéddi: “to fland or be in great neede.”
H&S (1950 [9:704]): cf. UV 34.67, of Inigo Jones; also cf. G. Torriano, Piazza Universale di Proverbi

105

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profession, [D4°] (Alessandro Buttone, I mean) who gave out, in publike, I was condemn'd a 'Sforzato to the Galleys, for poisoning the Cardinal Bemboo's—Cooke, hath at all attached, much lesse detected mee. No, no, worthie Gent: (to tell you true) I cannot indure, to see the rable of these ground Ciarlitani, that spread their clokes on the pauement, as if they meant to do feats of actuitie, and then come in, lamely, with their mouldy tales out of Boccacio, like stale Tabarine, the Fabulist: some of them discoursing

Italianni (1666 [147]): "Haver freedo a 'piedi ... to have cold at one's feet, viz. through poverty and want, to be fain to sell one's wares and commodities at a low rate, imy to lose."

Alessandro Buttone (1183) REA (1919 [180]): "This may be the name of a real person, but I do not know who it is. Albertino Bottoni of Padua was a physician of some prominence in the first half of the 16th c., and I may have him in mind. The fact that he was a contemporary of Paracelsus has made me think it possible that there may be some uncomplimentary reference to him in the latter's works; but I have not been able to find any such mention." H&S (1950 [9:704]): "Described as a brother-mountebank, and otherwise unknown." Kernan (1962 [78n]): "a rival mountebank." Adams (1979 [28n]): "Alessandro Buttone is an imaginary rival who has dreamed up a slander against Scotto."

Donalson (1985 [621]): "unidentified."


Cardinal Bemboo's—Cooke (1184) REA (1919 [180]): "The dash before Cooke is puzzling. Pietro Bembo was secretary to Pope Leo X, and later librarian of St. Mark's. He was famous for his pure Latin style. The most important of his works is history of his native city, Venice. H&S (1950 [9:705]): "Pietro Bembo (1470–1547), the great humanist. The dash before 'Cooke' marks a pause for the actor, suggesting a more scandalous dependant than a cook." Kernan (1962 [216]): "Cardinal Bembo (1470–1547) was a famous It. humanist noted for his pure Latin style and for the beautiful culminating speech he delivers in Castiglione's Il Cortegiano (1528) on the progress from love of earthly beauty to love of the spiritual. Castiglione's book was translated into Eng. as The Book of the Courtier by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561 and became a handbook for the Ren. Eng. gentleman. Also, Kernan (1962 [78n]): "the dash suggests that Volpone is about to say 'mistress.'" Adams (1979 [28n]): "the tale is most unlikely since Cardinal Bembo died in 1547, more than fifty years before the play is supposed to be taking place; the dash before 'cook' is supposed to indicate that the title 'cook' is just a euphemism."

attached (1185) H&S (1950 [9:705]): "suggested by the legal sense 'arrested' or 'accused.'" Kernan (1962 [78n]): "caused me to be arrested (?)." Donaldson (1985 [621]): "stuck to."

ground Ciarlitani ... (1186ff.) Gifford (1816 [3:210n]): "These ground ciarlietani (petty charlatans, impostors, babblers) are to be found in Italy in this hour, occupied precisely as they were in the days of Scotto Mantuano; Coryat (1611 [272]) gives a similar account of them: 'I have seen some fewe of them alfo stand upon the ground when they tell their tales, which are such as are commonly call Ciariante's or Ciarlitans....' These tales, or recitations, it should be observed, are merely to draw the people together; and always terminate with the production of some trumpery articles for sale." Corrigan (1961 [30n]): "charlatan." Kernan (1962 [79n]): "lit. 'ground charlatans,' i.e., the poorer quacks who performed on the pavement rather than on a platform." Cf. app. Sources.

feates of actuitie (1187) Kernan (1962 [79n]): "tumbling." Donaldson (1985 [621]): "(i) tumbling; (ii) sex."

mouldy tales out of Boccacio (1188) White (1935 [138]): "I continued to ridicule servile imitation, esp. of the trivial and trite, in his later plays." Kernan (1962 [216]): "Ciovanni Boccacio (1313?–75) whose collection of tales (fables) The Decameron was a storehouse for later storytellers." Adams (1979 [28n]): "Boccaccio told in the Decameron (ca. 1350) a great many popular stories; as he lived in the 14th c., the tales were 'moldy' by the 17th c.; rpt. Harp (2001 [32n]).

stale Tabarine, the Fabulist (1188) Florio (1611 [549]), s.v. Tabarrino: "a short riding ciacoe with a hood. Alfo a Shepheards froke." Variously identified as a 16th-c. it. comedian or a Fr. storyteller. For
their travells, and of their tedious captiuy in the Turkes Galleyes, when indeed (were the truth knowne) they were the Christians Galleyes, where very temperately, they eate bread, & drunke water, as a wholesome pennance (enioph'd them by their Confessors) for base pileries.

POL. Note but his bearing, and contempt of these.

VOLP. These turdy-facy-nasty-patie-lousie-farticall rogues, with one poore groats-worth of vnprepar'd antimony, finely wrap't vp in seuerall 'Scartoccios, are able, very well, to kill their twenty a weke, and play; yet these meagre steru'd spirits, who haue

commentary directly related to the identification and interpretation of this figure, cf. app. Sources, s.v. "Historical Figures and Allusions," and n. 1313 below.

discoursing (1188) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "talking of."
Turkes Galleyes (1189) SMITH (1912 [190n]): "Cf. RASI (1897–1905 [vol. 1]), s.v. F. Andreini, for an account of the adventure of this Captaino among the Turks; he spent several years in slavery to the Moslem. Andreini was also one of the most notable 'languaged men' among the comici."
Christians Galleyes ... (1190ff.) ADAMS (1979 [28n]): "Venetian galleys required many oars, often operated by captive Turks or condemned criminals, chained to the bench, fed miserable food, and whipped mercilessly"; rpt. HARP (2001 [32n]).
eate (1190) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "ate."
enioph'd them (1191) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "prescribed for them."
turdy-facy-nasty-patie-lousie-farticall rogues (1194) UPTON (1749 [25–26]): "Volpone personates a mountebank, in order to get the sight and speech of Corvino's wife; he accordingly makes an oration in imitation of these quacks under her window. Our poet has here put into his mouth a long compounded word after the manner of Aristophanes, who has many of the like kind to banner the dithyrambic poets. Horace, Odes 4.2.10–12, calls them nova verba ("seu per audaces nova dithyrambos / verba devolvit numerisque fertur / lege solutes" ("whether he rolls new words through through daring dithyrambs and is borne along in measures freed from rule") [Bennett, trans., 287]. REA (1919 [181]): "Upton comments that this long compound word is an imitation of similar long compounds used humorously in Aristophanes. Holt thinks it rather a 'shining example of London billingsgate.' I believe Upton is right as to the suggestion for the form of the word: the choice epheus, of similar import, hurled by Paracelsus at his rivals, doubtless furnished the reason for its use here." H&S (1950 [9:705]): "Modeled, as Upton notes, on similar compounds in Aristophanes, e.g., the songs of Philocleon, Wchs 220: ['Sweet-charming-old-Sidono-Phrynichian' (Rogers, trans., 1:425)]."
seuerall (1195) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "separate."
'Scartoccios (1195) FLORIO (1598 [350]), s.v. Scartoccio: "a coffin or paper for spic[e], as Apothecaries vse. Allo a charge made readie for any musket or ordinance." GIFFORD (1816 [3:211n]): "i.e., covers, fold of paper; whence our cartouch." CORNWALL (1838 [812]) adds: "cartridge." CORRIGAN (1961 [30n]): "wrapping paper." KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "papers—used to contain medicines, but may here refer also to plays."
halfe stopt the organs of their mindes with earthy oppilations, want not their fauwerers among your shruel'd, saltad-eating Artizans: who are ouerioy'd, that they may haue their halferth of Physick, though it purge 'hem into another world, makes no matter.

POL. Excellent! ha you heard better Language, Sir?

VOLP. Well, let 'hem go. And Gentlemen, honourable Gentlemen, know, that for this time, our Banque, being thus remou'd from the clamours of the Canaglia, shall be the Scene of pleasure, and delight; For I haue nothing to sell, little or nothing to sell:

POL. I told you, Sir; his ende. PER. You did so, Sir.

VOLP. I protest, I, and my sixe servaunts, are not able to make of this preiuous liquor, so fast, as it is fetch'd away from my lodging, by Gentlemen of your City; Strangers of the Térra-ferma; worshipful Merchants; I, and Senators too: who, euer since my arriuall, haue detained mee to their vses, by their splendidous liberalities. And worthy. For what

stopi the organs of their mindes with earthy oppilations (1197) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:501]): cf. Samuel Johnson, Dictionary and MagLady." KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "have become so concerned with gross, mundane activities that their minds have ceased to work."

oppilations (1197) Generally glossed from the Lat. oppilatio as "obstructions"; rf. H&S (1950 [9:705]), et al.

want (1197) HUTSON (1998 [498]): "lack."
sallad-eating Artizans (1198) H&S (1950 [9:705]): "Compare the taunt in Hym 25–28: '... where perhaps a few Italian herbs, pick'd vp, and made into a sallade, may find sweeter acceptance, than all, the most nourishing, and sound meates of the world.'" KERNAN (1962 [79n]), salad: "probably has the meaning here of 'raw unprepared vegetables.'

Artizans (1198) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "workers."

halfperth (1199) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "half-pennyworth."

Physick (1199) KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "medicine."


Térra-ferma (1207) FLORIO (1598 [417]), s.v. Térra ferma: "the firme or maine lande." GIFFORD (1816 [3:212n]): "It may be worth while to notice, that the Venetians distinguish their continental possessions by this expression"; rpt. REA (1919 [81]), H&S (1950 [9:705]), KERNAN (1962 [80n]), ADAMS (1979 [29n]), DONALDSON (1985 [621]), HUTSON (1998 [497]), HARP (2001 [32n]).

splendidous (1208) FLORIO (1611 [525]), s.v. Splendidus: "splendent, bright shining, glittering, glaring. Alfo magnificent, glorious, excellent, bountiull, liberal, fumptuous, famous, cleare, noble. Alfo one that hath his houle & al things about him gorgeouGy decked with abundance oF al things goodly, gay and beautyfull." CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]): "The form of this adjectve had not fixed itself in J's time, Drayton uses splendidous and splendorous"; repr. REA (1919 [81]), who adds: "With this speeche of Volpone [i.e., 1206–8] cf. Paracelsus, De Tinctura Philosophorum (1570 [1:20]): '{I in that I am esteemed by you a mendicant and vagabond sophist, the Danube and the Rhine will answer that accusation, though I hold my tongue. Those calumnies of yours falsely devised against me have often displeased many courts and princes, many imperial cities, the knightly order, and the nobility' (Waite, trans., 1:20]. H&S (1950 [9:705]): "Cf. EMO 2.2.79." DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "splendid (common variant)."
warily your rich man to haue his magazines stuff with Moscadelli, or the purest grape, when his Physitians prescribe him (on pain of death) to drinke nothing but water, cocted with Anise-seeds? O health! health! the blessing of the rich, the riches of the poore! [E17] who can buy thee at to deare a rate, since there is no enjoying this world, without thee? Be not then so sparing of your purses, honorable Gentlemen, as to abridge the natural course of life—

PER. You see his ende? POL. I, is't not good?

VOLP. For, when a humide Fluxe, or Catarrhe, by the mutability of ayre, falls from your head, into an arme or shoulder, or any other part; take you a Dukat, or your Cecchine of gold, and applie to the place affected: see, what good effect it can worke. No, no, 'tis this blessed Vnguento, this rare Extraction, that hath onely power to disperse all malignant humors, that procede, either of hot, cold, moist or windy causes—

worthy (1208) KERNAN (1962 [80n]): “properly.”
magazines (1209) FLORIO (1598 [211]), s.v. Magazzino or Magazzino: “a florehouse or a warehouk”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [80n]), DONALDSON (1985 [621]), HUTSON (1998 [494]), HARFP (2001 [32n]).
Moscadelli (1209) FLORIO (1598 [233]), s.v. Moscadello or Moçcatello: “the wine mulcadine”; Moçato: “sweetened or perfumed with muske, muske, a pomander or graine of muske. Alfo the wine muskadine”; Moçatini, “certaine grapes, pears and apricocks lb called.” Generally glossed as muscatel wine.
ende (1215) KERNAN (1962 [80n]): “goal.”
Fluxe (1216) KERNAN (1962 [80n]): “catarrh, discharge.” KERNAN (1962 [216]): “Volpone’s medicine throughout this speech is based on the med. and Ren. theory of the four humors and the four elements, which eventually goes back to Aristotelian physics. […] In his earlier plays, EMI and EMO, “After the Second Sounding,” 105-8, J had translated the concept of humors from the physical to the psychic realm and had defined a humor as a situation in which, ‘some one particular quality / Doth so possesse a man, that it doth draw / All his a*ecE, his spiriE, and his powers, / In  their confluctions, all to runne one w ay....” HUTSON (1998 [492]): “morbid discharge.”
take you a Dukat ... see, what good effect it can worke (1217-18) ADAMS (1979 [29n]): “i.e., money won’t cure your cold when you catch it (but my ‘blessed unguent’ will).”
Dukat (1217) FLORIO (1611 [153]), s.v. Ducato: “duckets, crownes.”
blessed Vnguento (1219) FLORIO (1611 [606]), s.v. Vnguento: “any kind of Oyntment, failue or vaction, any kind of sweet oyle or liquid perfume, any kindes of liquor mingled with Oyle. Vfed metaphorically for any comfort, remedy or faluing of a thing.” REA (1919 [181]): “Cf. Paracelsus, De Lapide Philosophorum (1572 [2:104]): ‘It is, therefore, called, and really is, a medicine blessed by God, which has not been revealed to all. It is better compounded than that dirty medicine which the slowly walking doctor has in his gown, or has filtered through his fillet or hood. Moreover, this blessed medicine has thrice greater force and virtue for operating in all diseases, however they may be called, than all the drug shops you ever saw’ (Waite, trans., 2:104]).” CORRIGAN (1961 [31n]): “ointments.” KERNAN (1962 [81n]): “salve.”
humors (1220) KERNAN (1962 [81n]): “see n. to [1216].” DONALDSON (1985 [621-22]): “According to ancient physiological theory, the four humours—blood, phlegm, choler, black choler (melancholy)—correspond to the four elements, air, water, fire, earth—their selves variously compounded of hot and cold, moist and dry. Health and temperament were determined by their balance.”

109
PER. I would he had put in dry to. POL. 'pray you, observe.

VOLP. To fortify the most indigest, and crude stomacke, I, were it of one, that (through extreame weknesse) vomited bloud, applying onely a warme napkin to the place, after the vaction, and fricare; For the Vertigine, in the head, putting but a drop into your nostrills, likewise, behind the eares; a most soueraigne, and approoved remedy. The Mall-caduco, Crampes, Convulsions, Paralysies, Epilepsies, Tremor-cordia, retired-Nerues, ill Vapours of the spleene, Stoppings of the Liuer, the Stone, the Strangury, Hernia ventosa, Iliaca passio; stops a Disenteria, immediatly; easeth the torsion of the small guts: and cures Melancolia hypocondriaca, being taken and applied, according to

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my printed Receipt. For, this is the Physician, this the medicine; this counsellors, this cures; this gives the direction, this works the effect: and (in summe) both together may be term'd an abstract of the theorick, and practick in the Æsculapian Art. 'Twill cost you eight Crownes. And, Zan Fritata, 'pray thee sing a verse, extempore, in honour of it.

POL. How do you like him, Sir? PER. Most strangely, I!

POL. Is not his language rare? PER. But Alchimy,

I never heard the like: or Broughtons bookees.

Melanconia hypocondriaca (1229)] ADAMS (1979 [30n]): “black depression.” HARP (2001 [33n]): “severe depression.” DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “the hypochondria (spleen, liver, etc.) was seen as the source of melancholy.”

Receipt (1230)] KERNAN (1962 [81n]): “recipe.” For, this is the Physician ... this works the effect (1231ff. + SD] F (1616 [469]) adds the three-line marginal SD “Pointing to his bill and his glass,” which roughly corresponds to 1230–32; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [250]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:311]) drops a four-line version of the same SD into the text at roughly the same point in the action. GIFFORD (1816 [3:213]) inserts the SD “[pointing to his bill and his vial.]” between “my printed Receipt” and “For, this;” rpt. ADAMS (1979 [30], HARP (2001 [33]). KERNAN (1962 [81; 81n]): “he points first to the bill and then to the glass,” glossing the F SD: “bill: prescription” and “glass: bottle containing medicine.” DONALDSON (1985 [33]): “(Pointing to his bill and his glass).”

abstract of the theorick (1232)] KERNAN (1962 [81n]): “abstract: compendium.” Also, “theoric: theory”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [30n]), HARP (2001 [33n]).

practick (1232)] KERNAN (1962 [81n]): “practice”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [30n]), HARP (2001 [33n]).

Æsculapian Art (1232)] KERNAN (1962 [81n]): “medicine. Aesculapius was the Roman god of medicine.” HUTSON (1998 [499]), Aesculapius: “God of healing; killed by Zeus for his presumption in attempting to revive a dead patient.”

Zan Fritata (1233)] SMITH (1912 [190–91n]): “GARZONI (1587) mentions Zan Fritata more than once. I quote one passage in The Memoirs of Count Carlo Gozzi, trans. Symonds (1890 [1:76]): “You will see our swaggering Fortune and his boon companion Fritata ... keeping the whole populace agape into the night with stories, songs, improvisations,” etc. Zan Fritata was as much an historical person as Scoto. He is mentioned not only by Garzoni but in the Capitolo in Morte di Simone da Bologna (see BONVIGLIO [1907]): ‘Fritata ch’in virtù te generos / De canta e sona col Fortunat / E sovra al banc a te vitorios....’ Cf. CARRARA (1909 [17], <which> notes several poems by Fritata.” H&S (1950 [9:705]): “or Fritata (It. frittata, ‘pancake’). The name is taken from a zany commemorated GARZONI (1587), in a ch. on the crowd at Venice: ‘Basta (per toccarne qualcuna) che da vn canto della piazza tu vedi il nostro galante Fortunato insieme con Fritata cacciar carotte, et trattener la brigata ogni sera dalle vinte di notte, agnette novelle, trovar historié, formai dialoghi, far calesselle, cantare aU’ improuiso, corucciarsi insieme, far la pace, morir deUa risa, alterarsi di nuouo, vrtarsi in sul banco, far questioiK insiemi, and venire al quamquam delle gazette, che voghano capire con queste loro gentUissime, & garbatissime chiacchiere.’” KERNAN (1962 [82n]): “a famous It. comedian. The order is probably addressed to Nano, who is playing zany to Volpone’s mountebank.” ADAMS (1979 [30n]): “Literally, ‘Johnny Om elet’ obviously one of the mountebank’s stooges”; rpt. HARP (2001 [33n]).

in honour of it (1233)] SMITH (1912 [191n]): “It is interesting to compare Volpone’s praises of his drug to another paragraph from GARZONI (1587 [550f.]) in which is given an idea of the It. charlatans’ speeches on a similar subject. ‘Charlains sell powders for indigestion ... tapers for perpetual lights; the philosopher’s oil, the fifth essence, to make you rich; oil of tasso barbaro for chills; an urgent to give you a good memory; ... lime paste to kill rats; ... burning glasses to light fires from the sun; ... spectacles to make you see in the dark.’”

But Alchimy (1235)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:213n]): “i.e., except alchemy, &c.” KERNAN (1962 [82n]): “except for [alchemy]”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [30n]), HARP (2001 [33n]).
SONG.

Had old Hippocrates, or Galen,
(That to their bookes put med’cines all in)

But knowne this secret, they had neuer
(Of which they will bee guilty euer)

Beene murderers of so much paper,

Broughtons bookes (1236) H&S (1950 [9:705-6]): "Hugh Broughton (1549-1612), a divine and rabbinical scholar, and a strong Puritan; he wrote a number of learned monographs and controversial pamphlets." HUTSON (1998 [500]): "Rabbinical scholar and puritan, author of voluminous, learned but obscure theological works." For further commentary related to Broughton, see app. Sources, s.v. "Historical Figures and Allusions.

SONG. (1237 + 8d) GIFFORD (1816 [3:214]) replaces this title with the SD "NANO sungs"; rpt. with bracketed SD by ADAMS (1979 [30]), DONALDSON (1985 [33]), HARP (2001 [34]). SMITH (1912 [191]) considers Nano’s song “uninspired.” RFA (1919 [183]): “This song is exactly in Paracelsus’ usual vein; cf. the following from the preface to De Tinctura Philosophorum (1570 [1:19-20]): ‘Hoc medio saeculo Monarchia cunctarum artium ad me Theophr. Paracelsum Philosophiae, Medicinaeque principem derivata est. Ad hoc enim a Deo sum electus, ut phantasias omnes excogitatorum et salsorum operum, putaticiorum et praesumptuosorum verborum extinguerem, sive ea sint Aristotelis, Galeni, Avicennae, Mesueae sive cuiuscunque alterius eorum asseclae placta’ "[From the middle of this age the Monarchy of all the Arts has been at length derived and conferred on me, Theophrastus Paracelsus, Prince of Philosophy and of Medicine. For this purpose I have been chosen by God to extinguish and blot out all the phantasies of elaborate and false words, be they the words of Aristotle, Galen, Avicenna, Mesva, or the dogmas of any among their followers” (Waite, trans., 1:19-20). Or this, from ch. 7 of the same work: ‘Iam tu Sophista respice Theophrastum Paracelsum, quinam tuus Apollo, Machaon et Hippocrates contra me stare valeant?’ "[Now, Sophist, look at Theophrastus Paracelsus. How can your Apollo, Machaon, and Hippocrates stand against me?” (Waite, trans., 1:29). Many other similar passages might be given from almost any of Paracelsus’ numerous works.”

Hippocrates (1238) Hippocrates (460-ca. 377 BCE). RFA (1919 [183]): “a Gr. physician ... <who> belonged to a famous family of physicians, who were believed to be descendants of Aesculapius. He was the founder of medicine as a science, rather than a part of priest-craft, which it seems to have been up to his day. There are more than fifty writings attributed to him, but few, if any, are really his work; most of them probably date from the Alexandrian period.” H&S (1950 [9:706]): "as the originator, and Galen as the systematic exponent of the theory of humors, [Hippocrates] would appeal to J; for the former, cf. ConvDum 141"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [622]). HUTSON (1998 [501]): “5th-c. RC Greek physician who invented the theory of ‘humours’; widely and long regarded as the paragon of medical integrity; works (often dubiously) attributed to him were still of the utmost importance in J’s day.”

Galen (1238) Claudius Galenus (ca. 130-200 CE). Generally glossed as a famous doctor of the classical world; cf. KERNAN (1962 [82n]), ADAMS (1979 [30n]), HARP (2001 [34n]). RFA (1919 [183]): “occupied the same position in the medieval period in medicine that Aristotle did in philosophy. Both Christian and Arabic medicine followed his theories. BAA (1889 [1:170]) says of him: “The philosophico-physiological and general pathological views of Galen are founded upon the four elements, to which are attached the primary qualities: to air, coldness, to fire, warmth, to water, moisture, to earth, dryness. To these correspond four cardinal humors, among which latter the element water predominates in the mucus, which is secreted by the brain; fire, in the yellow bile, which has its origin in the liver; earth, in the black-bile formed by the spleen; while in the blood, which is prepared in the liver (an important error, not discarded until the 17th c.), the elements are uniformly mixed. Mucus is cold and moist; yellow bile, warm and dry; black-bile, cold and dry; the blood, warm and moist.” HUTSON (1998 [500]): “2nd-c. AD physician, who expounded the theory of ‘humours,’ and whose dominance of medical doctrine was only beginning to be challenged in J’s time.”

112
Or wasted many a hurtlesse taper:
No Indian drug had ere been famed,

Tabacco, Sassafras not named;
Ne yet, of Guacum one small stick, Sir,
Nor Raymund Lullies greate Elixir.
Ne, had beene known the danish Gonswart.
Or Paracelsus, with his long-sword.

PER. All this, yet, will not do, eight Crownes is high.
Volp. No more; Gentlemen, if I had but time to discourse to you the miraculous effects of this my oyle, surnamed oglio del Scoto, with the count-lesse Catalogue of those I haue cured of th’aforesayd, and many more diseases, the Pattens and Priuiledges of all the Princes, and Common-wealthes of Christendome, or but the depositions of those that appear’d on my part, before the Signiry of the Sanitá, and most learned Colledge of Physicians; where I was authorized, vpon notice taken of the admirable vertues of my medicaments, and mine own excellency, in matter of rare, and vnknowne secrets, not onely to disperse them publiquely in this famous Citty, but in all the Territories, that happily oynder the government of the most pious and magnificent States of Italy. But may some other gallant fellow say, O, there be diuers, that make profession to haue as good, and as experimented receipts, as yours: Indeed, very many haue assay’d, like Apes, in imitation of that, which is really, and essentially in mee, to make of this oyle; bestow’d great cost in furnaces, stilles, alembekes, continuall fires, and preparation of the

No more; Gentlemen, if I had but time to discourse to you ... (1251ff.)] See Rea’s comments in n. 1208, s.v. “spendidious.”

oglio del Scoto (1252)] Fleay (1891 [2:50-51]) interprets the suggestive allusions in Mucedorus (1606) as satirical responses to J’s “Fox, in which the King’s miraculous healing powers by touch are perhaps ridiculed as Oglio del Scoto.” Rea (1919 [185]): “Fleay believes this a satire on the King’s miraculous healing powers.” Kernan (1962 [83n]): “Dr. Scoto’s Oil.”

Pattens (1253)] Kernan (1962 [83n]): “patents: official certificates conferring certain rights.”

Priuiledges (1253)] Kernan (1962 [83n]): “privilege: special ordinance giving honors to an individual.”


diuers (1260)] Kernan (1962 [83n]): “many.”

experimented (1261)] Kernan (1962 [83n]): “tested.”

furnaces, stilles, alembekes (1263)] Rea (1919 [185]): “Paracelsus, De Tinctura Philosphorum (1570), gives a still more formidable list of apparatus in his: ‘Discende primum ergo digestiones, destillationes, sublationes, reuerberationes, extractiones, solutions, coagulationes, fermentationes, fixationes, et omne, quod ad opus hoc instrumentum requiritur, cognoscendum est vsu, prout vitra, curbitae, circulatoria, vasa Hermetis, terrea vasa, balnea, furni ventales, reuerberatorii, similesque ali, nec non et Marmor, carbones, atque tenacula’” [“First of all, then, there must be learnt—digistions, distillation, sublimations, reverberations, extraction, solutions, coagulations, fermentations, fixations, and every instrument which is requisite for this work must be mastered by experience, such as glass vessels, curcibites, vessels of Herms, earthen vessels, baths, blast-furnaces, reverberatories, and instruments of like kind, also marble, coals, and tongs” (Waite, trans., 1:22)]. Kernan (1962 [83n]): “pieces of alchemical equipment.” Adams (1979 [31n]): “Distilleries, retorts”; rpt. Harp (2001 [34n]).

alembekes (1263)] Campbell (1995 [516]): “vessels used for distilling.”

114
ingredients, as indeede there goes to it sixe hundred severall Simples, beside, some quantity of humane fat, for the conglutination, which we buy of the Anatomistes; But, when these Practitioners come to the last decoction, blow, blow, puff, puff, and all flies in fumo: ha, ha, ha. Poore wretches! I rather pitty their folly, and indiscretion, then their losse of time, and money; for those may be recoouer'd by industry: but to be a Foole borne is a disease incurable. For my selfe, I alwaies from my youth haue [E27] indeauor'd to get the rarest secrets, and booke them; eyther in exchange, or for money; I spared nor cost, nor labour, where any thing was worthy to be learned. And Gentlemen, honourable Gentlemen, I will undertake (by vertue of Chymicall art) out of the honourable hat, that couers your head, to extract the foure Elements; that is to say, the Fire, Ayre, Water, and Earth, and returne you your felt, without burne, or staine. For, whil'st others haue bee


conglutination (1265) HARP (2001 [34n]): “coherence, sticking together.”

blow, blow, puff, puff (1266) KERNAN (1962 [83n]): “Volpone is imitating the alchemist blowing in his fire to get it to the proper heat.”
in fumo (1266–67) REA (1919 [185]): “There is a very similar passage in Alch 4.5.57–59: ‘O sir, we are defeated! all the works! Are flowne in fumo: every glasse is burst. / Fornace, and all rent downe!’ Cf. also the Argument of the same play: ‘Till it, and they, and all in fume are gone’ (12)”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:707]). KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “smoke.” DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “in vapour.”
to be a Foole borne is a disease incurable (1268–69) REA (1919 [185]): “This, in spite of its typically Jonsonian ring, is from Paracelsus, De Generazione Stultorum (1567), Preface: ‘Eo difficilis sanantur, qui stulti nati sunt. Is enim affectus nec morbus est, et est insuper incurabilis’” [“It is the more difficult that fools are born as there is no disease, they are incurable ...” (Cranefield & Federn, trans., 56)]. H&S (1950 [9:707]) add: “Rea ... has other parallels, most of them rather vague, to support his view that the mountebank’s speech as a whole is based on the writings of Paracelsus.”

For my selfe, I alwaies from my youth ... (1269ff.) REA (1919 [185–86]): “Cf. the following from the Epistle prefixed to Paracelsus, Chirurgia Magna (1573): ‘Quare ab inuencite actate salutiis agorum supra quam dici possit, studiosiss. fui, quomodo illis impendientia pericula avertem, semper meditatus, ac quo pacto salutis comparandae rationem, quae Diis ac mortalibus placaret, ostenderem cogiavi.’ Cf. also the following lines from Paracelsus, De Lapide Philosophorum (1572 [2:104]): ‘Hoc autem non per oitum, sedendo, et pigmentia nactus sum: neque in urinali, sed peregrinando, et ut tu dicis, vagando, et muta diligentia et labore me discere id oportmt, ut scirem, et non opinarer’” [“But I did not find this in idleness, by sitting still, and by sloth, nor did I find it in an urinal, but by travelling, or, as you say, by wandering, and by much diligence and labour it was necessary for me to learn it, so that I might know and not merely think” (Waite, trans., 2:104)].

from (1269) KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “since.”
booke (1270) KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “note.”
in exchange (1270) KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “by trading (secret for secret).”
nor, ... nor (1270–71) KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “neither ... nor.”
Chymicall (1272) KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “alchemical.”
foure Elements (1273) KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “see [n. 1216] above.”
at the balloo, I have beene at my booke: and am now past the craggy pathes of study, and come to the flowrie plaines of honour, and reputation.

POL. I do assure you, Sir, that is his ayme.

VOLP. But, to our price. PER. And that withall, Sir. Poll.

VOLP. You all know (honourable Gentlemen) I never vawed this ampulla, or violl, at lesse then eight Crownes, but for this time, I am content, to be depriu'd of it for sixe; sixe Crownes is the price; and lesse, in curtesie, I know you cannot offer mee; take it, or leave it, howsoever, both it, and I am at your seruice. I aske you not, as the vaule of the thing, for then I should demand of you a thousand Crownes, so the Cardinalls Montalto,

ballo (1275)] FLORIO (1598 [37]), s.v. Ballone: “a great ball, a ballone, to play at with braces, a football.” Also rf. FLORIO (1591 [67]): “According to the weather, and the company, sometymes I play at tennis, at cheffe, at tables, at cardes, at terefrall triumphs, at dice, at bowles, at nine pins, at quites, and at the ballone.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:216n]): “This play, in which a huge ball is driven forward by a flat piece of wood, fastened to the arm, is still much practiced on the continent. It is mentioned in EastHo 1.2.80: ‘We had a match at baloon too, with my lord Whackum, for four crowns.’ The Mall takes its name from this game, (Fr. pasle maile) which was often played there by the cavaliers who returned with Charles II from France.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]): “in LEBELAI* (1553 [75]), 1.23, the Esquire Gymnast ‘played at the balloon, and made it bound in the air both with fist and foot’ (Bohn ed., 1.179). It is possible, however, that there may be no allusion in the text to this or any other sport, but simply to what FLORIO (1598 [37]) describes as ‘Ballo: [a ball or] any kinde of dance.’” REA (1919 [186]): “Probably the game called balloon is meant; Cunningham thinks, however, that the reference is ‘simply to what Florio describes as “Balio, a ball or any kind of dance.”’ CORYAT (1611) gives an account of the playing of balloon in Italy: ‘Here every Sunday and Holy-day in the evening the young men of the city doe exercise themselfes at a certaine play that they call Baloono, which is thus: Sixe or seuen yong men or thereabout weare certaine round things vpon their arms, made of timber, which are full of sharpe pointed knobs cut out of the same matter. In these exercises they put off their dubletts, and hauing put this round instrument vpon one of their armes, they tosse vp and downe a grea bEl, as grea as otm fooEaG in England: sometimes they will tosse the ball with this instrument, as high as a common Church, and about one huiEred paces w iE  the least Gom them. About them sit the Clarissimoes of Vemce, with many strangers that repair thither to see their game. I haue seene at the least a thousand of fiftie hundred people there: If you will have a stool it will cost you a gazet, which is almost a penny.’” H&S (1950 [9:707]) add “more correctly ‘balloon’ (cf. EastHo 1.2.79–80).” CORRIGAN (1961 [33n]): a Fr. or It. game played with a large ball and a wooden bat.” KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “a Venetian game in which a large ball was tossed high in the air.” ADAMS (1979 [31n]): “balloon, ball; i.e., while others have been diverting themselves with ball games”; rpt. HARP (2001 [35n]). DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “or balloon, a Venetian ball-game”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [489]).

at my booke (1275)] KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “in careful study.”

now past (1275)] BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:149]) now at. WHALLEY (1756 [2:314; 314n]) restored to “now past.”

withall (1278)] KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “as well.”

ampulla (1279)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]): cites FLORIO (1611), s.v. Ampulla, “a thin viole glasse.” KERNAN (1962 [84n]): “container.”

as the vaule (1282)] KERNAN (1962 [85n]): “as (the oil) is valued; what it is worth.”

Fernese, the great Duke of Tuscany, my Gossip, with divers other Princes have given me; but I despise money: only to shew my affection to you, honorable Gentlemen, and your illustrious State here, I have neglected the messages of these Princes, mine owne offices, fram'd my journey hither, onely to present you with the fruict of my trauells. Tune your voyces once more, to the touch of your instruments, and give the honorable assembly some delightfull recreation.

PER. What monstrous, and most painefull circumstance
Is here, to get some three, or foure Gazets?
Some three-pence, i'th whole, for that 'twill come too.
SONG.

You that would last long, list to my song,

Make no more coyle, but buy of this coyle.

Would you be euer faire? and yong?
Stout of teeth? and strong of tongue?
Tart of palat? quick of eare?
Sharpe of sight? of nostrill cleare?

Moist of hand? and light of foot?
(Or I will come neerer to't)
Would you liue free from all diseases?
Do the act, your mistresse pleases;
Yet fright all aches from your bones?

Here's a med'cine, for the nones.


i'th whole (1292) KERNAN (1962 [85n]): “altogether.”
SONG. (1293) GIFFORD (1816 [3:217]) replaces title with SD “NANO sings”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [32]), HARP (2001 [35]). SMITH (1912 [192]): “Nan’s song is more like a Zanni’s than the first he sang . . . just the kind of jingle that could most easily be improvised.”


Tart (1298) KERNAN (1962 [85n]): “keen.”

Moist of hand (1300) REA (1919 [186]); “Cf. Oth 3.4.36–37: ‘Oth. Give me your hand. This hand is moist my lady. / Des. It yet hath felt no age nor known no sorrow.’ In 2Hen4 1.2.370–81, a moist eye and a dry hand are included among the ‘characters of age.’” DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “sign of sexual vitality; cf. VenaDon 143.”

come neerer to't (1301) KERNAN (1962 [85n]): “get down to what is most important.”


for the nones (1305) WHALLEY (1756 [2:315n]): “Or nonce; for that very purpose.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:218n]): “i.e., for the present occasion; for the immediate purpose. It is impossible to reflect without scorn on the elaborate attempts to explain the origin of the most simple and common expression. To say nothing of the Dii minores, even Tyrwhitt, who, when he mixes with the commentators on Shakespeare is no longer recognizable, gravely tells us that the phrase ‘was originally a corruption of corrupt Latin.’ Thus, says, he, from pro nunc came for the nunc, and so for ‘for the nonce’; just as from ad nunc came ‘anon’! This, it must be confessed, is sufficiently foolish: but by what term shall we characterize the stupendous absurdity of Mr. Chalmers? ‘The expression (he says) is local.’ It is as universal as the language. ‘This word (he continues) is probably derived from the Fr. nonce, a nuncio, the prelate whom the pope used to send for his special purposes.’ Glossary to Lyndsay. For the nonce is simply for the once, for the one thing in questions, whatever it be. This is invariably its meaning. The aptitude of many of our monosyllables beginning with a vowel, to assume the n is well known; but the progress of this expression is distinctly
VOLP. Well, I am in a humor (at this time) to make a present of the small quantity my coffer contains: to the rich, in courtesie, and to the poore, for Gods sake. Wherefore, nowe marke; I ask’d you six Crownes, and sixe Crownes, at other times, you haue payd me; you shall not giue me sixe Crownes, nor fiue, nor foure, nor three, nor two, nor one; nor halfe a Duckat; no, nor a Muccinigo: six pence it will cost you, or sixe hundred pound—expect no lower price, for by the banner of my front, I will not bate a bagatine, that I will haue, onely, a pledge of your loues, to carry somthing from amongst you, to shew, I am not contenn’d by you. Therefore, now, tosse your handkerchieves,

marked in our early writers, ‘a ones,’ ‘an anes,’ ‘for the ones,’ ‘for the nanes,’ ‘for the nonce.’ Shall we have any more repetitions of pro nunc, and pro nuntio, the prelate? I am not without my fears; for, as I lately had occasion to observe, the race of Ding-dong’s sheep is far from being extinct.


humor (1306) KERNAN (1962 [86n]): “mood.”

Duckat (1310) FLORIO (1598 [114]), s.v. Duccat: “ducketes, crownes, monie.” DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “worth about 4s. 8d.”


six pence (1310) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]): “In the F [471] it is printed, ‘six[e]…pence.’”

banner of my front (1311) H&S (1950 [9:708]): “The Widow (1652 [sig. F4v]), 4.1: ‘Where did I hear late of a skilfull fellow, / Good for all kind of Malladies? true, true sir, / His flag hangs out in town here, i’ th’ Cross Inn, / With admirable cures of all conditions, / It shews him a great traveling, and learn’d Emperor.’” Ibid., G1¹: ‘Enter Latrocinio and Occulo, (a Banner of Cures and Diseases hung out).’” KERNAN (1962 [86n]): “the mountebank’s banner displayed before his stand which lists diseases and cures.” DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “advertising the mountebank’s wares.”


onely (1312) KERNAN (1962 [86n]): “alone.”

contenn’d (1313) KERNAN (1962 [86n]): “despised.”

tosse your handkerchieves (1313) H&S (1950 [9:708]): “Daniel Martin, Parlement Nouveau (1613), describing the sensation made at Paris by the later famous Tabarin of 1623 and his associate Montdor, says when they had advertised their drugs: ‘il y avoit presse à qui jeteroit le plus tost son argent noué dans le coin d’un mouchoir ou dans un gant, sur l’echeaffaut, pour avoir une petite bouette d’onguent, enveloppée dans un billet imprimé, contenant l’usage d’ycelm et la façon de s’en server’ (quoted by Maurice SanE Masques et BoujOGns (Comédie /taienne); Texte et Dessins, 2 vols. [1860 (2:299))].” ADAMS (1979 [32n]): “When business was brisk at the mountebank’s stand, customers sometimes knotted their money in a handkerchief or glove and tossed it on stage; the money was taken out, replaced with the medicine, and the handkerchief tossed back to the purchaser”; rpt. HARP (2001 [36n]). DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “with money knotted in a corner.”
chearefully, cheerfully; and be aduertised, that the first heroique spirit, that deignes to grace mee, with a handkerchiefe, I will give it a little remembrance of something, beside, shall please it better, then if I had presented it with a double Pistolet.

PER. Will you be that heroique Sparke, Sir Pol?

O see! the windore has preuented you.

VOLP. Lady, I kisse your bounty; and, for this timely grace, you haue done your poore Scoto of Mantua, I will retornue you, ouer and aboue my oyle, a secret, of that high, and inestimable nature, shall make you for euer enamour'd on that minute, wherein your eye first descended on so meane, yet not altogether to be despis'd an obiect. Here is a Pouder, conceal'd in this paper, of which, if I should speake to the worth, nine thousand volumes were but as one page, that page as a line, that line as a word; so short is this Pilgrimage of man (which some call Life) to the expressing of it: would I reflect on the price? why, the whole VWorld were but as an Empire, that Empire as a Prouince, that Prouince as a Banke, that Banke as a priuate Purse, to the purchase of it. I will, onely, tell you; it is the Pouder, that made [E3] Venus a Goddesse (giuen her by Apollo) that

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be aduertised (1314) SCHELLING (1910 [1:625]): "be it known to you." KERNAN (1962 [86n]): "understand."

grace (1315) HUTSON (1998 [493]): "favour." Cf. 1319, 2169, 2173.

it (1315) KERNAN (1962 [86n]): "him."

double Pistolet (1316) SCHELLING (1910 [1:636]): "gold coin, worth about 6s." H&S (1950 [9:708]): "MIDDLETON (1653 [6:131]), 1.5: 'I'd not be so lin'd / For my cap full of double pistolets'; Fletcher and Massinger, The Spanish Curate (1647), 1.1: 'And perhaps give a double Pistolet / To some poor needy Frier, to say a Masse / To keep your Ghost from walking.' The pistolet was a Spanish gold coin worth from 16s. 9d. to 18s. at the date of the play." ADAMS (1962 [32n]): "A double pistolet was a Sp. coin of some value, worth not much less than an Eng. pound." DONALDSON (1985 [622]): "worth about 17s." HUTSON (1998 [495]): "regarded as good currency anywhere, esp. Italy."

Sparke (1317) KERNAN (1962 [86n]): "man of fashion."

SD (1317–19) F (1616 [471]) adds the four-line marginal SD "CELIA at the | windo' throwes | downe her | handkerchief.," which corresponds to 1317–19; rpl. HUTSON (1998 [253]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:316]) inserts the SD "[CELIA at the window throws down her handkerchief,]" between Peregrine’s "the windore has preuented you" [1318] and Volpone’s "Lady, I kisse your bounty" [1296]. GIFFORD (1816 [3:219]) inserts the SD "[CELIA at a window above, throws down her handkerchief.]", which corresponds to 1317 and his "O see! the windore has preuented you" [1318]; rpl. KERNAN (1962 [86]), ADAMS (1979 [32]), DONALDSON (1985 [36]), HARP (2001 [36]). KERNAN (1962 [217]): "CELIA is on the upper stage above and at the rear of the Eliz. stage, or at a windowed projection to the side of the balcony."

preuented (1318) CORRIGAN (1961 [34n]): "preceded, anticipated, gotten ahead of." KERNAN (1962 [87n]): "lit. 'come before.'" ADAMS (1979 [32n]): "forestalled." DONALDSON (1985 [622]): "beaten you to it."

shall (1321) KERNAN (1962 [87n]): "which shall—I, like other Eliz. writers, frequently omits the relative pronoun."

Pouder (1323) KERNAN (1962 [87n]): "powder."

so (1323) KERNAN (1962 [87n]): "of."
kept her perpetually yong, clear'd her wrinckles, firm'd her gummes, fill'd her skinne, colour'd her hayre; From her, deiru'd to Helen, and at the sack of Troy (unfortunatly) lost: Till now, in this our age, it was as happily recouer'd, by a studious Antiquary, out of some ruines of Asia, who sent a moyety of it, to the Court of France (but much sophisticated) wherewith the Ladyes there, now, colour their hayre. The rest (at this present) remains with mee; extracted, to a Quintessence: so that, where euer it but touches, in youth it perpetually preserues, in age restores the complexion; seats your teeth, did they dance like Virginall iacks, firme as a wall; makes them white, as ivory, that were black, as——

ACT. 2. SCENE. 3.

CORVINO. POLITIQVE.

Helen (1330) KERNAN (1962 [87n]): “Helen of Troy.”
Antiquary (1331) KERNAN (1962 [87n]): “scholar.”
extracted, to a Quintessence (1334) KERNAN (1962 [88n]): “refined to its pure essence.”
complexion (1335) SCHELUNG (1910 [1:628]): “natural disposition, constitution.”
dance like Virginall iacks (1336) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]): “Dekker has the same idea in his Gull’s Hornbook (1609), ch. 3: ‘thy teeth (as if thou wert finging prick-fong) stand coldly quavering in thy head, and leap vp and down like the nimble lackses of a paire of Virginals’”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:708]). CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]) adds: “When Gifford wrote there was no proper descripGon of the virginals extant. It has since been supplied by Archdeacon Nares: ‘An instrument of the spinnet kind, but made quite rectangular like a small pianoforte. I remember two in use belonging to the master of the King’s choristers. Their name was probably derived from being used by young girls. They had, like spinnets, only one wire to each note.’” SCHELUNG (1910 [1:642]), virginal: “old form of piano.” H&S (1950 [9:708–9]), per OED: “The jack was ‘an upright piece of wood fixed to the back of the key-lever, and fitted with a quill which plucked the string as the jack rose on the key’s being pressed down,’ which notes that Sh. (as J does here) erroneously applied the term to the key; so in the following [Dekker, op. cit., as above]; John Taylor, The Penniless Pilgrimage (1618 [sig. B4]): ‘The next day I trauelled ouer an exceeding high mountaine, called mount Skene, where I found the valley very warme before I went vp it; but when I came to the top of it, my teeth beganne to daunce in my head with cold, like Virginall iacks.’ The idea came from RABELAIS (1553 [162]), 2.Prol.: ‘les dentz leur tressailloyent comme font les marchettes d’un clavier d’orgues ou d’espinette, quand on joue desus’” [Their teeth danced in their heads like the keyboard of an organ or spinet under the fingers of a maestro” (Le Clercq, trans., 162)]; rpt. REA (1919 [186]), BROWN (1929 [7]). CORRIGAN (1961 [35n]): “pieces of wood attached to the keys of the virginal.” KERNAN (1962 [217]): “The virginal was a small spinet without legs, and its ‘jack’ was a board with quills which plucked the strings as the keys were played. But the reference here is probably to the keys, which resemble teeth.” ADAMS (1979 [33n]): “The quills that pluck the strings of a harpsichord (‘virginal’);” rpt. HARP (2001 [37n]). DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “wooden uprights at the back of the keyboard instrument, fitted with quills which pluck the strings when the keys are struck.”
Blood of the devil, and my shame! come downe, here;

Come downe: No house but mine to make your Scene?

Signior Flaminio, will you downe, Sir? downe?

What is my wife your Franciscina? Sir?

No windoress on the whole Piazza, here,

To make your properties, but mine? but mine?

Hart! ere to morrow, I shall be new christen'd,

SD (1338-40)] Gifford (1816 [3:220]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD "Enter Corvino."; Kernan (1962 [88]) adds to 2.3 the SD "Enter Corvino"; rpt. Adams (1979 [33]), Donaldson (1985 [36]), Hutson (1998 [254]), Harp (2001 [37]).

Blood of the devil (1341)] F (1616 [472]) reads "Spite o' the devil," which Kernan (1962 [88]) glosses as: "manifestation of the devil's hatred of man, i.e., woman."

SD (1341-42)] F (1616 [472]) adds the three-line marginal SD "He beats away the montebank &c.," which corresponds to 1341-42; rpt. Hutson (1998 [254]). Whalley (1756 [2:317]) inserts the SD "[He beats away the montebank, &c.,] after Corvino's "come downe, here" [1341]; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [36]). Gifford (1816 [3:220]) inserts the SD "Beats away Volpone, Nano, &c." after Corvino's "but mine?" [1346]; rpt. Adams (1979 [33]), Harp (2001 [37]). Kernan (1962 [88]) reprints the F SD in conjunction with 1342-44, and applies the SD "[Shouting up to Celia]" to Corvino's "Blood of the devil, and my shame!" [1341];

SD (1342)] Kernan (1962 [88]) inserts the SD "[To Volpone]" before Voltores "Come downe, here" [1341ff.]; rpt. Adams (1979 [33]), Harp (2001 [37]).

Scene (1342)] Rea (1919 [187]): "Scenes at balconies or windows were common in the commedia dell'arte. Corvino protests at having the window of his house made a part of the stage for a little comedy."

Kernan (1962 [216]): "Ren. critical theory prescribed as the proper setting or 'scene' for comedy a public place backing on private houses. Although the literal meaning applies well enough here, the larger meaning of 'scene' as 'setting for a play' should not be overlooked, for Volpone has just acted out a play of his won devising." Donaldson (1985 [622]): "Corvino sees the incident in terms of a commedia dell'arte scene, which might similarly be set in a street overlooked by private houses, with characters appearing at windows. Flaminio was the stock commedia lover (Flaminio Scala being a leading commedia actor); Franciscina was the serving maid, and Pantalone di Besogniosi the aged, frequently cuckolded pantaloon."

See app. Sources, s.v. "Venetian Background."

Flaminio (1343)] H&S (1950 [9:709]): "Flaminio Scala, professionally known as Flavio, published at Venice in 1611 a collection of scenari, Il Teatro delle Favole. He was a noted actor in the Comedy of Arts."

See app. Sources, s.v. "Historical Figures and Allusions."

Franciscina (1344)] Smith (1912 [5]): "The servetta—Franceschina or Colombina—kept closer to earth, had always a ready and none too squeamish word for everyone, and in love speeches to her adorers parodied ludicrously enough her mistress's romantic flights."

Smith (1912 [193n]): "Franceschina was of course the servetta in Scala's scenarios and perhaps from them was adopted by Marston for the name of his Dutch Curtizan; the connotation of the name was the opposite of maidenly or wifely virtue. Cf. the Franceschina of George Chapman's May Day (1601)."

Rea (1919 [187]): "The part Celia has unconsciously been taking seems to Corvino that of the ordinary flirtatious servant-maid of comedy."

H&S (1950 [9:709]): "the servant-maid of the Comedy of Arts. In Jacomo Callot's Balli di Sfessania (1630), she is dressed as a dancing-girl with a tambourine."

Adams (1979 [33n]): "Franciscina is an always-available serving girl in popular it. comedy (commedia dell'arte); rpt. Harp (2001 [37n])."

properties (1346)] Schelling (1910 [1:637]): "stage properties"; rpt. Kernan (1962 [88n]).
And cald the Pantalone di Besogniosi,

About the towne.  P.E.R. What should this mean, Sir Poll?

P.O.L. Some trick of State, beleeeue it. I will home.

P.E.R. It may be some designe on you:  P.O.L. I knowe not.

Ile stand vpon my gard.  P.E.R. 'Tis your best, Sir.

P.O.L. This three weekes; all my aduises, all my letters

They haue beeene intercepted.  P.E.R. Indeed, Sir?

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Pantalone di Besogniosi (1348)] FLORIO (1598 [42]), s.v. Beffo: “a foole, a gull, an idiot, a ninnie.”
WHALLEY (1756 [2:317r]): “The name Pantalone was given to the Venetians by way of reproach, and as a kind of local nick-name. Gilles Menage, *Les Origines de la Langue Françoise* (1650) gives us the following account of the word, which shows the poet’s humorous application of it: ‘Pantalon, calçon, ou haut de chausse, qui tient avec le bas. Le mot nous est venu d’Italie, ou les Venitiens qui portent de ces fortes de hauts de chausses, sont appelez par injure Pantaloni. Et ils sont ainsi appelez de saint Pantaleon, qu’ils nomment Pantalone, au lieu de Pantaleone, mot corrupu de Pantelemon, qui signifie tout misericodieux. Ce saint etoit autrefois en grande veneration parmy eux; et plusieurs a cause de cela, s’appeloient Pantaleoni dans leurs noms de baptesme: d’ou ils furent tous ensuie appelez de la forte par les autres Italianis. C’est ainst que le Tassone dans son poeme della Secchia rapita appelle les Boulonois Petronii, & les Modenois Geminiani.”
GIFFORD (1816 [3:220n]): “i.e., the zany or fool of the beggars. Such, at least, is the vulgar import of the words; but I probably affixed a more opprobrious sense to them.”
CORNWALL (1838 [807]), Besogno: “a beggar, needy wretch.”
CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:503]): “Here Mr. [Alexander] Dyce notes ‘Corvino means, I shall be called cuckold, as the Pantalone of the It. Comedy is frequently represented to be.’”
SMITH (1912 [6–7]): ‘When Pantalone de’Besognosi came on in the long black robe and scarlet hose of a Magnifico of Venice, the audience knew at once that according to convention he would speak Venetian patois, would be stupid, avaricious and amorous and the dupe of the young people in the intrigue.’ The lean and slipped pantaloon had by J’s time become well known far beyond Italy.”
SMITH (1912 [193]): ‘Gifford’s n. on Pantalone is inadequate ...; WILKINS (1906) ... does not understand any better than Gifford the allusions to Fritata, Pantalone, etc.”
REA (1919 [187]): “Corvino realizes that he has arrived on the scene just in time to play the part of another character in the extempore performance.”
H&S (1950 [9:709]): “a stock Venetian character in the Comedy of the Arts; ‘de Bisogniosi’ is a jocular, quasi-family name—of the pedigree of Paupers. He was a lean old man, wore loose slippers, a black cap and gown, and a red dress. He was commonly depicted as a jealous dotard or as a cuckold, and this is the point of Corvino’s allusion. Compare John Day, William Rowley, and Wilkins, *The Travels of Three English Brothers* (1607 [sig. E4′]), where Will Kemp arranges to play with an It. Harlaken: ‘HARL. Marry, sir first we will haue an old Pantaloune. KEMP. Some jealous Coxscombe. HARL. Right, and that part will I play.’ He goes on to say, ‘And wee must have an Amorado that must make me a Cornuto.’”
CORRIGAN (1961 [35n]): “Pantalone of the Beggars; Pantalone or Pantaloon was a stock character in the It. comedy and pantomimne, often an old dotard, the butt and accomplice of the clown.”
ADAMS (1979 [33n]): “Pantaloon of the Paupers. Pantaloon, in the tradition of *commedia dell’arte*, is a doddering old fool in perpetual terror of being cuckolded”, rpt. HARP (2001 [37n]). See app. Sources, s.v. “Historical Figures and Allusions.”
SD (1349)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:221]) adds the SD “[Exitunt,” after Corvino’s “About the towne”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [88]), DONALDSON (1985 [37]), HUTSON (1998 [254]), each with “[Exit].”
Home (1350)] KERNAN (1962 [88n]): “go home.”
Designe (1351)] KERNAN (1962 [88n]): “plot.”
Properties (1353)] KERNAN (1962 [89n]): “you were best to do so.”
This three weekses (1354)] H&S (1950 [9:709]): “Sir Politic has forgotten the ‘aduises’ he had ‘on wensday last’ in 2.1.94 [1110].”
Best have a care. Pol. Nay so I will. Per. This Knight, [E3']

I may not loose him, for my mirth, till night.

ACT. 2. SCENE. 4.

VOLPONE. MOSCA.

Is ym wounded. Mos. Where, Sir? Volp. Not without; Those blowes were nothing: I could beare them euer.

But angry Cupid, boultling from her eyes,

Hath shot himselfe into me, like a flame;

SD (1356)] Kernan (1962 [89]) indicates Would-Be's departure with the sd "[Exit.]."
SD (1356–57) Kernan (1962 [89]) adds the sd "[Exit.]" after Peregrine's "This Knight / I may not loose him, for my mirth, till night"; rpt. Adams (1979 [34]), Donaldson (1985 [37]), Hutson (1998 [254]), Harp (2001 [38]), each with "[Exeunt]." Donaldson (1985 [37]) inserts "[Aside]" between Peregrine's SP and this line.


Not without; / Those blowes were nothing: I could beare them euer. / But angry Cupid ... Hath shot himselfe into me (1360–63) Upton (1749 [27–28]): "This passage is greatly improved from a like thought printed among those poems which are ascribed to Anacreon," for which he quoted Anacreonta 13.14–20: "(Love) shot, I ran; his shafts all sped, / Angered he sent / Himself at me instead. / He pierced me my inmost heart, and laid / Me wasted quite; / My buckler's useless made. / For what is outward equipage, / When he the fight / Doth still within me wage" (Edmonds, trans., 2:35), and added that "Sh. has likewise imitated this poem in TrodCreA 1.1.1–3: 'Call here my varlet; I'll unarm again. / Why should I war without the walls of Troy, / That fend such cruel battle here within.'" Gifford (1816 [3:221n]): "pretty imitated from the concluding lines of the 14th Ode of Anacreon." Rea (1919 [187–88]) adds: "I quote the lines referred to in the Lat. trans. of Stephanus, in his ed. of the Greek Lyric Poets (1600): 'Tandemque missili omni / Quum destitutus esset / Ira aestuans iacit se / In me; velut sagittam / Et in cor vsque / Medium, resoluit artus / Scutum ergo nil iuuat me: / Nam cur petamur extra, / Quum praetum sit intus.' The same thought may be found in Thomas Watson's 'EKATOMIAΘΛA' (1581 [24]), taken from the It. of Serafino." Rea (1919 [188]); Cf. Hue and Cry after Cupid, 91: 'And, if chance his arrow misses, / He will shoot himself, in kisses.' H&S (1950 [9:709]) repr. the Gr. text of Anacreonta 13.13–20. Adams (1979 [34n]): "Most of Volpone's erotic torments are of the sort popularized 300 years before by Francesco Petrarca." McDonald (1988 [126, 127]): "Volpone's quest for Celia is a perfect instance of the protagonist's misuse of his imagination to dignify and inflate his tawdry desires."

"Volpone's catalogue of his amorous wounds, expressed as it is in exaggerated terms of fire and air, prepares for the hyperboles of the seduction scene, in which the lecher seeks to transmute common lust into an act of transcendence."

without (1360) Kernan (1962 [89n]): "outside, on the body."
Those (1361) Kernan (1962 [89n]): "blows given him by Corvino."

But angry Cupid, boultling from her eyes (1362) H&S (1950 [9:709]): "Cf. the Anacreonta, 26.4–8: ["No ships were my undoing, / Nor horse nor foar my ruin, / But barbarous foes / With eyes for brows']
Where, now, he flings about his burning heat,

As in a furnace, some ambitious fire,
Whose vent is stopt. The fight is all within mee.
I cannot liue, except thou helpe me, Mosca;
My liuer melts, and I, without the hope
Of some soft ayre, from her refreshing breath,

Am but a heape of cinders. M O S . ’Lasse, good Sir,
Would you had neuer seene her. V O L P . Nay, would thou
Had’st neuer told me of her. M O S . Sir, ’tis true;
I do confesse, I was vnfortunate,
And you vnhappy: but I am bound in conscience.

No less than duety, to effect my best
To your release of torment, and I will, Sir.
V O L P . Deare Mosca, shall I hope? M O S . Sir, more then deare,
I will not bidd you to dispaire of ought,
Within a humane compasse. V O L P . O, there spoke

My beter Angell. Mosca, take my keyes,
Gold, plate, and ieweells, all’s at thy deuotion;

(Edmonds, trans., 2:55)]. PARKER (1999 [156n]): “This ... is from the conclusion of his Ode 16 (The Captive).”

boulding (1362) Cunningham (1875 [3:503]): “Here boulding of course signifies shooting bolts, or arrows. Its use as a verb in this sense is uncommon.” Rea (1919 [188]) adds: “But it is quite possible that boulding is used intransitively, or as a sort of middle voice.” H&S (1950 [9,709]): “springing.” Kernan (1962 [89n]): “springing, but also, ‘shooting.’ A bolt is an arrow, and ‘Cupid’s bolt’ was a standard figure of speech.” Parker (1999 [156n]): “i.e., shooting like a ‘bolt’ or arrow.”

her eyes (1362) Kernan (1962 [89n]): “Celia’s.”


liuer (1368) H&S (1950 [9,709]): “In classical poetry spoken of as the seat of the violent passions, such as jealousy or love. Cf. Und 86.12, where J translates Horace’s address to Venus: ‘si torrere iecur quaeris idoneum’ by ‘If a fit liver thou dost seek to toast.’” Kernan (1962 [90n]): “the supposed seat of violent passions such as love or hate.”

compasse (1379) Kernan (1962 [90n]): “reach, possibility of achievement.”
Employ them, how thou wilt; nay, coyne me, too:
So thou, in this, but crowne my longings. Mosca?
M O S. Vse but your patience. V O L P. So I haue. M O S. I doubt
not
But bring successse to your desires. V O L P. Nay, then,
I not repent me of my late disguise.
M O S. If you can homne him, Sir, you neede not. V O L P. True: [E4r]
Besides, I neuer meant him for my heyre.
1390
Is not the colour of my beard, and eye-brows,
To make me knowne? M O S. No iot. V O L P. I did it well.
M O S. So well, would I could follow you in mine,
With halfe the happinesse; and, yet, I would
Escape your Epilogue. V O L P. But, were they gull’d
1395
With a beleefe, that I was Scoto? M O S. Sir,
Scoto himselfe could hardly haue distinguish’d;
I haue not time to flatter you, wee’ll part:
And, as I prosper, so applaud my art.

**ACT. 2. SCENE. 5.**

**CORVINO. CELIA. SERVITORE.**

Death of mine honour, with the cittyes *Foole*?
A iugling, tooth-drawing, prating *Montebanke*?

And, at a publique windore? where whil’st hee,
With his strain’d action, and his dole of faces,
To his *drug-Lecture* drawes your itching eares,
A crewe of old, vn-mari’d, noted lechers,
Stood leering vp, like *Satyres*; and you smile,
Most graciously? and fanne you fauours forth,
To giue your hote *Spectators* satisfaction?

---

**SD (1398)** GIFFORD (1816 [3:222]) applies the marginal SD “[Exeunt.” to Mosca’s “as I prosper, so applaud my art”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [91]), ADAMS (1979 [35]), DONALDSON (1985 [38]), HUTSON (1998 [256]), HARF (2001 [39]).


**tooth-drawing (1402)** KERNAN (1962 [92n]): “one of the major activities of itinerant quacks.”

**publique (1403)** KERNAN (1962 [92n]): “i.e., opening on the square.”

**strain’d action (1404)** KERNAN (1962 [92n]): “overdone theatrical gestures.”

**dole of faces (1404)** UPTON (1749 [31]): “This can hardly be tortured into any kind of meaning. But the poet thus originally gave it, ‘Where, whilst he, / With his strain’d action, and his dole of *faces*, &c.’ A true picture of a mountebank, with his strained action, and his distributing his *faces*, or physical dregs to the multitude.” WHALLEY (1756 [2:320n]): “[Upton’s] correction is ingenious; but I think, a very easy meaning may be assigned without altering the text. *Dole of faces* is the grimace, or change of features, which accompanied [Volpone’s] action. We have a parallel expression in the beginning of our poet’s *Seij* 1.1.7: ‘We have no shift of faces.’” SCHELUNG (1910 [1:630]): “distribution of grimaces.” REA (1919 [188]): “Upton thought this should be *faces*: ‘A true picture of a mountebank ... dregs.’ Whalley’s explanation is better: *Dole of faces* is the grimace, or change of features, which accompanied Volpone’s action.” H&S (1950 [9:710]) cite *Seij* 1.1.7. KERNAN (1962 [92n]): “repertory of masks or facial expressions.” ADAMS (1979 [35n]): “Guile, trickery; the suggestion is of false faces or masks.” DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “repertoire (lit. ‘share’).”

**dole (1404)** HUTSON (1998 [491]): “limited repertoire.”

**Satyres (1407)** KERNAN (1962 [92n]): “mythological demi-gods noted for their cruelty and lechery.”
What; was your Montebanke their call? their whistle? 
Or were you‘enamour’d on his copper rings?  
His saffron iewell, with the toade-stone in’t?  
Or his imbroydred sute, with the cope-stitch,  
Made of a herse-cloath? or his old tilt-feather?  

Or his starch’d beard? well; you shall haue him, yes.
He shall come home, and minister vnto you
The fricace, for the Mother. Or, let me see,
I think, you'had rather mount? would you not mount?
Why, if you'll mount, you may; yes truely, you may:

And so, you may be seene, downe to' th' foote.
Get you a citterne, Lady Vanity,
And be a Dealer, with the Virtuous Man;
Make one: Ile but protest my selfe a cuckold,
And saue your dowry. I am a Dutchman, I;

For, if you thought me an Italian,
You would be damn'd, ere you did this, you Whore:
Thou'ldst tremble, to imagine, that the murder
Of father, mother, brother, all thy race,
Should follow, as the subject of my iustice.

CEL. Good Sir, haue pacience. CORV. What couldst thou propose
Less to thy selfe, then, in this heate of wrath,
And stung with my dishonour, I should strike
This steele vnsto thee, with as many stabs,

As thou wert gaz’d vpon with goatish eyes?

CEL. Alas, Sir, be appeas’d; I could not thinke
My beeing at the windore should more, now,
Moue your impatience, then at other times:

CORV. No? not to seeke, and entertaine a parlee;

With a knowne knaue? before a multitude?
You were an Actor, with your handkercheife;
Which he, most sweetly, kist in the receipt,
And might (no doubt) returne it, with a letter,
And point the place, where you might meete: your sisters,

Your mothers, or your aunts might serue the turne.

CEL. VWhy, deare Sir, when do I make these excuses?
Or euer stirre, abroad, but to the Church?
And that, so seldom— CORV. VWell, it shall be lesse;
And thy restraint, before, was liberty,

To what I now decree: And therefore, mark mee.
First, I will haue this baudy light damn’d vp;
And, till’t be done, some two, or three yards of,
Ile chalke a line: ore which, if thou but (chance

Parlee (1439)] KERNAN (1962 [93n]): “conversation.”
In the receipt (1442)] KERNAN (1962 [94n]): “when he received it.”
Point (1444)] KERNAN (1962 [94n]): “appoint”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [623]).
Serve the turne (1445)] KERNAN (1962 [94n]): “do the trick.”
Turne (1445)] DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “Cf. AntCleo 2.5.59: ‘the best turn i’ th’ bed.’”
Abroad (1447)] KERNAN (1962 [94n]): “out of doors.”

And thy restraint, before, was liberty. / To what I now decree (1449ff.) REA (1919 [189–90]): “These
threats of Corvino’s are quite in keeping with the usual descriptions of the characteristics of Venetians. Cf.
the following from the Eng. trans. of AGrippa (1530 [207–8]): ‘if a ielouse man obtaine her, he shutteh her
vp perpetually, and setteh watchmen to keepe her, as if shee were a prisoner: if he disappoinhted of his louve
shalbe euer to winner hir, geuninge himselfe to reprocheful language, doth deteste her with
infinite railinge and slasherdous worde... The Frencheman loueth a pleasaunte wenche, although shee be
fowle: the Spaniarde estemeth a faire woman more then any other, although shee bee rude: the Italian had
lieuer haue a woman that is somewhat fearefull.’”

To (1450)] KERNAN (1962 [94n]): “compared to.”
Mark (1450)] KERNAN (1962 [94n]): “pay close attention to.”

This baudy light damn’d vp (1451)] ADAMS (1979 [36n]): “i.e., brick up the window”; rpt. HARP (2001
[40n]). FITZGIBBON (1975 [248–49]) notices a “close verbal correspondence” between Corvino’s line and
the Bassanes of Ford’s The Broken Heart (2.1.1, 7).
To set thy desp’rate foote; more hell, more horror,

1455 More wilde, remorcelesse rage shall seize on thee,

Then on a Conjurier, that had heed-lesse left,

His Circles safetie, ere his Deuill was layd.

Then, here’s a lock, which I will hang vpon thee;

And, now I thinke on’t, I will keepe thee back-wards;

Then, here’s a lock, which I will hang vpon thee;

1460 Thy lodging shall bee back-wards; thy walkes back-wards;

Thy prospect-all be back-wards; and no pleasure,

That thou shalt know, but back-wards: Nay, since you force

My honest nature, know, it is your owne

Being to open, makes me vse you thus.

Since you will not containe your subtill nostrills

In a sweete roome, but, they must snuffe the ayre

Of ranke, and sweaty passengers—One knocks.
Away, and be not seen, paine of thy life;
Not looke toward the windore: if thou dost—
(Nay stay, heare this) let me not prosper. Whore,
But I will make thee an Anatomy,
Dissect thee mine owne selfe, and read a lecture
Vpon thee, to the citty, and in publique.
Away. Who's there? S E R . 'Tis Signior Mosca, Sir.

ACT. 2. SCENE. 6.

CORVINO, MOSCA.

Let him come in, his master's dead: There's yet
Some good, to helpe the bad. My Mosca, welcome;
I gesse your newes. M O S . I feare, you cannot, Sir.
Corvino: Is't not his death? Mosca: Rather, the contrary.

Corvino: Not his recovery? Mosca: Yes, Sir, Corvino. I am curst, I am bewitch'd, my crosses meete to vexe mee.

How? how? how? how? Mosca: Why, Sir, with Scoto's oyle; Corbaccio, and Voltore brought of it,

Whilst I was busy in an inner roome—

Corvino: Death! that damnd but, for the Law,

Now, I could kill the raskall: 't cannot bee,

His oyle should haue that vertue. Ha' not I Knowne him a common rogue, come fidling in To th' Osteria, with a tumbling whore, And, when he ha's done al his forc'd tricks, beene glad Of a poore spooneful of dead wine, with flies in't? It cannot bee. All his ingredients Are a sheepes gall, a rosted bitches marrow,

Some fewe sod earewigs, pounded caterpills,
A little capons grease, and fasting spitle:
I know 'hem, to a dram. M O S. I know not, Sir,
But some on't, there, they pour'd into his eares,
Some in his nostrills, and recouer'd him;

Applying but the fricace. C O R V. Pox o' that fricace.
M O S. And since, to see me the more officious,
And flatt'ring of his health, there, they haue had
(At extreme fees) the Colledge of Physitians
Consulting on him how they might restore him;

Where, one would haue a cataplasme of spices,
Another a flead Ape clapt to his brest,
A third would ha'it a Dog, a fourth an oyle
With wild Catts skinnes: At last, they all resolu'd
That, to preserve him, was no other means,

But some yong woman must be straight sought out,
Lusty, and ful of iuice, to sleepe by him;
And, to this servise (most vnhappily,
And most vnwillingly) am I now imploy’d,
Which, here, I thought to pre-acquaint you with,

For your aduice, since it concernes you most,
Because, I would not do that thing might crosse
Your ends, on whome I haue my whole dependance, Sir:
Yet, if I do it not, they may delate
My slacknesse to my Patron, worke me out

Of his opinion; and there, all your hopes,
Venters, or whatsoever, are all frustrate.
I do but tell you, Sir. Besides, they are all
Now striuing, who shall first present him. Therefore—
I could intreate you, briefely, conclude some-what:

Preuent ’hern if you can. C O R V. Death to my hopes!
This is my villainous fortune! best to hire
Some common Curtezan? M O S. I, I thought on that, Sir.

But some yong woman must be streight sought out, / Lusty, and ful of iuice, to sleepe by him (1510-11) SYMONDS (1886 [80]): “nothing is wanting to [Volpone’s] cure but the warmth of an Abishag to comfort his decrepitude <i.e., 1 Kings 1:1-4>.” Also see app. Sources, s.v. “Other Sources, Analogues, and Influences.”

streight (1510) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “instantly.”
to (1512) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “on.”
ends (1517) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “aims, intentions.”
delate (1518) GIFFORD (1816 [3:227n]): “i.e., accuse, or complain of; a vile latinism.” H&S (1950 [9:710]): “inform against (Lat. delator, an informer). Cf. Disc 1596.” SALE (1951 [143]): “either ‘report’ or ‘dilate upon.’” ADAMS (1979 [38n]): “denounce.”
worke me out / Of his opinion (1519-20) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “persuade him out of his high regard for me.”
Venters (1521) Cf. nn. 424, 589.
frustrate (1521) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “frustrated.”
I do but tell you, Sir (1522) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “I only tell what may happen.”
present him (1523) KERNAN (1962 [97n]): “i.e., with the young woman prescribed.”
breefly (1497) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): “quickly.”
conclude some-what (1497) KERNAN (98n): “decide something, form some plan.”
But, they are all so subtle, full of art,
And age againe, doting, and flexible,

So as—I cannot tell—we may perchance
Light on a queane, may cheate vs all. Corv. Tis true.
M O S. No, no: it must be one, that has no tricks, Sir,
Some simple thing, a creature, made vnto it;
Some wench you may command. Ha’you no kinswoman?

Gods so—Thinke, thinke, thinke, thinke, thinke, thinke, thinke, thinke, Sir.
One o’ the Doctors offer’d, there, his daughter.
Corv. How! Mos. Yes, Signior Lupo, the Physitian.
Corv. His daughter? Mos. And a virgin, Sir. Why? Alasse,
He knowes the state of’s body, what it is;

That naught can warme his bloud, Sir, but a feuer;
Nor any incantation raise his spirit:
A long forgetfulness hath seiz’d that part.
Besides, Sir, who shall know it? some one, or two.

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subtle (1528) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): "cunning, tricky"; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [497]).
art (1528) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): "wiles."
age againe (1529) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): "old age on the other hand."
flexible (1502) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): "pliant, gullible."
queane (1504) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): "whore." ADAMS (1979 [38n]): "trollop." HARP (2001 [43n]): "prostitute."
simple (1533) Cf. n. 76.
a creature, made vnto it (1533) Cf. n. 2714.
made vnto (1533) KERNAN (1962 [98n]): "forced to, directed."
Gods so (1535) RF. FLORIO (1611 [91]). Cazzo: "a mans priuie member." GIFFORD (1816 [1:clxxxvii])
notes that J’s “most usual oath” in EMIL “was an unmeaning exclamation ‘by G-d so!’ from this, when his
works were reprinted, he withdrew the G, and thus rendered the nonsense harmless.” KERNAN (1962
[98n]): “[God’s] soul (?). Also a corruption of It., cazzo, the male organ”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [623]).
Lupo (1537) FLORIO (1611 [291]), s.v. Lupo: “a Wolfe”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [98n]). ADAMS (1979 [38n]):
“Doctor Wolf”; rpt. HARP (2001 [43n]).
nought can warme his bloud, Sir, but a feuer ... (1540ff.) GIFFORD (1816 [3:228n]) quotes Juvenal, Sat
10.217–18: “Pratera minimus gelido iam in corpore sanguis / febre calet sola” (“Besides all this, the little
blood in his now chilly frame is never warm except with fever” (Ramsay, trans., 209)); and notes that
“What follows is from the same satire”; rpt. REA (1919 [190]), H&S (1950 [9:710]). CUNNINGHAM (1875
[3:503]): ‘The Satire is the famous Tenth, and ‘what follows’ has been rendered by GIFFORD (1803 [II.
298–305]) himself: ‘The sluggish palate dulled, the feast no more / Excites the same sensations as of yore; /Taste, feeling, all, a universal blot, / And e’en the rites of love remembered not: / Or if,—through the long
night he feebly strives / To raise a flame where not a spark survives; / While Venus marks the effort with
distrust, / And hates the gray decrepitude of lust.‘” DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “from Juvenal, Sat 10.217–
18.”
CORV. I pray thee giue mee leaue: If any man
But I had had this luck— The thing in’t selfe,
I know, is nothing— Wherefore should not I
As well command my bloud, and my affections,
As this dull Doctor? In the point of honor,
The cases are all one, of wife, and daughter.

Mos. I heare him comming. CORV. She shall doo’t: Tis done.
Slight, if this Doctor, that is not engag’d,
Vnlesse’t bee for his councell (which is nothing)
Offer his daughter, what should I, that am
So deeply in? I will preuent him, wretch!

Couetous wretch! Mosca, I haue determin’d.
Mos. How, Sir? Corv. We'll make all sure. The party, you wot of,  
Shall be mine owne wife, Mosca. Mos. Sir. The thing,  
(But that I would not seeme to counsell you)

1560 I should haue motion'd to you, at the first:  
And, make your count, you haue cut all their throtes.  
Why! Tis directly taking a possession!  
And, in his next fit, we may let him go. 

'Tis but to pull the pillow, from his head,

1565 And he is thratled: 't had beene done, before,  
But for your scrupulous doubts. Corv. I, a plague on't,  
My conscience fooles my wit. Well, Ile be briefe,  
And so be thou, least they should be before vs:  
Go home, prepare him, tell him, with what zeale,  

1570 And willingnesse, I do it: sweare it was,  
On the first hearing, (as thou mayst do, truely)  
Mine owne free motion. Mos. Sir, I warrant you,
Hé so possesse him with it, that the rest
Of his stern’d clients shall be banisht, all;
And onely you receiu’d. But come not, Sir,
Vntil I send, for I haue something, else
To ripen, for your good (you must not know’t)
C ORV. But do not you forget to send, now. M OS. Feare not.

ACT. 2. SCENE. 7.

C ORVINO. C ELIA.

Where are you, wife? my Celia? wife? what, blubbering?
Come, drye those teares. I thinke, thou thought’st mee in
earnest?
Ha? by this light, I talk’d so but to trie thee.

Me thinkes, the lightnesse of the occasion
Should ha’ confirmed thee. Come, I am not jealous:

2.7 (1579ff.)] H&S (1950 [9:771]): “K. Brunner poinAd out an analogy to the Celia story in Gower’s Con/BMio Amanfk, 5.2643–825, which Gower ... took from the Roman des Sept Sages—the story of a steward who betrayed his wife to a king.”


I think, thou thought’st mee in earnest? / Ha? by this light, I talk’d so but to trie thee (1582–84)] REA (1919 [191]), per HOLT (105): “Holt compares Plautus, Amphitr(o) 912–17: ‘ego expediam tibi. / non edepol qtA A A A...’”

by this light (1584)] DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “reviled as ‘bawdy’ by Corvino [1451].”

trie (1584)] KERNAN (1962 [101n]): “test.”

the lightnesse of the occasion / Should ha’ confirmed thee (1585–86)] ADAMS (1979 [39n]): “You should have seen I was joking because the occasion was so trivial”; rpt. HARP (2001 [44n]).

lightnesse (1585)] KERNAN (1962 [101n]): “triviality.”
ocassion (1585)] KERNAN (1962 [101n]): “i.e., leaning out the window, dropping handkerchief.”
confirmed (1586)] KERNAN (1962 [101n]): “reassured.”

jealous (1586)] HUTSON (1998 [493]): “suspicious.”

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CEL. No? COR. Faith, I am not I, nor neuer was:

It is a poore, vnprofitable humor.

Do not I know, if women haue a will,

They'll doo 'gainst all the watches, o' the world?

And that the feircest spies, are tam'd with gold?

Tut, I am confident in thee thou shalt see't:

And see, Ile giue thee cause too, to beleue it.

Come, kisse mee. Go, and make thee ready straight,

In all thy best attire, thy choicest iewells,

Put 'hem all on, and, with 'hem, thy best lookes.

We are in invite d to a solemn feast.

At old Volpone's, where it shall appeare

How far I am free, from jealouse, or feare.
ACT. 3. SCENE. I.

MOSCA.

I

Feare, I shall begin to grow in loue
With my deare selfe, and my most prosp'rous parts,
They do so spring, and burgeon; I can feele
A whimsey i'm y bloud: (I know not how)
Successe hath made me wanton. I could skip
Out of my skinne, now, like a subtil snake,
I am so limber. O! Your *Parasite*
Is a most pretitious thing, dropt from aboue,
Not bred 'mongst clods, and clot-poules, here on earth.

I muse, the *Mysterie* was not made a *Science*,
It is so liberally profest! Almost,
All the wise world is little else, in nature,
But *Parasites*, or *Sub-parasites*. And, yet,

I meane not those, that haue your bare *Towne-art*,


*Mysterie* (1611) FLORIO (1611 [317]), s.v. *Mysterio*: “a misterie or secret in holy things, a thing secretly hid in wordes or ceremonies, whereunto the common fort might not come.” SCHELLING (1910 [1:635]): “art, trade, profession.” KERNAN (1662 [102n]): “craft”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [623]). ADAMS (1979 [40n]): “craft. Mosca is playing on the idea of the liberal arts and sciences”;

*Science* (1611) KERNAN (1662 [218]): “a term formerly applied to certain philosophical studies required for a degree in the School of *Literae Humaniores*, the Liberal Arts—see ‘liberally profest’ in [1612]. Mosca is lamenting that the art of the flatterer should be considered only a ‘mystery’ [1611], i.e. a mechanical skill or trade, and he is proposing that in view of its prevalence it be raised to the dignity of a science and made, like logic, a required study for all educated men.” DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “academic discipline.”

liberally profest (1612) KERNAN (1662 [102n]): “freely practiced.”


And, yet, / I meane not those, that haue your bare *Towne-art* ... Eecho my-Lord, and lick away a moath (1614–23) DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “cf. *Disc* 1586-1635,” which contains J’s observations regarding “*Parasiti ad mensam*” (“Parasites at the Table”): “These are flatterers for their bread, that praise all my oraculous lord does or says, be it true or false; invent tales that shall please; make baits for his lordship’s ears; and if they be not received in what they offer at, they shift a point of the compass, and turn their tale, presently tack about, deny what they confessed, and confess what they denied; fit their discourse to the persons and occasions. What they snatch up and devour at one table, utter at another; and grow suspected of the master, hated of the servants, while they inquire, and reprehend, and compound, and dilate business of the house they have nothing to do with. They praise my lord’s wine and the sauce he likes; observe the cook and bottle-man; while they stand in my lord’s favour, speak for a pension for them, but pound them to dust upon my lord’s least distaste, or change of his palate. How much better is it to be silent, or at least to speak sparingly! for it is not enough to speak good, but timely things. If a man be asked a question, to answer; but to repeat the question before he answer is well, that he be sure to understand it, to avoid absurdity; for it is less dishonour to hear imperfectly than to speak imperfectly. The ears are excused, the understanding is not. And in things unknown to a man, not to give his opinion, lest by the affection of knowing too much he lose the credit he hath, by speaking or knowing the wrong way what he utters. Nor seek to get his patron’s favour by embarking himself in the factions of the family, to inquire after domestic similitudes, their sports or affections. They are an odious and vile kind of creatures, that fly about the house all day, and picking up the filth of the house like pies or swallows, carry it to their nest (the lord’s ears), and oftentimes report the lies they have feigned for what they have seen and heard, *Imò serviles.*—These are called instruments of grace and power with great persons, but they are indeed the organs of their impotency, and marks of weakness. For sufficient lords are able to make these discoveries themselves. Neither will an honourable person inquire who eats and drinks together, what that man plays, whom this man loves, with whom such a one walks, what discourse they hold, who sleeps with whom. They are base and servile natures that busy themselves about these disquisitions. How often have I seen (and worthily) these censors of the family undertaken by some honest rustic and cudgelled thriftily! These are commonly the off-scouring and dregs of men that do these things, or calumniate others; yet I know not truly which is
To know, who's fit to feed 'em; have no house,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for mens eares, to baite that sense; or get
Kitchin-inuention, and some stale receipts

To please the belly, and the groine; nor those,
With their Court-dog-trickes, that can fawne, and fleeere,
Make their revenue out of legges, and faces,
Eccho my-Lord, and lick away a moath:
But your fine, elegant rascal, that can rise,
And stoope (almost together) like an arrow;
Shooe through the aire, as nimbly as a starre;
Turne short, as doth a swallow; and be here,
And there, and here, and yonder, all at once;
Present to any humour, all occasion;

And change a visor, swifter, then a thought.
This is the creature, had the art borne with him;
Toyles not to learne it, but doth practise it

Eccho my-Lord (1623) UPTON (1749 [35–37]): “This part of Flattery, ‘Echo my Lord’ he thus dilates on in his Sej, which is plainly imitated from the following verses of Juvenal, Sat 3.100: ‘rides, maiore cachinno / concutitur; flet, si lacrmas conspexit amici, / nee dolet; igniculum brumae si tempore poscas, / accipit endromidem; si dixeris “aestuo,” sudat. / non sumus ergo pares: melior, qui semper et omni / nocte dieque potest aliena sumere vultum / a facie, lactare manus, laudare paratus, / si bene rectavit, si rectum minxit amicus’” [“If you smile, your Greek will split is side with laughter; if he sees his friend drop a tear, he weeps, though without grieving; if you call for a bit of fire in winter-time, he puts on his cloak; if you say ‘I am hot,’ he breaks into a sweat. Thus we are not upon a level, he and I; he has always the best of it, being ready at any moment, by night or by day, to take his expression from another man’s face, to throw up his hands and applaud if his friend gives a good belch or piddles straight” (Ramsay, trans., 39–41)]. Also, “this Ecchoing My-Lord is very prettily managed in Ham 5.2.92ff.” Also, “Gnatho in Terence, Eunuchus 251–52: ‘quidquid dicunt Audo; id rursum si negant, laudo id quoque; / negat quA: nego; ait: aio’” [“Whatever they say I praise; if again they say the opposite, I praise that too. If one says no, I say no; if one says yes, I say yes” (Sargeaunt, trans., 1:259].

liou away a moath (1623) UPTON (1749 [37]): “that other instance of flattery ... is an allusion to such officious kind of parasites, who are called in Low Dutch plyyme-strucker, qui plumas pilosque ex vestibus assentatorie legit. A plume striker. In Gr. it is called, τίσσας; Ovid, Ars Amatoria 1.149–52, advises the lover to try this piece of flattery towards the woman, he would gain: [‘And if perchance, as will happen, a speck of dust falls on your lady’s lap, flick it ff with your fingers; and if none fall, then flick off—not: let any pretext serve to show your attentiveness’ (Mozley, trans., 23)]. Mention too is made of this kind of flattery in the characters of Theophrastus.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:232n]): responds to Upton with: “All this learning is from Minshew: I, however, did not go to Holland for his flatterer, but to Attica, a country with which he was much better acquainted: Theophrastus, Characters 2.3, “Flattery”: [‘he picks a speck from your coat; or if a morsel of chaff be blown into your beard, plucks it out ...’] (Edmonds, trans., 43). Joseph Hall, Virgilianarum (1598), 6.1.43–44, has the same allusion: ‘But some one, like a clawe-backe parasite, / Pick’d mothes from his patron’s cloak in sight.’” REA (1919 [191–92]) adds: “Many examples might be added from both classical and Eng. writers; it is one of the conventional touches in the description of parasites and flatterers. Cf. Nicholas Udall, Ralph Roister Doister (1567), 1.4: ‘MERRY FOREEK. By your majesty’s license. / ROISTER. What is that? a motte? / MERRY. No, it was a fowl’s feather had light on your coat.’” H&S (1950 [9:712]): “a trick of the parasite in all ages; Valeria, Sulla’s last wife, first attracted his notice at the theatre by picking a thread from his cloak (Plutarch, Sulla 35).” KERNAN (1962 [218]): “Mosca is carrying to the extreme that form of servility, common in all ages, in which the flatterer picks threads or other objects from the coats of those he is trying to please.” HARP (2001 [45n]): “i.e. from his clothes.”

moath (1623) KERNAN (1962 [218]): “had until the 18th c. the gen. meaning of ‘vermin.’”
Out of most excellent nature: And such sparkes,  
Are the true Parasites, others but their Zani's.


But your fine, elegant rascall, that can rise, / And stoope (almost together) like an arrow; / Shoote through the aire, as nimblly as a starre; / Turne short, as doth a swallow; and be here, / And there, and here, and yonder, all at once; / Present to any humour, all occasion; / And change a visor, swifter, then a thought. / This is the creature, had the art borne with him; / Toyles not to learne it, but doth practise it / Out of most excellent nature: And such sparkes, / Are the true Parasites, others but their Zani's (1624—34)
Mosca. Bonario.

Who's this? Bonario? old Corbaccio's sonne?
The person I was bound to seeke. Fayre Sir,

You are happily met. Bon. That cannot be, by thee.

1640 Mos. Why Sir? Bon. Nay, 'pray thee know thy way, and leave me;

I would be loath to inter-change discourse,
With such a mate, as thou art. Mos. Curteous Sir.

Scorne not my pouerty. Bon. Not I, by heauen,

1645 But thou shalt giue mee leave to hate thy basenesse.

Mos. Basenesse? Bon. I Answer me, Is not thy sloth Sufficient argument? thy flattery?

Thy meanes of feeding? Mos. Heauen, be good to me.

These imputations are too common, Sir,

1650 And eas'ly stuck on vertue, when shee's poore;

You are vnequaU to me, and how ere

Your sentence may be righteous, yet you are not,

That ere you know me, thus, proceed in censure:

S'. Marke beare witnesse 'gainst you, 'tis inhumane.
1655 B O N . What? do's he weepe? the signe is soft, and good;
I do repent mee, that I was so harsh.

M o s . 'Tis true, that sway'd, by strong necessity,
I am enforc'd to eate my carefull bread
With to much obsequy; 'tis true, beside,

1660 That I am faine to spin mine owne poore rayment,
Out of my mere observance, being not borne,
To a free fortune: but that I haue done
Base offices, in rending friends asunder,
Diuiding families, betraying counsellors,
Whispering false lies, or mining men with prayses,
Train'd their credulitie with periuries,
Corrupted chastity, or am in loue
With mine owne tender ease, but would not rather
Proue the most rugged, and laborious course,

1665 That might redeeme, my present estimation;
Let me here perish, in all hope of goodnesse.

how ere (1651) KERNAN (1962 [104n]): “no matter how much.”

SD (1655–56) GIFFORD (1816 [3:233]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.” to Bonario’s “What? do’s he weepe? the signe is soft, and good; / I do repent mee, that I was so harsh”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [104]), ADAMS (1979 [41]), DONALDSON (1985 [46]), HARP (2001 [46]), each with the SD between Bonario’s SP and his lines.

Train’d (1666) DEAN (1950 [204n]): “led on.”
Prone (1669) HUTSON (1998 [496]): “endure, pit oneself against, test.”

sway’d, by strong necessity ... Let me here perish, in all hope of goodnesse (1657–71) REA (1919 [93]): “The whole of this speech of Mosca’s describing the character of a parasite should be compared with his speech in the preceding scene on the same subject; the sudden shift of tone is quite in keeping with the parasite’s usual conduct. The source is still Athenaeus: cf. Delp 6.238a: ‘Antiphanes in Geminis: Hoc vide, parasitus, si recte consideres; Urariusque socius ac particeps est vitae, ac fortunae: / Nullus parasitus inofficis amicos esse cupit: / Sed e duero semper fortunatos omnes: / Vita si quis sumptuosus est, non invidens, / Verum ei adesse potius optat, et cum illo simul ea frui: / Non iurgiosus, non acer, non semulus’” [“Antiphanes says in The Twins: ‘For the parasite, if you look at him rightly, is a partner in both things, our fortune and our life. No parasite prays that his friends may have misfortune; quite the contrary, he prays that all may have perpetual good fortune. A man may be sumptuous in his mode of life; he feels no envy, but only prays that he may stand beside him and share his wealth. He is also a noble friend and safe as well, not contentious, not quick to take offence, not malicious … ’” (Gulick, trans., 3:71)].

sway’d (1657) KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “controlled.”
B O N . This cannot be a personated passion.
I was too blame, so to mistake thy nature;
'Pray thee forgive mee: and speake out thy bus'nesse.

M O S . Sir, it concerns you; and though I may seeme,
At first, to make a maine offence, in manners,
And in my gratitude, vnto my maister,
Yet, for the pure loue, which I beare all right,
And hatred of the wrong, I must reueale it.

This very houre, your father is in purpose
To disinherit you— B O N . How? M O S . And thrust you
forth,
As a mere stranger to his bloud; tis true, Sir:
The worke no way ingageth mee, but, as

Of goodnesse, and true vertue, which I heare

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faine (1660)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “obliged.”

spin mine owne poore rayment (1660)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “get clothing.”


but that I have done ... (1662fL)] REA (1919 [193]): “The sentence is never Gmshed. Mosca changes the construction so that the sentence becomes entirely meaningless, but gives the general impression which he wishes to convey—that he does not resort to such disreputable practices. Bonario’s next speech shows that he has been successful in conveying this impression.”

mining (1665)] DEAN (1950 [204n]): “undermining”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [105n]).

Prouе (1669)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “endure”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [623]).

estimation (1670)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “reputation.”

personated (1672)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “pretended.” HARP (2001 [47n]): “contrived, false.”

passion (1672)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “strong feeling.”

SD (1672)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:234]) adds the marginal SD “[Aside.” to Bonario’s “This cannot be a personated passion”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [104]), ADAMS (1979 [41]), DONALDSON (1985 [46]), HARP (2001 [47]), each with the SD between Bonario’s SP and his line

maine (1676)] KERNAN (1962 [105n]): “great”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [623]).

your father is in purpose / To disinherit you (1680–81)] DENNIS (1695a [2:384]) found Mosca’s revelation to Bonario here to be “unreasonable,” and even a plot defect. See app. Tech. & Dramatic Struct.

T'abound in you: and, for which mere respect,
Without a second ayme, Sir, I haue done it.

Bon. This tale hath lost thee much of the late trust,
Thou hadst with me; it is impossible:
I know not how to lend it any thought,
My father should be so vnnaturall.

Mos. It is a confidence, that well becomes
Your piety; and form’d (no doubt) it is,
From your owne simple innocence: which makes
Your wrong more monstrous, and abhor’d. But, Sir,
I now, will tell you more. This very minute,
Is is, or will be doing: And, if you
Shall be but pleas’d to goe with me, Ile bring you,
(I dare not say where you shall see, but) where

Your eare shall be a witness of the deed;
Heare your selfe written Bastard; and profest
The common issue of the earth. Bon. I’m mazed.

Mos. Sir, if I do it not, draw your iust sword,
And score your vengeance, on my front, and face;
Marke me your villayne: You haue too much wrong,
And I do suffer for you, Sir. My heart
Weepes bloud, in anguifh— B O N. Lead. I follow thee.

ACT. 3. SCENE. 3.

VOLPONE. NANO. ANDROGYNO.
CASTRONE.

M ofca stayes long, me thinkes. Bring forth your fports
And helpe, to make the wretched time more sweete.

NAN. Dwarf, Foole, and Eunch, well mett here wee be.

A question it were now, whether of vs three,
Being, all, the knowne delicakes, of a rich man,

In pleasing him, claime the precedence can?

CAS. I claime for my selfe. AND. And, doth the Foole.

NAN. Tis foolish indeed: let me set you both to schoole.

First, for your Dwarf, hee's little, and witty,
And every thing, as it is little, is pritty;  
Else, why do men say to a creature (of my shape)  
So soone as they see him, it's a pritty little Ape?  
And, why a pritty Ape? but for pleasing imitation

Of greater mens action, in a ridiculous fashion.  
Beside, this feat body of mine doth not craue  
Halfe the meat, drinke, and cloth, one of your bulkes will haue.

Admit, your Fooles face be the Mother of laughter,  
Yet, for his braine, it must alwaies come after:

And, though that do feede him, it's a pittfull case,  
His body is beholding to such a bad face.  
V O L P . Who's there? my couch, Away, looke Nano, see:  
Gieu mee my cappes, first—go, enquire. Now, Cupid
Send it be Mosca, and with faire returne.

N A N . It is the beauteous Madam—  
V O L P . Would-bee? is it?

every thing, as it is little, is pritty (1721)rea (1919 [194]): "Cf. Martial, Epig 1.9: 'Bellus homo et magnus vis idem, Cotta, videri: / sed qui bellus homo est, Cotta, pusillus homo est’' ["A pretty fellow you wish to appear, and yet, Cotta, a great man. But a pretty fellow, Cotta, is a puny fellow" (Ker, trans., 1:35)].  
H & S (1950 [9:713]): "cf. LovesLab 1.2.21: ‘pretty, because little’; John Taylor, Works (1630 [264]), epig. 17, “Every thing is prettie when it is little’’; “There is a saying old, (but not so witty) / That when a thing is little, it is prettie: / This doating age of ours it finely fits; / Where many men thought wise, haue pretty wits."

as (1721) KERNAN (1962 [107n]): “to that degree.”  

come after (1729) KERNAN (1962 [108n]): “follow, i.e. be second, less important.”  
that (1730) KERNAN (1962 [108n]): “…i.e., the face, the mouth.”

SD (1732) F (1616 [481]) adds the marginal SD “One knocks,” which corresponds with 1732: rpt. HUTSON (1998 [266]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:332]) inserts the SD “[One knocks.” between Volpone’s “looke Nano, see” and his “Gieu mee my capes.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:236]) adds the SD “[Knocking within.” after Nano’s “His body is beholding to such a bad face” [1731]: rpt. KERNAN (1962 [108]), ADAMS (1979 [43]), HARP (2001 [48]). DONALDSON (1985 [48]) uses the original F SD.

SD (1732) GIFFORD (1816 [3:236]) adds the SD “[Exe. And. and Cas.” after Volpone’s “looke Nano, see,” and the SD “[Exit Nano.” follows Volpone’s “go, enquire”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [43]), HARP (2001 [48]). KERNAN (1962 [108]) applies two separate SDS to Volpone’s “go, enquire”: “[Exit Castrone, Androgyno,]” and “[Volpone lies down in his bed.]” DONALDSON (1985 [48]) inserts the SD “[Exit Nano, Androgyno, Castrone; Volpone lies down]” between Volpone’s “go, enquire” and his “Now, Cupid.”

HUTSON (1998 [266]) applies the SD “[Exit NANO]” after Volpone’s “Nano, see,” and the SD “[Exit ANDROGYNO and CASTRONE]” after his “go, enquire.”

faire returne (1734) KERNAN (1962 [108n]): “good luck—the phrase has commercial suggestions: ‘a fair return’ on a venture.”

returne (1734) DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “playing on the commercial sense: ‘profit.’”
Nan. The same. Volpe. Now, torment on me; squire her in:
For she will enter, or dwell here for ever.
Nay, quickly, that my fit were past. I feare
A second hell too, that my loathing this
Will quite expell my appetite to the other:
Would she were taking, now, her tedious leave.
Lord, how it threatens me, what I am to suffer!

ACT. 3. SCENE. 4.

Women. 2.
thank you, good Sir. 'Pray you signifie
Vnto your Patron, I am here. This band
Shewes not my neck inough (I trouble you, Sir,
Let me request you, bid one of my women

1750
Come hether to mee) In good faith, I, am drest
Most favorably, to day, it is no matter,
'Tis well inough. Looke, see, these petulant things,
How they haue done this! V O L P. I do feele the Feuer

1755
Entring, in at mine eares; O, for a charme,
To fright it hence. L AD. Come nearer Is this curle
In his right place? or this? why is this higher
Then all the rest? you ha'not wash'd your eies, yet?

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SD (1746)] KERNAN (1962 [109]) inserts the SD "[To Nano,]" between Lady Would-be's SP and her line "I thanke you, good Sir."

band (1747)] KERNAN (1962 [109n]): "ruff." BAMBOROUGH (1963 [61n]): "collar."

SD (1750)] HUTSON (1998 [267]) inserts the SD "[Exit NANO]" after Lady Would-be's "bid one of my women / Come hether to mee."

I, am drest / Most favorably, to day, it is no matter... (1750ff.)] UPTON (1749 [39–40]): "Lady Would-Be visits the sick Volpone (as he pretends to be) in his chamber: she is setting her dress in order, 'I am drest / Most favorably to day! It is no matter, / 'Tis well enough,' so it should be stopped: she speaks ironically: otherwise 'tis no better than nonsense. Then she corrects herself and adds 'it is no matter &c.' Afterwards she takes her maids to talk about her head dress; and here our learned poet plainly has Juvenal in view, Sat 6.487–95: ["If she has an appointment and wishes to be turned out more nicely than usual, and is in a hurry to meet some one waiting for her in the gardens, or more likely near the chapel of the wanton Isis, the unhappy maid that does her hair will have her own torn, and the clothes stripped off her shoulders and her breasts. "Why is this curl standing up?" she asks, and then down comes a thong of bull's hide to inflict chastisement for the offending ringlet. Pray how was Psecas in fault? How would the girl be to blame if you happened not to like the shape of your own nose?" (Ramsay, trans., 123–25)]."

WHALLEY (1756 [2:333n]): "Lady Would-be is setting her dress in order: but the pointing must be altered": "she speaks ironically." GIFFORD (1816 [3:238–39n]): "Upton has noticed various imitations of Juvenal, Sat. 6, in lady Would-be's colloquy with her maids: they are all, however, so obvious as scarcely to require pointing out, though Whalley copied most of them." CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:504]): "Upton may be right in supposing that Lady W. is speaking ironically, but I think it more likely that the printer is in error, a rare case in this 1616 folio—carelessly would do or shamefully." REA (1919 [194]): "Said ironically, as Upton notes; but Cunningham is inclined to disagree, believing favourably a printer's error for carelessly or shamefully," KERNAN (1962 [109n]): "ironic."


SD (1753–55)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:237]) applies the marginal SD "Aside. to Volpone's "I do feele the Feuer ... O, for a charme, / To fright it hence"; rpl. KERNAN (1962 [109]), ADAMS (1979 [44]), DONALDSON (1985 [49]), HARP (2001 [49]), with SD between Volpone's SP and his lines.
Or do they not stand even i’ your head?
Where’s your fellow? call her. N A N. Now, S † M a r k e
1760 Deliuer vs: anone, she’ll beate her women,
Because her nose is red. L A D. I pray you, view
This tire, forsooth; are all things apt, or no?
W O M. One hair a little, here, sticks out, forsooth.
L A D. Do’s’t so, forsooth? and where was your deare sight
1765 When it did so, forsooth? what now? bird-eyd?

Is this curle / In his right place? ... (1755–56ft.) WHALLEY (1756 [2:333n]): “she takes her maids to task about her head-dress; and here our learned poet has Juvenal, Sat 6.492–93, in view: "altior hic quare cincinnus?" taurea punit / continuo Gexi crimen Gexi &illi’” [see trans. above]; rpt. REA (1919 [194]), and H&S (1950 [9:713]), who add: “similarly Philip Massinger, The Bondman (1623), 2.1, Corsica to her maid Zanthia: ‘Carelesse Harlotrie, / Looke too’t, if a Curie full, a winde, or Sunne, / Take my conception off, I will not leave / One hair vpon thine head.’”
you ha’not wash’d your eies, yet? / Or do they not stand even i’ your head? (1757–58) KERNAN (1962 [109n]): “can’t you see straight?”
wash’d yonr eies (1757) H&S (1950 [9:713]): “cf. TaleTub 2.2.136: ‘where were your eyes then? out at washing?’”
SD (1759–61) KERNAN (1962 [109]) inserts the SD “[Aside.]” between Nano’s SP and his “Now, S † M a r k e / Deliuer vs ...”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [44]), DONALDSON (1985 [49]), HARP (2001 [49]).
shee’ll beate her women, / Because her nose is red (1760–61) WHALLEY (1756 [2:333, n2]): “Juvenal, Sat 6.494–95: ‘quaenam est hic culpa puellae, / si tibi displicuit nasus mus?’” [see trans. above]; rpt. REA (1919 [194]), H&S (1950 [9:713]).
shee’ll beate her women, / Because her nose is red (1760–61) KERNAN (1962 [109]): “Now, S † M a r k e / Deliuer vs . ..”; rpt. HARP (2001 [49]).
One haire a little, here, sticks out (1763) H&S (1950 [9:714]): “Martial, Epig 2.66.1–4: ‘Unus de toto pescaverat orbe comarum / anulus, incerta non bene fixus acu. / hoc facinus Lalage speculo, quo viderat, ulta est, / et cecidit saevis icta Plecusa comis’” [“One curl of the whole round of hair had gone astray, badly fixed by an insecure pin. This crime Lalage avenged with the mirror in which she had observed it, and Plecusa, smitten, fell because of those cruel locks” (Ker, trans., 1:147)].
what now? bird-eyd? (1765) H&S (1950 [9:714]): “At the word ‘foresooth’ Lady Would-be turns upon her woman with a threatening gesture, and the latter starts back as if to avoid a blow.” ADAMS (1979 [44n]): “She strikes at them both, and jeers at their flinching.”
bird-eyd (1765) GIFFORD (1816 [3:238n]): “What particular defect is here meant I know not; unless it be near-sightedness. We had the expression in CynRev 5.4.167–68: ‘Cri. ‘tis the horse-start out o’ a browne studie.’ AMO. Rather the bird-ey’ed stroke, sir.’ It is also in William Bullein, A Dialogue Against the Fever Pestilence (1576), where the citizen says to his wife, whose horse had just started, ‘He is a bird-eyed jade, I warrant you.’ Perhaps the allusion is to the askaunt [sic] or side view, which birds appear to take to every object.” DEAN (1950 [207n]): “startled and jumpy (the maid ducks a blow).” KERNAN (1962 [110n]): “frightened(?)” BAMBOROUGH (1963 [61n]): “beady-eyed (or perhaps ironical, since birds have sharp eyes).” ADAMS (1979 [44n]): “sharp of sight.”

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And you, too? 'pray you both approach, and mend it.
Now (by that light) I muse, yo' are not asham'd,
I, that haue preach'd these things, so oft, vtio you,
Read you the principles, argu'd all the grounds,
Disputed euery fitnesse, euery grace,
Call'd you to counsell of so frequent dressings—
(NAV. More carefully, then of your fame, or honor)
LAD. Made you acquainted, what an ample dowry
The knowledge of these things would be vnto you,

Able, alone, to get you Noble husbands
At your returne: And you, thus, to neglect it?
Besides, you seeing what a curious Nation
Th' Italians are, what will they say of mee?
The English Lady cannot dress her selfe;

Here's a fine imputation, to our Country:
Well, goe your waies, and stay, i'th the next roome.
This *fuscus* was to course too, it’s no matter.

Good-Sir, you’ll giue 'hem entertainement?

**V O L P.** The storme comes toward me. **L A D.** How do's my *Volp*?

**V O L P.** Troubled with noyse, I cannot sleepe; I dreamt’

That a strange *Fury* entred, now, my house,
And, with the dreadful tempest of her breath,
Did cleave my roofe asunder. LAD. Beleeue me, and I
Had the most mostearfull dreame, could I remember't—

VOLP. Out on my fate; I ha'giu'n her the occasion
How to torment mee: shee will tell me hers.

LAD. Me thought, the golden Mediocrity
Polite, and delicate— VOLP. O, if you do loue mee,
No more; I sweate, and suffer, at the mention

Of any dreame: feele, how I tremble yet.

LAD. Alasse, good soule! the Passion of the heart.

Seede-pearle were good nowe, bold with sirrope of Apples,
Tincture of Gold, and Corrall, Citron-pills,
Your Elicampane roote, Mirobalanes—

Did cleaue my roofe asunder (1788) REA (1919 [195]): cf. Lat. trans. of Libanius, Decl 26.42: "She nearly burst the house open with her cries" (Russell, trans., 121). I uses the same passage again, ShiWom 4.1: "They have rent my roof, walls, and all my windows asunder, with their brazen throats."

I / Had the most fearfull dreame, could I remember't— / VOLP. Out on my fate; I ha'giu'n her the occasion / How to torment mee: shee will tell me hers. / LAD. Me thought, the golden Mediocrity / Polite, and delicate— (1788–93) REA (1919 [196]): REA (1919 [195]): cf. Lat. trans. of Libanius, Decl 26.23: "... and if nothing else turns up, she tells her dreams—making those up too, I truly believe, because she never sleeps, and the night is commonly spent in her nocturnal lectures ..."). H&S (1950 [9:713]) counter with the Gr. text.

golden Mediocrity (1792) H&S (1950 [9:714]): "Lady Would-be, forced to make up a dream on the spur of the moment, takes refuge in high-sounding nonsense." DEAN (1950 [208n]): "Her dream, inappropriate for her, was apparently of Aristotle's golden mean." KERNAN (1962 [219]): "[H&S's observation] is true, but the phrase operates—like most of the apparent nonsense spoken by J's characters—to remind us of ideals being violated and to define the moral status of the characters and action. Here the ideal referred to is the 'golden mean,' that classic guide to conduct which dictates 'nothing in excess,' and which has been lost completely in Volpone's world where men pursue gold and power and lust to the exclusion of all else, becoming in the process 'golden mediocrities.'" ADAMS (1979 [45n]): "i.e., the golden rule or the golden mean." DONALDSON (1985 [50]), HARP (2001 [50]), each with the SD between Volpone's SP and his lines.

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Passion of the heart (1796) REA (1919 [196]): "This is merely a trans. of cardiaca passio, which BURTON (1621–51) defines: 'Cardiaca passio, grief in the mouth of the stomach, which maketh the patient think his heart itself acheth.' Cor is often used in the sense of stomach; there seems to be a similar confusion in the Eng. term heartburn." H&S (1950 [9:714]): "heartburn (Lat. cardiaca passo)"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [45n]),
V O L P. Ay me, I haue tâne a grasse-hopper by the wing.

L A D. Burnt silke, and Amber, you haue Muscadell

Good i'the house— V O L P. You will not drinke, and part?


Seede-pearle were good now, bold with sirlope of Apples, / Tincture of Gold, and Corall, Citron-pills, / Your Elicampane roote, Mirobalanes— / ... / Burnt silke, and Amber, you haue Muscadell / ... / wee shall not get / Some English saffron (halfe a dram would serve) / Your sixteene Clouses, a little Muske, dri’d Mintes, / Buglosse, and barley-meale— / ... / And these appli’d, with a right scarlet-cloth (1797–1805) REA (1919 [196]): “Judging from the nature of the remedies prescribed, Lady Would-bee thinks that Volpone is suffering from melancholy.” KERNAN (1962 [111n]): “a catalogue of popular remedies.” DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “Popular remedies for diverse ailments, indiscriminately proposed.”

Seede-pearle (1797) REA (1919 [196]): “CF. BURTON (1621–51 [2:219n]), 2.4.1.4 via Petrus Andreas Matthiolus: ‘Margarita & corallum ad melancholiam præcipitè valent’” (“Pearl and coral are especially effective against melancholy”). H&S (1950 [9:714]): “BURTON (1621–51 [2:221]), 2.4.1.4, discussing the cure of melancholy, says: ‘those smaller unions which are found in shells amongst the Persians and Indians, by the consent of all writers, are very cordial, and most part availe to the exhilaretion of the Mask, dri’d Muske, / Bagfosse, and Aarky-meak—... / ...And these appli’d, with a right scarlet-cloth”

Tincture of Gold (1798) See n. 780, “Aurum palpabile ... potabile.” SCHELLING (1910 [1:640]): tincture: “an essential or spiritual principle supposed by alchemists to be transfusible into material things.” H&S (1950 [9:714]): “the aurum potabile again. Chaucer, GenProl 443: ‘For gold in phisik is a cordial.’”


SD (1800) GIFFORD (1816 [3:239]) adds the marginal SD “Aside” to Volpone’s “Ay me, I haue tâne a grasse-hopper by the wing”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [111]), ADAMS (1979 [45]), DONALDSON (1985 [50]), HARP (2001 [51]), each with SD between Volpone’s SP and his line.

grasse-hopper by the wing (1800) UPTON (1749 [41]): “So again in an apologetical dialogue at the end of his Poet, ‘To the Reader,’ 113–14: ‘And like so many screaming grasse-hoppers, / Held by the wings, fill every ear with noyse.’ This was a proverb of the poet Archilochus, as Lucian tells us in the beginning of his Pseudologista: [‘But I say to you now what Archilochus once said: ‘You have caught a cicada by the wing’’] (Harmon, trans., 5:373). For the faster you hold them by the wings, the louder they screan.—But is this true of grasse-hoppers? Cicada & tetrî is not a grasse-hopper, for the poets describe it as sitting and singing on trees. However the common translations must excuse our poet.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:239–40n]): “This is certainly not our grass-hopper, which is the locust. It is to be wished that we could adopt some other name for the foreign insect, to prevent confusion: cigale or chigale would serve; though, indeed, tettix is as good as either. Both Ray and Chandler witnessed the singing of the cicada, the one in Italy, and the other in Greece: they do not speak of it with much rapture; and, to say the truth, a more tiresome annoying
LAD. No, feare not that. I doubt, wee shall not get
Some English saffron (halfe a dram would serue)
Your sixteene Cloues, a little Muske, dri'd Mintes,
Buglosse, and barley-meale— V O L P. Shee's in againe,
Before I fayn'd diseases, now I haue one.
LAD. And these appli'd, with a right scarlet-cloth—

sound cannot well be heard." Gifford also notices Poet, ApolDial, 113–14: 'And like so many screaming grasse-hoppers, / Held by the wings, fill every ear with noyse.'” REA (1919 [196]): ‘Cf. Libanius, Decl 26.34: ['She's the Arab piper, only more so. She chatters more than the dove, or a jay, or a nightingale, or a cicada’ (Russell, trans., 119)]. This evidently suggested to J the common proverb, 'Cicadem ala corripuis,' on which see Erasmus, Adagia 345D. Both Upton and Gifford object to grashopper as a trans. of terré. J had used the same expression in the ApolDial at the end of Poet. But in the MagLady he substitutes cricket for grashopper. 'You do hold / A cricket by the wing.'” H&S (1950 [9:714]): “Poet ApolDial 113–14.” DEAN (1950 [208]): “cicada, and therefore noisy.” KERNAN (1962 [111n]: “referring to constant whirring noise made by captive grass-hoppers.”

_Burnt silke (1801)_ WHALLEY (1756 [2:335–36n]): “Burnt silk, says Mr. Sympson, seems to be an odd ingredient; and such perhaps he may think the rest of the composition: but our poet, I believe, in this part of the lady's character, hath shadowed out the likeness of those good wives in his own, and the preceding times, who addicted themselves to the study and profession of physic. Most of these ingredients are taken from some very choice receipts, not then out of vogue, and are the same we meet with in the works of our earliest practitioners. Such were Gilbertus, and John of Gaddesden, author of the _Rosa Anglicana_. Had I the performances of these writers at hand, I should probably be able to oblige the reader with a more particular prescription: but I must content myself at present, with producing some extracts which occur in FREIND (1727 [vol. 2]): ‘Gilbertus then acquaints us, that burnt silk, especially if it were of a purple colour, was often given by old nurses in a draught or cordial. [2:283n] _Vetulae provinciales dant purpuram combustam in potu—similiter pannus tinctus de grano._’” H&S (1950 [9:714]), per FREIND (1727 [2:283n]): “Gilbert the Englishman (fl. 1250) in his Compendium Medicine (pub. 1510 [fol. 348b]), mentions a popular remedy for the small-pox: _Vetulae provinciales dant purpuram combustam in potu. habet enim occultam naturam curandi variolas. Similiter pannus tinctus de grano._” DONALDSON (1985 [623]): “used against smallpox.”

_Amber (1801)_ CORNWALL (1838 [807]): “ambergris”; rpt. SCHELLING (1910 [1:625]):

_Muscadell ... You will not drinke, and part? (1801–2)_ REA (1919 [197]): “In the next line Volpone loses no time in grasping at this word with, _You will not drinke, and part?_ But his guest is not to be put off by such a hint.”

doubt (1803) KERNAN (1962 [111n]): “fear.”

_English saffron (1804)_ H&S (1950 [9:714]): “Formerly much used both in confectionery and medicine. The county Essex was noted for it; hence the name of Saffron Walden. William Harrison, _Description of England_ (1587), 3.8, has a chapter on the industry.”

Cloues ... Buglosse (1805–6) DEAN (1950 [208n]): “small plant, the ox tongue, a heart stimulant.”

_Buglosse_ (1805) REA (1919 [197]): “cf. BURTON (1621–51 [2:248]): ‘Bugloss is hot and moist, and therefore worthy reckoned up amongst those herbs which expel melancholy, and exhilarate the heart’”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:714–15]), who extend the Burton quote to add: “It is an excellent cordial, and against this malady most frequently prescribed.” ADAMS (1979 [45n]): “a common herb used as a mild stimulant”; rpt. HARP (2001 [51n]):

SD (1806–7) GIFFORD (1816 [3:240]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.” to Volpone’s “Shee’s in againe, / Before I fayn’d diseases, now I haue one”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [112]), ADAMS (1979 [45]), DONALDSON (1985 [50]), HARP (2001 [51]), each with the SD between SP and Volpone’s lines.

a right scarlet-cloth (1808) WHALLEY (1756 [2:335–36n]): “[T]he virtues of a right scarlet cloth were held so extraordinary, that Dr. John, by wrapping a patient in scarlet, cured him of the small-pox, without leaving so much as one mark in his face: and he commends it for an excellent method of cure. _Capiatur scarletem, et involvatur variolosus totaliter, sicut ego feci, et est bona cura_;” repr. GIFFORD (1816
VOLP. Another flood of words! a very torrent!

1810 LAD. Shall I, Sir, make you a poultise? VOLP. No, no, no; I am very well: you neede prescribe no more.

LAD. I haue, a little, studied Physick; but, now, I am all for Musique: saue, i'the forenoones, An hour, or two, for Paynting. I would haue

1815 A Lady, indeed, t'haue all, Letters, and Artes,
Be able to discourse, to write, to paynt,
But principall (as Plato holds) your Musique
(And, so do's wise Pithagoras, I take it)
Is your true rapture; when there is concent

[3:240n]). REA (1919 [197]) repr. Whalley; but adds: 'I suppose it would not be hard to find those who still believe in the superior efficacy of red flannel to that of any other color. A cure for cardiuca passio somewhat similar to the one recommended here may be found in Hippocrates, Aphorisms (ed. Heurnius (1655 [282]): 'Nihil melius usu deprehendi cum querulit sunt aegri de flagrante cordis incendio, quam ex panno rubro imponere cordi epithema ex aqua rosata cum aceto, et lulapenum propinare ex aqua cichoreum cum sirupo de aceredine citreorum cum pauculo oleo vitrioli plurimos ita redintegravi. Dei beneficia.' The prescription is that of Heurnius, not Hippocrates." DONALDSON (1985 [623]): "used against smallpox." H&S (1950 [9:715]): "used, like the burnt silk of [1801], for the treatment of small-pox. John of Gaddesden, court doctor under Edward II, cured a son of Edward I by wrapping him in scarlet cloth. In his Rosa Anglica (1492 [fol. 51]), he says: 'Dein capiatur scarletum rubeum & involvatur variolosus totaUter vel in panno alio rubeo. Sic ego feci de filio nobilissimi Regis angliae qui patiebatur istos morbos & feci omnia circa lectum esse rubea. Est bona cura. & curavi eum for excellent way of curing" (PREIND [1727 (2:283 + n)]) [("(He) order'd the patient to be wrap'd up in Scarlet; and every thing about the bed to be red; no doubt the room was hung in the same manner. This, he says, made him recover, without so much as leaving one mark in his face; and he commends it for an exceUent way of curing") (PREIND, op. cit.). J appears to have believed in the use of scarlet cloth: see DevAss 4.4.38, EutBlack 160."

1819 Another flood of words! a very torrent! (1809) REA (1919 [197]); 'Cf. Libanius, Decl. 26.20: 'Ego vero horreo, fluxum alium adventare praesidium'" [("[Aside. She cuds her memory as though she had forgotten something very important, and] I shudder, because I see another flood advancing upon me") (Russell, trans., 117)]. Cf. another reminiscence of this line, SilWom 3.6.2-3: "'O, the sea breakes in vpon me! another flood! an inundation! I shall be owerhelmd with noise"; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:713]) with a series of parallels from the Gr. text.

SD (1809)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:240]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside." to Volpone's "Another flood of words! a very torrent!"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [112]), ADAMS (1979 [45]), DONALDSON (1985 [50]), HARP (2001 [51]), each with the SD between SP and Volpone's lines.

poulrise (1810) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:504]): "Gifford had been half his life engaged upon Juvenal, and imitations, which were obvious to him, might not necessarily be so to others. The best plan is to turn to his trans., GIFFORD (1803), Sat. 6.680–83, which in this part is particularly successful. What can well be better than, 'But tell me yet; this thing, thus daubed and oiled, / Thus poulticed, plaistered, baked by turns and boiled; / Thus with pomatums, ointments, lackered o'er, / Is it a face, Ursidius, or a sore?'

Physick (1812) KERNAN (1962 [112n]): "medicine."

concent (1819) GIFFORD (1816 [3:241n]): "i.e., agreement or harmony, a Platonic expression." KERNAN (1962 [112n]) adds "agreement." ADAMS (1979 [45n]) adds: "concord." HUTSON (1998 [491]) adds: "concert."
In face, in voice, and clothes: and is, indeed, Our sexes chiefest ornament. VOLP. The Poët,
As old in time, as Plato, and as knowing,
Say's that your highest female grace is Silence.
LAD. Which o’your Poëts? Petrarch? or Tasso? or Dante?

Cieco di Hadria? I have read them all.

The Poët / As old in time, as Plato ... Say's that your highest female grace is Silence (1821-23)
UPTON (1749 [42]): "The poet, viz. Sophocles: ['for women silence is a grace' (Storr, trans. 2:31)]; rpt.
WHALLEY (1756 [2:337n]): "The poet perhaps is Sophocles, Ajax 293, or Euripides, whom the Oracle
pronounced the wiser." GIFFORD (1816 [3:241n]): "I ... whose reading was far more extensive than Upton
suspected, alludes to a passage in <the Gr. text of> Libanius, Decl 26.40: ['It then occurred to me that,
though she despised the living, she might perhaps yield to the counsels of the ancients. 'Now then,' I said,
'if you don’t respect me, respect the wisest of the poets, who says "Woman, to women silence brings
renown"'""] (Russell, trans., [120]). REA (1919 [197]) counters with the Lat. trans. of Libanius, adding that
"This line is from the Ajax of Sophocles. Upton notes this, and Gifford cites the passage in Libanius as the
real source. ... I has been reminded of a passage in Juvenal, Sat 6.434–43: ['But most intolerable of all is
the woman who as soon as she has sat down to dinner commends Virgil, pardons the dying Dido, and pit
the poets against each other' (Ramsay, trans., 119)]."

The Poët (1821) Generally identified as Sophocles (496–406 BCE) according to the Gr. text of his Ajax
293, as cited above in n. 1821-23.

your highest (792) F2 (1640), F3 (1692 [166]), BOOKSELLERS (1716-17 [2:167]): our highest /
WHALLEY (1756 [2:337n]): "Here is a slight error in the text, which I correct on the authority of the first
folio: our highest, should be read your highest." Following F (1616 [483]), Whalley and Gifford each print
"your highest."

Which o’your Poëts? ... (1824f.) REA (1919 [197]): "cf. Libanius, Decl 26.40," for which he quotes the
Lat. trans.: "‘Who was that poet?’ she countered immediately, ‘who was his father, what deme was he from
...?’" (Russell, trans., 120). H&S (1950 [9:713]) note that "the literary criticism of [1823–42] is elementary
in Libanius and cite the relevant Gr. passages. H&S (1950 [9:715]): ‘cf. the literary lady in Juvenal, Sat
6.434–36’; see n. 1821–23 above. HARPs (2001 [51n]) notes that "the poets Lady Politic named lived in
much more modern times than Plato."

Tasso (1824) HARPs (2001 [51n]): "Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) wrote the epic Jerusalem Delivered."

Guerrini (1825) REA (1919 [197–98]): "Giovanni Battista Guarini (1553–1612) after a not very
successful career as a courtier at Ferrara, and in affairs of state, retired to his farm, and there wrote his
Pastor Fido (1590), a pastoral drama with the scene laid in Arcadia. It was very popular, and is perhaps one
of the most representational expression of the Italy of the time." Also: "KEIGHTLEY (1868 [603]) and HOLT
(1905) both remark on this list of names that Lady Would-bee is evidently not an ignorant person. But
surely they failed to note that she is simply giving names she has happened to hear; the depth of her
knowledge is shown by the fact that she suggests them all as possibly [sic] contemporaries of Plato!"; rpt.

HUTSON (1998 [501]) adds "dramatist and influential author of the first theoretical defence of
tragicomedy."

Ariosto (1825) HARPs (2001 [51n]): "Ludovico Ariosto (1474–1535) wrote Orlando Furioso (1532)."
REA (1919 [198]) noted that he was "famous from the trans. of Sir John Harrington (1591)."

Aretine (1825) REA (1919 [198]): "Pietro Aretino (1492–1556) took his name from the place of his birth,
Arezzo. He gained fame as a witty, but scurrilous writer. Perhaps his best known work was a series of
sonnets written for a set of obscene drawings by Giulio Romano. He wrote also comedies and dialogues.
Nash was sometimes called the English Aretine." H&S (1950 [9:715]): "comedian and satirist." KERNAN
(1962 [219]): "a writer of powerful but extremely scurrilous and obscene verses." HUTSON (1998 [499]):
VO LP. Is every thing a cause, to my distruction?

L AD. I thinke, I ha' two or three of hem, about mee.

VO LP. The sunne, the sea will sooner, both, stand still,

Then her æternall tongue; nothing can scape it.

L AD. Here is Pastor Fido— V OL P. Professe obstinate silence,

That's, now, my safest. L AD. All our English Writers,

I meane such, as are happy in th' Italian,

Will deigne to steale out of this Author, mainly;

"It, poet whose works, esp. the 'Sonnets of Lust' he issued to accompany designs of Giulio Romano in 1524, became the most notorious erotic publications of the century." HARP (2001 [51n]): "well known for pornographic poems." Cf. nn. 1826, 1841-42.

Cieco di Hadria (1826) REA (1919 [198]): "Luigi Grotto (1541–1585), It. orator and poet, was called II Cieco d'Adria ['the blind man of Adria'] on account of his blindness"; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:715]), who add: "He trans. the bk. 1 of the Iliad (1570), and celebrated the battle of Lepanto (1572); he also wrote tragedies, comedies, and pastorals. He made a sensation as a blind actor in O. Giustiniani's version of the Oedipus of Sophocles at Vicenza in 1585, and he annotated an edition of the Decameron, which was published at Venice in 1588." KERNAN (1962 [219]): "the other names Lady Wouldbe reels off are major It. poets, but Luigi Grotto, known as Cieco di Hadria, is a distinctly minor writer.... By joining these names to those of the poets of the great tradition Lady Would be betrays her lack of discrimination, her inability to distinguish in literature as in life the profound & om the vulgar." ADAMS (1979 [45n]) repeats much of the n. cited by H&S above, but adds that "all Lady Politic's poets are well known today except Cieco di Hadria"; rpt. HARP (2001 [51n]). DONALDSON (1985 [623]): "Luigi Grotto (1541–85), 'the blind man of Adria,' poet, dramatist, and translator." Hutson (1998 [500]) adds "prolific dramatist whose works include an early version of the Romeo and Juliet story."

Is every thing a cause, to my distruction? (1827) REA (1919 [198]): cf. Lat. trans. of Libanius, Decl 26.40: "She wasted my whole day on this, and the poet had the opposite effect to what I intended: instead of quenching the talk, he rekindled the flame" (Russell, trans., 120). Also, Decl 26.22: "Any excuse serves to start a speech" (Russell, trans., 118).

SD (1827) GIFFORD (1816 [3:241]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside.] to Volpone's "The sunne, the sea will sooner, both, stand still...", rpt. KERNAN (1962 [112]), ADAMS (1979 [46]), DONALDSON (1985 [51]), HARP (2001 [51]), each with the SD between SP and Volpone's lines.

The sunne, the sea will sooner, both, stand still, / Then her æternall tongue (1829–30) REA (1919 [198]): cf. Lat. trans. of Libanius, Decl 26.22: "Rivers will stop sooner than her tongue" (Russell, trans., 117–18).

SD (1829–30) GIFFORD (1816 [3:241]) adds the marginal SD "[Aside.] to Volpone's "The sunne, the sea will sooner, both, stand still...", rpt. KERNAN (1962 [112]), ADAMS (1979 [46]), DONALDSON (1985 [51]), HARP (2001 [51]), each with the SD between Volpone's SP and his lines.


SD (1831) KERNAN (1962 [113]) inserts the SD "[Producing a book.]" to Lady Would-be's "Here is Pastor Fido."

SD (1831–32) GIFFORD (1816 [3:241]) adds the marginal SD "[Aside.] to Volpone's "Professe obstinate silence, / That's, now, my safest", rpt. KERNAN (1962 [113]), ADAMS (1979 [46]), DONALDSON (1985 [51]), HARP (2001 [52]), each with SD between SP and Volpone's lines.
Almost as much, as from Montagnié;
He has so moderne, and facile a veine,
Fitting the time, and catching the Court-eare.
Your Petrarch is more passionate, yet he.

All our English Writers, / I meane such, as are happy in th' Italian, / Will deigne to steale out of this
Author, mainly; / Almost as much, as from Montagnié; / He has so moderne, and facile a veine, / Fitting the time, and catching the Court-eare (1832-37)

Lady Would-be is perfectly correct, both in what she says here of Petrarch, and above of Guarini. The Pastor Fido was plundered without mercy, or judgment; yet the theft was not unhappy; for though much poor conceit, and unnatural passion was thus introduced among us, many graces of expression, and delicacies of feeling accompanied them, which in the gradual improvement of taste, now first become an object of concern, enriched the language with beauties, which have not yet lost their power to charm. To Petrarch we are still more indebted—though the coarse and wolesale manner in which he was at first copied gave occasion to the well-merited reproofs of our early satirists. Thus Hall, 'Or filch whole pages at a clap for need, / From honest Petrarch, clad in English weed.' Again: 'Or an “hos ego” from old Petrarch’s spright, / Unto a plagiarie sonnet-wight,' &c.

The reference to plagiarism from him points, as FEAY first suggested, to Daniel; whose Arcadian paternals had been acted before Royalty 1605 Aug. It has been absurdly supposed to point to Shakespeare. Jonson who cared for the classics, had a poor opinion of the French and it. authors, whom says Drummond, he did not understand. 'Fitting the time and catching the Court-eare' certainly refers to Daniel: Shakespeare never wrote mask or pastoral for the Court; repr. REA (1919 [198]). The reference to plagiarism is directed against Daniel, whose Arcadian pastoral was performed at Court on 8 Jan 1604 and his pastoral, The Queen’s Arcadia, at Oxford before the Queen on 30 Aug 1605. Compare the criticism in The Return from Parnassus, pt. 2, 1.2.41-46: ‘Sweete honry dropping Daniell doth wage / Warre with the proudest big Italian, / That melts his heart in Sugred sonnetting. / Onely let him more sparingly make use / Of others wit, and use his owne the more: / That weue may scorn base imitation.’

'Fitting the time, and catching the court-eare' points to Daniel; see the n. on For 12.68-69” in H&S 11:45.

Montagnié (1835) Michel de Montaigne (1533-92). F (1616 [483]) reads “MONTAGNIE.” KEIGHTLEY (1688 [603]): “It is quite impossible that a scholar like J could have thus mispelt ‘Montaigne’: the printer must have transposed the f in it, and a word have been omitted, e.g. indeed, after ‘much.’ The mistake could not have been made by Lady Would-be, for she is not an ignorant person; on the contrary, she is what is called a ‘bluestocking’—the first of the kind in our literature.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:505]): “In the Disc 725 the name is spelt in the usual way (‘Montaigne’), but it was not fixed at this time, and in Bacon’s Essay on Truth (no. 41) I find ‘Montainga saith prettily.’” REA (1919 [198]) notes that ‘Keightley was answered in a later number [of N&Q] with a quotation from Guérard’s French Grammar, showing that in the south of France the name is not pronounced as in Paris: ‘Montaigne est un nom propre du midi de la France; on doit le prononcer comme le font les méridionaux eux-mêmes, Monta-gne.’” H&S (1950 [9:715-16]): “the Q spelling shows the pronunciation; cf. Bacon, Essay 41: ‘Montaigna saith prettily.’ For J’s opinion of essayists and their plagiarisms, see Disc 719-29. Marston and Webster borrowed freely ideas and aphorisms from Montaigne, sometimes quoting verbatim; see C. Crawford’s Collectanea 2:1-63.” DEAN (1950 [209n]): “Lady Would-be’s English-French pronunciation.” KERNAN (1962 [113n]): “Montaigne, the French essayist. Pronounced with four syllabiles here.” ADAMS (1979 [46n]): Michel de Montaigne (1533-92) “Montaigne’s name tended to be given three syllables by Eng. tongues; his Essays, first published in 1580, were trans. into Eng. by J’s friend John Florio (1603);” rpt. HARP (2001 [52n]), HUTSON (1998 [501]).

Court-eare (1837) KERNAN (1962 [113n]): “ear of courtiers.”
Your Petrarch is more passionate, yet he, / In dayes of Sonetting, trusted 'hem, with much (1838-39)
REA (1919 [198-99]) reprints Gifford [see n. 1832-37], but adds: “J’s own opinion of Petrarch and Guarini [see n. 1831] may be judged from a passage in the ConvDrum 60ff.: ‘he curled petrarch for redacting Verës to Sonnets, which he laid were like that Tirrantss bed, wher some who where too short were racked, others too long cut short.’ On this Drummond observes: ‘This was to no purpose, for he neither doeth

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In dayes of Sonnetting, trusted 'hem, with much:

Dante is hard, and fewe can understand him.

But, for a desperate wit, there's Aretine;

Onely, his pictures are a little obscene—

You marke mee not? VOLP. Alasse, my mind's perturb'd.

LAD. Why, in such cases, we must cure our selves,

Make use of our Philosophie— VOLP. O'ay mee.

LAD. And, as we finde our passions do rebell,

Encounter 'hem with reason; or diuert 'hem,

understand French nor Italianes.'" WHITE (1935 [138]): "[J's] use of the past tense ... is significant, as it shows that he considered the sonnet an obsolescent, if not obsolete, genre." H&S (1950 [9:716]): "Eng. borrowings from Petrarch's love poems begin with Wyatt, who translated thirteen sonnets. Comment on the practice is frequent. It begins with Sidney, A&S 15: 'You that old Petrarchs long deceased woes / With new borne sighes, and wit disguised sing; / You take wrong ways, those far-fet helps be such, / As doe bewray a want of inward tutch, / And sure at length stolne goods doe come to light.' Drayton in the lines to Antony Cooke prefixed to Ideas Mirror (1594) says of his sonnets in that collection: 'Yet these mine owne, I wrong not other men, ... / Nor filch from Portes nor from Petrarchs pen, / A fault too common in thys latter tyme.' Hall, Virgideaursarum (1597 [4.2.17]), speaks of 'an, Hos ego, from old Petrarchs spright / Vnto a Plagiarie sonnet-wright' And ibid., 6.1.93: 'Or filch whole Pages at a clap for need / From honest Petrarch, clad in English weed.' VAN DEN BERG (1987 [42]) comments upon Lady Would-Be's literary tastes, particularly her appreciation of Petrarch, with reference to J's disdain for the sonnet form.

trusted 'hem, with much (1839) REA (1919 [199]): "Holt thinks 'hem refers to EngAsh wrzterf; it seems to me better to take it as referring to the sormets; probably J had in mind a passage of Horace, Sat 2.1.30–31, referring to Lucilius, paraphrased in Poet 2.4: 'He, as his trustie friends, his books did trust / With all his secrets.'" DEAN (1950 [209n]), trusted: "provided." KERNAN (1962 [219]): "Petrarch was most famous for his love sonnets, which were imitated by generaGons of poets— Sidney's A&B and Spenser's Amoretti were in this tradition—and this extensive imitation and borrowing are perhaps the basis for the statement 'trusted 'em with much.'" DONALDSON (1985 [623]): "i.e., left much for Eng. writers to borrow." HARP (2001 [52n]): "left to subsequent ages a substantial literary heritage.

Dante is hard, and fewe can understand him (1840) H&S (1950 [9:716]): "cf. Florio (1598 [a4]), Epistle Dedicatorie: 'Boccace is prettie hard, yet vnderstood: Petrarche harder, but explained [sic]: Dante hardest, but commented. Some doubt if all aright.' Nicholas Breton, The Court and Country (1618 [sig. B4]), makes a country-man say, 'I will say as one Dante, an It. Poet, once said in an obscure Booke of his, Vnderstand me that can, I understand my selfe.'" HARP (2001 [51n]): "Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) was author of the Divine Comedy;"

for a desperate wit, there's Aretie; / Onely, his pictures are a little obscene (1841–42) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:505]): "Pietro Aretino was born in 1492, and died at Venice in 1557. Hallam characterizes him as 'profligate' and 'impudent.' In spite of his 'neatness and point of expression' his writings are a disgrace to It. burlesque poetry, and therefore, I suppose, Lady Would-be calls him a 'desperate wit.'" ADAMS (1979 [46n]): "Aretino's dirty poems, illustrated by Giulio Romano and engraved by M. Raimondi, were internationally notorious"; rpt. HARP (2001 [52n]). Cf. n. 1825.

By giving scope vnto some other humour
Of lesser danger: As, in politique bodyes,

There's nothing, more doth overwhelm the judgment,
And clouds the understanding, then too much
Setting, and fixing, and (as 't were) subsiding
Vpon one object. For the incorporating
Of these same outward things, into that part,

Which we call mentall, leaues some certaine faeces,
That stop the organs, and, as Plato sayes,
Assassinates our knowledge. V O L P . Now, the spirit
Of patience helpe me. L A D . Come, in faith, I must
Visit you more, a dayes; and make you well:

Laugh, and be lusty. V O L P . My good Angell saue mee.
L A D . There was but one fole man, in all the world,
With whom I ere could sympathize; and hee

scope (1848) Kernan (1962 [113n]): "free play."
humour (1848) Kernan (1962 [113n]): "desire."
There's nothing, more doth overwhelm the judgment ... (1850) Rea (1919 [199]): "The speaker shows no signs of being in danger of too much fixing and subsiding on any one subject."
outward things (1854) Kernan (1962 [114n: 109]): "the object on which the mind has fixed." Also: "Lady Would be's psychology is as crude, jargon-ridden, and jumbled as her medicine and literary criticism, but it does describe roughly what has happened to the characters of the play and the city of Venice—she is using the commonplace Ren. comparison of man the microcosm and the state or body politic. Man and state in Volpone have chosen gold as then âke )îze, and the result has been clouded understanding."
faeces (1855) Adams (1979 [46n]): "traces." Also: "Lady Politic is into orthodox, but very verbose, psychology"; rpt. Harp (2001 [52n]).
Assassinates (1857) H&S (1950 [9:716]): "cf. Martial, Epig 8.51.26: 'ut iugulem curas'" ["then, to throttle care" (Ker, trans., 2:41)]. The earliest example of the verb in the OED is dated 1618.
SD (1857–58) Gifford (1816 [3:243]) adds the marginal SD "'Aside.' to Volpone's "Now, the spirit / Of patience helpe me"; rpt. Kernan (1962 [114]), Adams (1979 [46]), Donaldson (1985 [52]), Harp (2001 [52]), each with the SD between SP and Volpone's lines.
SD (1860) Gifford (1816 [3:243]) applies the marginal SD "'Aside.' to Volpone's "My good Angell saue mee"; rpt. Kernan (1962 [114]), Adams (1979 [46]), Donaldson (1985 [52]), Harp (2001 [52]), each with the SD between SP and Volpone's lines.
There was but one fole man ... five years (1861–69) McDonald (1988 [128]): "The subtext of this passage, aided esp. by the pun on 'rap't [1864] exposes the vulgar facts beneath the lady's image of intellectual intercourse. Her romantic description conceals only from herself a virago and a trull."
Would lie you often, three, foure houres together,
To heare me speake: and be (sometime) so rap’t,
As he would answer me, quite from the purpose,
Like you, and you are like him, iuft. Ilie discource
(And’t be but only, Sir, to bring you a sleepe)
How we did fpend our time, and loues, together,
For some fixe yeares. V O L P. Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh.

L A D. For we were Coetaneî, and brought vp—
V O L P. Some power, some fate, some fortune rescue mee.

ACT. 3. SCENE. 5.

Mosca. Lady. Volpone.

G O D faue you, Madam. L A D. Good Sir. V O L P. Mosca? welcome,
Welcome to my redemption. M O S. Why, Sir? V O L P. Oh,
Rid me of this my torture, quickly, there;
My Madam, with the euerlafting voyce.

Would lie you often (1863) ADAMS (1979 [46n]): “would often lie (if you please).”
lie you (1863) KERNAN (1962 [114n]): “lic.”
rap’t (1864) Cf. n. 98.
from the purpose (1865) KERNAN (1962 [114n]): “nothing to the point.”
Coetaneî (1870) H&S (1950 [9:716]): “cf. the use of ‘solecite’ [2499]. Usually Lady Would-be’s verbal extravagances are English.”
ADAMS (1979 [47n]): “of an age”; rpt.
HARP (2001 [53n]), who adds “[IL].”
SD (1871) DONALDSON (1985 [52]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Volpone’s SP and his “Some power, some fate, some fortune rescue mee.”
SD (1872-73) GIFFORD (1816 [3:244]) replaces the original act/scene and mass entry notations with the SD “Enter Mosca.”
KERNAN (1962 [115]) adds to 3.5 the SD “[Enter Mosca.]”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [47]), DONALDSON (1985 [52]), HUTSON (1998 [271]), HARP (2001 [53]).
SD (1876) DONALDSON (1985 [52]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” prior to Volpone’s “Welcome to my redemption.”
SD (1876) DONALDSON (1985 [52]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Mosca’s SP and his “Why, Sir?”
SD (1876) DONALDSON (1985 [52]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Volpone’s SP and his “Oh, /Rid me of this my torture,....”
Rid me of this my torture, quickly, there; / My Madam, with the euerlafting voyce (1877-78) REA (1919 [199]): cf. Lat. trans. of Libanius, Decl 26.24: “For heaven’s sake, help me, give me the poison, save me from the unceasing voice” (Russell, trans., 118). “The intervention of Mosca seems to be suggested by Libanius, Decl 26.39: ‘Realizing then that I needed allies, I called in friends who had prepared Encomia of

167

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The Bells, in time of pestilence, nêre made / Like noyfe, or were in that perpetuall motion;
The Cock-pit comes not neare it. All my honfe.
But now, fteam'd like a bath, with her thicke breath.
A Lawyer could not haue beene heard; nor scarfe

---

Silence’ (Russell, trans., 120). H&S (1950 [9:716]) counter with the Gr. text, wherein “the husband in Libanius appeals to the Court.”

Rid (1877) SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]): “destroy, do away with.”

The Bells, in time of pestilence, nêre made / Like noyfe, or were in that perpetuall motion (1879–80)

REA (1919 [199-200]): “Holt calls attention to the fact that the plague had been very severe in London in 1603, and quotes DEKKER (1625 [4:281–82]): ‘To Queene Elizabeth and to King iames, we were an vnthankfull and murmuring Nation, and therefore God tooke them from vs; they were too good for vs; we too bad for them; and were therefore then, at the deceafe of the one, and now, of the other, are deueredly punifhed: our fins increaing with our yeeres, and like the Bells, neuer lying still’; cf. SilWom 1.1.183–84: ‘But now, by reason of the sickness, the perpetuie of ringing has made him deuise a roome, with double walls, and treble seelings’”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:717]), who add: cf. Epig 133.173–74: “Cannot the fZague-bm keepe you backe? Nor bells / Of loud SEPVLCHRES with theG hourely knells?,” and “WILSON (1927 [177–78]). KERNAN (1962 [115n]): ‘the bells in London rang almost without ceasing during times of the plague’; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [47n]), HARP (2001 [53n]).

The Cock-pit (1881) GIFFORD (1816 [3:244–45n]): “The Cock-pit! Had J forgot that he was now in Venice?—But, perhaps, he saw no impropriety in giving this name to a theatre there. The Cock-pit was one of our earhest theatres, and form the allusion in the text, as well as from many others which occur in our old dramatists, it may be collected that it was frequented by the lowest and most disorderly of the people. After all, Venice was not much injured:—for CORYAT (1611 [247.18–22]), who was there about this time, says, ‘I was at one of their Play-houfes, where I saw a Comedie acted. The houfe is very beggarly and bale in comparifbn of our Gately Play-houfes in England: neyther can the Actors conq)are with vs for apparrell, fhewes and muGcke.’” REA (1919 [200]): “Gifford asks whether J had forgotten that the scene of his play is in Venice, while the cock-pit was at London. I imagine the idea was suggested by Libianius, Decl 26.52: ‘Nam a pratis aedes meae non different, in quibus avium exercitus cum clangore cGconvolitat’ [‘My house will be no different from the meadows where the flocks of birds fly around screaming’ (Russell, trans., 122)]. On the cock-pits of London, see HENRY (1906 [237]) [in her note on SilWom 4.4.14, “cock-pit”]: ‘Any of the numerous places of resort where the sport of cock-fighting was carried on, may be meant. The one later known as the Phoenix Theatre stood in the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, and is said by Frynne to have demoralized the whole of Drury Lane. This place was torn down by the prentices in one of their raids on Shrove Tuesday, March 4, 1616–17. The Cock-pit in St. James Park stood at some steps leading from the Birdcage Walk in Dartmouth Street, near the top of Queen Street. There was the no less famous Cock-pit built at Whitehall by Henry VIII, which was later used as a hall for political speeches. Then there was another in Jewn Street, and one in Shoe Lane. It was very much a thing of fashion to witness the sport of cock-fighting in J’s time, for it was a favorite pastime of the monarch, who went where it might be enjoyed at least twice a week. Stow says, “Cocks of the game are yet cherished by divers men for their pleasures, much money being laid on their heads when they fight in pits, whereof some be costly made for that purpose.”’ KERNAN (1962 [115n]): “where cock fights were put on.” ADAMS (1979): “at the cockpit spectators constantly shouted bets and encouragement to the birds”; rpt. HARP (2001 [53n]). DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “there were three in London, noisy with cries of wagerers.” H&S (1950 [9:717]): “cf. SilWom 4.4.14n; there were cockpits in St. Giles-in-the-Fields (afterwards the Phoenix theatre), St. James’s Park, and at Whitehall.” HUTSON (1998 [490]): “exclusive theatre, the Cockpit-in-Court in Whitehall.”
Another Woman fuch a hayle of words

1885
She has let fall. For hells sake, ridd her hence.

M o s . Has she presented? V o l p . O, I do not care,

I'll take her abscence, vpon any price,

With any loose. M o s . M a d a m . L a d . I ha' brought your Pa-

1890
A toy, a cap here, of mine owne worke— M o s . Tis well,

I had forgot to tell you, I saw your Knight,

Where you'ld little thinke it— L a d . Where? M o s . Marry,

Where yet, if you make haft you may apprehend him,

Rowing vpon the water in a gondole,

1895
With the moft cunning Curtizan, of Venice.

A Lawyer could not haue beene heard; nor fearfe / Another Woman (1883-84) Gifford (1816 [3:244-45]), et al. have noticed J's debt to Juvenal, Sat 6.438-42: "vincuntur rhetores, omnis / turba tacet,

nec causidicus nec praeco loquetur, / altera nec mulier; verborum tanta cadit vis, / tot pariter pelves ac tintinnabula dicas / pulsari" ["the rhetoricians give in; the whole crowd is silenced: no lawyer, no auctioneer will get a word in, no, nor any other woman; so torrential is her speech that you would think that all the pots and bells were being clashed together" (Ramsay, trans., 119)].

fuch a hayle of words (1884) REA (1919 [200]): "Cf. Libanius, Decl 26.33: 'Saepe, per Apollinem, expallui, nugis ceu grandine prostratus'" ["Many a time, I swear, I have fainted away under the pelting hail of her silly talk" (Russell, trans., 119)].

ridd (1885) See n. 1877.

SD (1886) Donaldson (1985 [53]) inserts the SD "[Aside]" between Mosca's SP and his "Has she presented?"

presented (1886) Dean (1950 [211]): "given you a present"; rpt. Kernan (1962 [115n]).

SD (1886) Donaldson (1985 [53]) inserts the SD "[Aside]" between Volpone's SP and his "O, I do not care...."

I'll take her abscence, vpon any price (1887) REA (1919 [200]): "Cf. Libanius, Decl 26.32: 'Istae omnia incommoda minora sunt eo quod praesens est: omnia sunt leuiora loquacitate'" ["All these troubles are less than that which is upon me; anything is easier to bear than chatter" (Russell, trans., 119)].

a cap here, of mine owne worke (1890) Barish (1953 [88]): "As her contribution to Volpone's coffers, [Lady Would-be] leaves behind a wrought cap of her own making; this forms a suitably ridiculous contrast to the treasures earlier offered by Corvino, Corbaccio, and Voltore."

I had forgot to tell you, I saw your Knight, / Where you'ld little thinke it (1891-92) Barish (1953 [88]): "only Mosca's happy notion of exciting [Lady Would-be's] jealousy, as he previously aroused Corvino's, and for the same purpose, succeeds in getting rid of her."

gondole (1894) Florio (1611 [215]), s.v. Gondola: "a little boat or whirry vied no where but about and in Venice." REA (1919 [200-1]), per Holt (1905): "Holt notes that the form of the word is incorrect. Coryat (1611 [313]) has an interesting description of the gondolas of Venice, 'Certaine little boates, which they call Gondolas the fayrest that ever I saw in any place. For none of them are open aboue, but fairly couered, first with some fifteene or sixtene little round peeces of timber that reach from one end to the other, and make a pretty kinde of Arch or vault in the Gondola; then with faire blacke cloth which is turned vp at both ends of the boate, to the end that if the passenger meaneth to be priuate he may draw down the same, and after row so secretly that no man can see him: in he inside the benches are very neately garnished with fine linnen cloth, the edge whereof is laced with bonelace: the ends are beautified with two pretty and
LAD. Is't true? Mos. Purfue 'hem, and beleue your eyes; Leaue mee, to make your gift. I knew, 'twould take. For lightly, they, that vie themselues most licence, Are still most jealous. VOLP. Mosca, hearty thanks, For thy quick fiction, and deliuerie of mee. Now, to my hopes, what saift thou? LAD. But, do you heare, Sir? VOLP. Againe; I feare a paroxism. LAD. Which way Row'd they together? Mos. Toward the Rialto. [G3'] LAD. I pray you, lend me your Dwarfè. Mos. I pray you, take ingenuous [sic] deuices. For each hath a crooked thing made in the forme of a Dolphin's tayle, with the fins very artificially represented, and it seemeth to be tinned ouer. The Water-men that row these neuer sit as our do in London, but alwaies stand, and that at the farther end of the Gondola, sometimes one, but most commonly two; and in my opinion they are altogether as swift as our rowers about London. Of these Gondolas they say there are ten thousand about the cite, whereof sixe thousand are priuate, seruing for the Gentlemen and others, and foure thousand for mercenary men, which get their living by the trade of rowing." H&S (1950 [9:717]): "a form in use Gom the 17th to the 19th c. 'Gondola' in [2762]."

the most cunning Curtizan, of Venice (1895) GIFFORD (1816 [3:245n]): "Venice succeeded, and not unjustly, to all the celebrity of Corinthus for rapacious, subtle, and accomplished wantons. Shakespeare notices this circumstance; as, indeed, do all the writers of his age, who have occasion to mention the city. The "leg-stretcher of Odcombe," (as Coryat aptly calls himself), whose simple love of novelty involved him in the most ridiculous adventures, has a great deal of curiu matter on this subject." Cf. app. Venice. CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:505]): "Here Robert Southey (1774–1843) wrote in the margin of his copy, "The love of notoriety set in motion my comical friend Tom Coryat, who by the engraver's help has represented himself at one time in full dress, making a leg to a courtesan at Venice, and at another, dropping from his rags the all too lovely proof of prolific poverty."


vfe themselues most licence (1898) KERNAN (1962 [116n]): "are most free (morally)."

vfe (1898) SCHELLING (1910 [1:641]): "be in the habit of; accustomed to."

full (1899) KERNAN (1962 [116n]): "always."


the Rialto (1903) REA (1919 [201]): "On the origin of this word see Sebastian Munster. Cosmographia (ed. 1554 [155]): 'Paulo post coeperunt in insulis illis erigere aedicifia, maxime in ea quae vocatur Rio alto, sic dicta, quod mare ibi profundius esset quam circa alias insulas, aut quod haec insula eminenter supra alias.'"

I pray you, lend me your Dwarfè (1904) Cf. app. Genre, s.v. "Romance."
Your hopes, Sir, are like happy blossomes, fayre,
And promise timely fruit, if you will stay
But the maturing; keepe you, at your couch,
Corbaccio will arrive straight, with the Will:

When he is gone, I'll tell you more. V O L P. My blood,
My spirits are return'd; I am alive:
And like your wanton gambler, at Primero,
Whose thought had whisper'd to him not go leffe,
Me thinkes I lie, and drawe—for an encounter.

A C T. 3. S C E N E. 6


like your wanton gam'ster, at Primero, / Whose thought had whisper'd to him not go leffe, / Me thinkes I lie, and drawe—for an encounter (1912-14) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246n]): “I have adopted the terms of this game, as they appear in, what Sir John Harrington is pleased to call, an Epigram upon ‘The Story of Marcus’ Life at Primero’: ‘Our Marcus never can encounter right, / Yet drew two aces, and, for further spight, / Had colour for it with a hopeful draught, / But not encountered it avail’d him naught.’”

REA (1919 [201]): “The fashionable card game of the day, also called prime. Nares gives a full account of what is known about it. The next two lines contain several expressions taken from the language of the game.” H&S (1950 [9:717]): “I play upon the technical terms of the game.” KERNAN (1962 [219]): “a popular card game of the day. Volpone makes use of the technical terms of the game—‘go less’ (i.e. wager less), ‘draw’ and ‘encounter’—as metaphors for his coming meeting with Celia.”

wan'ton gam'ster (1912) KERNAN (1962 [117n]): “reckless gambler.”


not go leffe (1913) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246n]): “not to go less ... is not to adventure a smaller sum.”


go (1913) DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “wager.”


encounter (1914) H&S (1950 [9:717]): “quibbles on the senses of love meeting; cf. Epig 112.18-19: ‘That both wit, and sense, so oft doth plucke, / And never art encouter’d.’” CORRIGAN (1961 [52n]), with drawe: “terms in primo, her used punningly by Volpone.” DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “(i) winning card; (ii) sexual meeting.”

SD (1914) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) indicates the conclusion of this scene with the SD “[The scene closes upon Volpone.” after Volpone’s “… Me thinkes I lie, and drawe—for an encounter”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [116]), with the SD “[He draws the curtains across his bed.]”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [187]). ADAMS (1979 [48]) adds the SD “[The bed-curtains close upon Volpone];” rpt. HARF (2001 [54]).
Sir, here conceal'd, you may here all. But 'pray you
Haue patience, Sir; the same's your father, knocks:
I am compeld, to leaue you. B O N. Do so. Yet, 1920
Cannot my thought imagine this a truth.

ACT. 3. SCENE. 7

MOSCO. CORUINO. Celia. BONARIO.

SD (1915–16) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD: “SCENE II. | The Passage leading to Volpone’s Chamber. | Enter MOSCA and BONARIO.”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [48]), HARP (2001 [54]) at 3.6. KERNAN (1962 [117]) adds to 3.6 the SD: “[Mosca leads Bonario on stage and hides him.]”; DONALDSON (1985 [54]): “[Enter Mosca, leading Bonario to a hiding-place]”; HUTSON (1998 [273]): “[Enter mosca and bonario]”; PARKER (1999 [187]): “MOSCA [enters with] BONARIO.”

SD (1918) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) inserts the SD “[shews him a closet.]” between Mosca’s “Sir, here conceal’d” and his “you may here all”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [48]), HARP (2001 [54]); REA (1919 [201]): “Perhaps behind the door of one of the entrances for actor at both side of the stage.” H&S (1950 [9:717]): “Mosca takes him [i.e., Bonario] to one of the side-doors of the stage. In [1936] he sends him off-stage into the ‘gallery’ of this opening.” PARKER (1999 [187]) inserts the SD “[indicating a hiding place]” between Mosca’s SP and his line.

SD (1918) F (1616 [485]) adds the marginal SD “One knock.,” which corresponds with 1918; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [273]), PARKER (1999 [188]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:340]) inserts the SD “[One knock.]” between Mosca’s “your father, knocks” [1918] and his “I am compeld, to leaue you” [1919]. GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) inserts the SD “[knocking within.]” between Mosca’s “Haue patience, Sir” and his “the same’s your father, knocks” [1918]; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [48]), HARP (2001 [54]), and DONALDSON (1985 [54]), who adds the F SD “[One knock.]” KERNAN (1962 [117]) inserts the F SD between 1917 and 1918.

Haue patience, Sir; the same’s your father, knocks: (1918) UPTON (1749 [42]): “We must read, ‘—The same’s your father’s knock.’ This knocking you now hear, is your father’s. Mosca expected it to be so, but the sequel will shew his mistake.” Repr. WHALLEY (1756 [2:340–41n]), who adds “Or it may be an elliptical expression, ‘The same’s your father who knocks.’” Whalley revised this line as “Have patience, sir; the same’s your father’s knock.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) reads “the same’s your father knocks”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [48]), PARKER (1999 [188]), et al. CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:505]): “Upton wishes to change this to ‘the same’s your fathers knock,’ but the one seems quite as intelligible as the other.” REA (1919 [201–2]): “Upton proposed changing to the same’s your father’s knock—an emendation that seems wholly unnecessary, and does not improve the sense. Cf. Poet 4.3.16: ‘This same is he met him in holy-street.’”

SD (1919) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) indicates Mosca’s departure with the marginal SD “[Exit.” after “I am compeld, to leaue you”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [48]), HARP (2001 [54]). DONALDSON (1985 [54]) applies the marginal SD “[Exit Mosca]” to Bonario’s “Do so”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [273]). PARKER (1999 [188]) adds the SD “[He goes towards the knocking]” after Mosca’s “I am compeld, to leaue you.”

SD (1919–20) GIFFORD (1816 [3:246]) adds the marginal SD “[goes into the closet]” after Bonario’s “Yet, I Cannot my thought imagine this a truth”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [48]), HARP (2001 [55]). PARKER (1999 [188]) adds: “=[bonario conceal himself.]”

MOSCO. (1922) MOSCA accidentally printed as “MOSCO” in the mass entry notation.

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Volpone.

Death on me! you are come to soone, what meant you?

Did not I say, I would send? Corv. Yes, but I feared

You might forget it, and then they preuent vs.

Mos. Preuent? did ere man hast so, for his hornes?

A Courtier would not ply it so, for a place.

Well, now there's no helping it, stay here;

Ile presently returne. Corv. Where are you, Celia?

You know not, wherefore I haue brought you hether?

Cel. Not well, except you told mee. Corv. Now, I will:

Hearke hether. Mos. Sir, your father hath sent word,
It will be halfe an houre, ere he come;

And therefore, if you please to walke, the while,

Into that gallery—at the upper end,

There are some books, to entertaine the time:

And I'll take care, no man shall come vnto you, Sir.

Bon. Yes, I will stay there; I do doubt this fellow.

Mos. There, he is farre inough; he can heare nothing:

And, for his father, I can keepe him of.

Corv. Nay, now, there is no starting back; and therefore,

Resolue vpon it: I haue so decree'd.

It must be done. Nor, would I moue't, afores

Because I would auoyd all shifts and tricks,

That might deny mee. Celia. Sir, let mee beseech you,

Affect not these strange trialls; if you doubt

My chastity, why lock mee vp, for euer:

apart, and whispers to her]
entertaine[1937]_KERNAN_[1962 [118n]]: "pass."

SD[1939]_GIFFORD_[1816 [3:248]] applies the marginal SD "[Aside, and exit." to Bonario's "I do doubt this fellow." _KERNAN_[1962 [118]] inserts the SD "[Aside!" prior to to Bonario's "I do doubt this fellow," and adds the marginal SD "[Exit]" after the line; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [49]), DONALDSON (1985 [55]), PARKER (1999 [189]), HUTSON (1998 [274]) simply applies the marginal SD "[Exit]" to this line. SD[1940-41]_GIFFORD_[1816 [3:248]] inserts the SD "[Looking after him.]" between Mosca's SP and his "There, he is farre inough ..."; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [49]), HARP (2001 [55]).

of[1941]_GIFFORD_[1816 [3:248]] reads "off."

SD[1941]_GIFFORD_[1816 [3:248]] indicates Mosca's departure and marks the scene's close with the marginal SD "[Exit]" after "of." ADAMS (1979 [49]) and HARP (2001 [55]) use the same SD, but the action remains continuous. GIFFORD (1816 [3:248]) indicates the start of the next scene with the SD "SCENE V. Volpone's Chamber.— Volpone on his couch,| MOSCA sitting by him. | Enter CORVINO forcing in Celia." _KERNAN_[1962 [118]] inserts the marginal SD "[Returns to Volpone's couch, opens the curtains, and whispers to him]" after Mosca's "... I can keepe him of"; rpt. PARKER (1999 [189]), with "bed" instead of "couch."

SD[1941]_ADAMS_[1979 [49]] inserts the SD "[To Celia]" between between Corvino's SP and his Nay, now, there is no starting back ...; rpt. HARP (2001 [55]), PARKER (1999 [189]).

moue't[1944]_DEAN_[1950 [213n]]: "suggest it"; rpt. _KERNAN_[1962 [118n]].


Affect not these strange trialls[1947]_REA_[1919 [202]]: "Celia naturally fails to understand the plan, and thinks Corvino is merely tempting her in order to try her virtue." _KERNAN_[1962 [118n]]: "do not pretend to make such unusual tests (of her virtue)." ADAMS (1979 [49n]): "don't tempt me so"; rpt. HARP (2001 [55n]).

Affect[1947]_PARKER_[1999 [190n]]: "(a) seek to perform; (b) pretend to perform. Either meaning is possible, depending upon how serious Celia thinks Corvino's plan is."
Make me the heyre o f darknesse. Let me liue,
Where I may please your feares, if not your trust.

C o r v . Beleeue it, I haue no such humor, I.
All that I speake, I meane; yet I am not mad:
Not horne-mad, see you? Go too, shew your selfe
Obedient, and a wife. C e l . O heauen! C o r v . I say it.

D o so. C e l . Was this the traine? C o r v . I haue told you reasons;
What the Physitians haue set downe; how much,
It may concerne mee; what my ingagements are;
My meanes; and the necessity o f those meanes,
For my recouery: wherefore, if you bee

Loyall, and mine, be wonne, respect my venture.
There's no such thing, in nature: a mere terme
Inuented to awe fooles. What is my gold
The worse, for touching? clothes, for being look'd on?

\begin{quote}
\textit{strange trialls (1947)} PARKER (1999 [190n]): "unusual tests (i.e., of her chastity); cf. [1584]."
\textit{horne-mad (1953)} DEAN (1950 [213n]): "madly jealous." KERNAN (1962 [119n]): "with fear of being a cuckold." PARKER (1999 [190n]): "(a) sexually jealous; (b) eager to be cuckolded."
\textit{Was this the traine? (1955)} ADAMS (1979 [49n]): "Is this what you had in mind all the time?"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56n]).
\textit{ingagements (1957)} KERNAN (1962 [119n]): "financial commitments." PARKER (1999 [190n]): "(a) i.e., the gifts already made to Volpone; (b) possibly, more widely, Corvino's financial commitments in general."
\textit{meanes (1958)} KERNAN (1962 [119n]): "i.e., becoming Volpone's heir." DONALDSON (1985 [624]): "(i) financial resources; (ii) stratagem." PARKER (1999 [190n]): "(a) opportunity or course of action by which one's object will be obtained [OED 10]; (b) less probably, 'financial resources.'"
\textit{recovery (1959)} KERNAN (1962 [119n]): "regaining financial stability." ADAMS (1979 [49n]): "Corvino is evidently in financial straits"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56]). PARKER (1999 [190n]): "(a) i.e., of the 'engagements' of [1957]; (b) possibly, 'regaining financial stability' in a wider sense."
\textit{venture (1960)} KERNAN (1962 [119n]): "commercial enterprise." ADAMS (1979 [49n]): "in the sense of a commercial venture"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56]). PARKER (1999 [190n]): "used in its commercial sense of 'business venture.'"
\textit{Before your honour? (1961)} PARKER (1999 [190n]): "Celia is remembering [1401]; cf. [1991]."
\textit{Honour? tut, a breath (1961)} GIFFORD (1816 [3:249n]): "This is excellent after what we had from him [in TLN 1430ff.]." RBA (1919 [202]): "Corvino's idea of honor seems to very like that of Sir John Falstaff; cf. the latter's soliloquy, \textit{I Hen. 5.1.129-40.} ADAMS (1979 [49n]): "like Falstaff, Corvino disposes easily of honor." PARKER (1999 [190n]): "cf. Falstaff and the catechism-of-honour tradition."
\end{quote}
Why, this's no more. An old, decrepitude wretch,
That has no sense, no sinewe; takes his meate
With others fingers; onely knowes to gape,
When you do scald his gumes; a voice; a shadow;
And, what can this man hurt you? C E L. Lord! what spirit

Is this hath entred him? C O R V. And for your fame,
That's such a ligge; as if I would go tell it,
Crie it, on the Piazza! who shall know it?
But hee, that cannot speake it; and this fellow,
Whose lippes are i’ my pocket: saue your selfe,
If you'll proclaime't, you may. I know no other,
Should come to knowe it. C E L. Are heauen, and Saints then

There's no such thing, in nature (1962) REA (1919 [202]), per HOLT (1905): "The same expression, as Holt notes, in SilWom 4.2.50: 'Wife! Buz. Titiuilitium. There's no such thing in nature.' This and in rerum natura are favorite phrases with the speaker, Captain Otter"; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:717]).

An old, decrepitude wretch, / That has no sense, no sinewe; takes his meate / With others fingers; onely knowes to gape, / When you do scald his gumes ... (1965–68) GIFFORD (1816 [3:249n]): "The conclusion of this speech is from Juvenal, Sat 10.228–31: 'huius / pallida labra cibum accipiunt digitis alienis, / ipse ad conspectum cenea diducere rectum / suetus hiat tantum &c.' ['another takes food into his pallid lips from someone else's fingers, while he whose jaws used to fly open at the sight of his dinner, now only gapes ...'] (Ramsay, trans., 211); repr. REA (1919 [202]), H&S (1950 [9:717]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]), PARKER (1999 [191n]). ADAMS (1979 [50n]): "the old man has to be fed by others and doesn't even know enough to open his own mouth for food"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56n]).

sense (1966) KERNAN (1962 [119n]): "sensory perception"; rpt. PARKER (1999 [191n]).

spirit (1969) PARKER (1999 [191n]): "i.e., evil spirit: one of the many 'possession' images of the play."

fame (1970) KERNAN (1962 [120n]): "reputation"; rpt. PARKER (1999 [191n]).

ligge (1971) CORNWALL (1838 [810]): "a ballad or low licendious dialogue in metre." CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:505]): "In those days a jig did not necessarily mean a dance, but a song or ballad or any small composition that raised laughter." H&S (1950 [9:717]): "farce"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [120n]). ADAMS (1979 [50n]) adds "joke"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56n]). DONALDSON (1985 [624]): "trifle." PARKER (1999 [191n]) adds "joke of an excuse." Also cf. n. 2969.

Crie (1972) PARKER (1999 [191n]): "advertise; cf. 2021."

hee, that cannot speake it (1973) ADAMS (1979 [50n]): "Volpone"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56n]).

this fellow (1973) ADAMS (1979 [50n]): "Mosca"; rpt. HARP (2001 [56n]).

Whose lippes are i’ my pocket (1974) H&S (1950 [9:717]): "cf. HEYWOOD (ca. 1520 [126]): 'So much the bettyr, and yow so muche the wurs. / Ye may nowe put yowr toong in yowr purs. '"


proclaime't (1975) PARKER (1999 [191n]), proclaim: "announce publicly."
nothing?
Will they be blind, or stupide? CORV. How? CEL. Good Sir,
Be jealous stil, emulate them; and thinke

What hate they burne with, toward euery sinne.
CORV. I graunt you; if I thought it were a sinne,
I would not vrge you. Should I offer this
To some young Frenchman, or hot Tuscan bloud,
That had read Aretine, conn’d all his printes,

Knew euery quirke within lusts Laborinth,
And were profest Critique, in lechery;
And I would looke vpon him, and applaud him,
This were a sinne: but here, tis contrary,
A pious worke, mere charity, for Physick,

And honest politie, to assure mine owne.
CEL. O heauen, canst thou suffer such a change?

VO LP. Thou art mine honor, Mosca and my pride,
My joy, my tickling, my delight: go, bring ’hem.
MOS. Please you drawe neare, Sir. CORV. Come on, what—

Are heauen, and Saints then nothing? (1976–77) REA (1919 [202]): “BURTON (1621–52 [2:236]), quotes as proverbial: ‘Nullum locum putes sine teste, semper Deum cogita.’ Corvino’s exclamation ‘How?’ [1978] in the next line is excellent, showing how completely he has left such higher powers out of consideration.”
emulate them(1979)] ADAMS (1979 [50n]): “i.e., God and the saints, who hate sin.”
I graunt you (1981)] KERNAN (1962 [120n]): “agreed.” PARKER (1999 [191n]): “I agree with you.”
had read Aretine, conn’d all his printes (1984)] For previous notes on Aretino, see nn. 1045, 1825, 1841–42, 1842. KERNAN (1962 [120n]), printes: “the obscene pictures referred to above.” ADAMS (1979 [50n]): “Aretino was a notorious pornographer.”
profest Critique (1986)] KERNAN (1962 [120n]): “connoisseur.” PARKER (1999 [192n]) adds “qualified specialist.”
And (1987)] KERNAN (1962 [120n]): “if”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [192n]).
but here, tis contrary, / A pious worke, mere charity, for Physick, / And honest politie, to assure mine owne (1988–90) ADAMS (1979 [50n]): “‘pious work’ means it’s good for your soul, ‘mere charity’ says its kindness to the neighbor, ‘for physic’ means it’s prudent self-interest, and ‘to assure mine own’ gets down to the basic motivation—greed”; rpt. HARP (2001 [57n]).
politie (1990)] HUTSON (1998 [495]): “(a) society; (b) policy.” PARKER (1999 [192n]): “skilful management. (The word had a sinister nuance because of its association with Machiavelli.)”
mine owne (1990)] PARKER (1999 [192n]): “(a) the ‘engagements’ of [1957]; (b) Volpone’s legacy, which Corvino already regards as his (cf. [959])?”
owne (1990)] KERNAN (1962 [120n]): “i.e. inheritance.”
1995 You will not be rebellious? By that light—
   Mos. Sir, Signior Corwino, here, is come to see you,
Volp. Oh. Mos. And, hearing of the consultation had,
   So lately, for your health, is come to offer,
Or rather, Sir, to prostitute— Corv. Thankes, sweete Mosca.

2000 Mos Freely, vna—sk’d, or vn—intreated— Corv. Well.
   Mos. (As the true, feruent instance of his loue)
   His owne most faire, and proper wife; the beauty,
   Onely of price, in Venice— Corv. ’Tis well vrg’d.
   Mos. To bee your comfortresse, and to preserue you.
Volp. Alasse, I’am past already. ’Pray you, thanke ’him,
   For his good care, and promptnesse. But for that,
   Tis a vaine labour, eene to fight, ’gainst heauen;
   Applying fire to a stone: (uh, uh, uh, uh.)
Making a dead leafe grow againe. I take

SD (1992) PARKER (1999 [192]) inserts the SD “[Aside to Mosca]” between Volpone’s SP and his line “Thou art mine honor, Mosca....”
SD (1994) GIFFORD (1816 [3:250]) inserts the SD “[advancing.]” between Mosca’s SP and his “Please you drawe neare, Sir”: rpt. ADAMS (1979 [50]), PARKER (1999 [192]), HARP (2001 [57]).
SD (1994) KERNAN (1962 [121]) applies the marginal SD “[She hangs back.] regarding Celia nonverbal response to Corvino’s “Come on, what—”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [192]), with “[Celia resists].”
SD (1995) KERNAN (1962 [121]) applies the marginal SD “[He drags her to the bed.] to Corvino’s “You will not be rebellious? By that light—”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [192]).
SD (1996) KERNAN (1962 [121]) inserts the SD “[To Volpone.]” between Mosca’s SP and his “Sir, Signior Corwino, here, is come to see you”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [192]).
prostitute (1999) PARKER (1999 [192n]), per OED, 3a: “to offer with complete devotion or self-negation, to devote;” with an obvious ironic play on the usual meaning.
Mos Freely, vna—sk’d, or vn—intreated— Corv. Well. (2000) Regarding the BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:173]), WHALLEY (1756 [2:343n]) notes: “Here is a line lost, which I have inserted [on 2:344] from the old copy, ‘Mos. Freely, unask’d, or unintreated.—. COR. Well.”
proper (2002) PARKER (1999 [193n]): “(a) comely; (b) respectable; (c) exclusively his; (d) suitable: a viciously barbed pun.” Cf. n. 811.
Applying fire to a stone (2008) H&S (1950 [9:718]): “cf. HEYWOOD (1562 [Fiili’]), pt. 2, ch. 2: ‘Her carrain carkas (saide he) is so colde, / Because she is aged, and somewhat to ole, / That she kyth me, I doo but roste a stone.’” KERNAN (1962 [121n]): “proverbial statement of absolute futility.” PARKER (1999 [193n]): “proverbial. Volpone perhaps puns on ‘stone’ and hides his snigger under the coughing that follows?”
SD (2008) GIFFORD (1816 [3:250]) deletes the parentheses and applies the marginal SD “[coughing.]” to Volpone’s “uh, uh, uh, uh”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [51]), PARKER (1999 [193]), HARP (2001 [57]).
2010 His wishes gently, though; and, you may tell him,
What I’haue done for him: Mary, my state is hopelesse.
Will him, to pray for mee; and t’vse his fortune,
With reverence, when he comes to it. M O S . Do you heare, Sir?
Go to him, with your wife. C O R V . Heart of my father!

Thou seest’ tis nothing: C elia. By this hand,
I shall grow violent. Come, do’t, I say.
C E L . Sir, kill mee, rather: I will take downe poyson,
Eate burning coales, do any thing— C O R V . Be damn’d.

(Heart) I will drag thee hence, home, by the haire;
Cry thee a strumpet, through the streetes; rip vp
Thy mouth, vnto thine eares; and slit thy nose,
Like a raw rotchet—Do not tempt mee, come,

---

Alasse, I’am past already ... when he comes to it (2005–13) PARKER (1999 [193]): “Both Q and F punctuate these lines very heavily, perhaps to convey Volpone’s laboured delivery.”
SD (2013) PARKER (1999 [193]) inserts the SD “[To Corvino]” between Mosca’s SP and his line, “Do you heare, Sir?”
SD (2014–17) KER NAN (1962 [122]) inserts the SD “[To Celia,”] between Corvino’s SP and his line, “Heart of my father!”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [193]).
SD (2016) KER NAN (1962 [122]) applies the marginal SD “[Raising his hand.]” to Corvino’s “By this hand.”
Eate burning coales (2019) Most editors follow UPTON (1749 [42]) and his observation that Celia’s line is “like Porcia,” wife to Brutus, who committed suicide by eating burning coals; cf. R E A (1919 [202]), H&S (1950 [9:718]), KER NAN (1962 [122n]) DONALDSON (1985 [624]), PARKER (1999), who adds that she represents “one of the paragons of married constancy.”
I will drag thee hence, home, by the haire ... on this stubborn brest (2020–29) PARKER (1999 [194n]): “While revealing Corvino’s personal sadism, this passage may also reflect the fact that Venetian justice was far more savage to erring women than to men.”
slit thy nose, / Like a raw rotchet (2022–23) ADAMS (1979 [51n]): “like a fish”; rpt. HAR P (2001 [58n]). PARKER (1999 [194n]) adds: “I had been in dange of having his own nostrils slit because of EastHo, just before writing Volp.”
raw rotchet (1991) GIFFORD (1816 [3:251n]), per WHALLEY (1756a): “a rochet or rouget, so named from its red colour, is a fish of the gurnet kind, but not so large” rpt. SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]), H&S (1950 [9:718]), C ORRIGAN (1961 [56n]), KER NAN (1962 [122n]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]), HUTSON (1998 [496]). PARKER (1999 [194n]) adds: “chosen here not only for reasons of sound but because of its red colour (‘rouget’).”

179

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Yeld, I am loath—(Death) I will buy some slaue,

Whom I will kill, and binde thee to him, alie;

And, at my windore, hang you forth: devising
Some monstrous crime, which I, in CAPITAL letters,
Will eate into thy flesh, with *Aqua-fortis*,
And burning cor'siues, on this stubborne brest.

Now, by the bloud, thou hast incens'd, lie doo’L

CEL. Sir, what you please, you may, I am your Martyr.

CORV. Bee not thus obstinate, I ha’ not deseru’d it:

Thinke, who it is, intreates you. ’Pray thee, sweete;
(Good’faith) thou shalt haue iewells, gownes, attires,

What thou’ wilt thinke, and aske—Do, but, goo kisse him.

Or touch him, but. For my sake. At my sute.

This once. No? Not? I shall remember this.

Will you disgrace mee, thus? Do’you thirst my’vndoing?

M O S. Nay, gentle Lady, bee aduis’d. C O R V. No, no.

She has watch’d her time. God’s precious—this is skiruy;

---

*I will buy some slaue, / Whom I will kill, and binde thee to him, alie ... (2024–25ff.)* Corvino’s words to Celia have been generally identified as an allusion to the manner in which the rapist Tarquin threatened the chaste Lucrece; cf. [UPTON (1749 [43]), REA (1919 [202]), H&S (1950 [9:718]), DONALSDON (1985 [624]), PARKER (1999 [194n]). PAULUMO (1975) suggests that the strange nature of Corvino’s threats may reflect a “mocking allusion” to Piero Sforza’s threats to Mellida in John Marston’s *Antonio’s Revenge* (1599–1600), 1.1.1–2.

*with *Aqua-fortis* / And burning cor’siues (2028–29)*] ADAMS (1979 [51n]): “with acids and corrosives”; rpt. Harp (2001 [58n]).


*cor’siues (2029)] SCHELING (1910 [1:627]): “corrosive”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [122n]), DONALSDON (1985 [624]), PARKER (1999 [194n]).

*’Pray thee, sweete / (Good’faith) thou shalt haue iewells, gownes, attires (2033–34)*] UPTON (1749 [42–43]): “Corvino, having brought his wife to Volpone, threatens and intreats her; and tries all his rhetoric to persuade her to yield.... But after all his terrible threatenings and imprecations, he is reduced to the last argument, promises of jewels, and fine gowns; if these cannot prevail, nothing can.”

*Do, but, goo kisse him ... (2035–41)*] PARKER (1999 [194n]): “There is a very similar passage between Kastril, Dame Pliant, and Pace in *Aich* 4.4.73–75. For the ‘do but go’ construction, see PARTRIDGE (1953 [12]).”

*SD (2037)] KERNAN (1962 [122]) inserts the SD “[She refuses]” between Corvino’s “This once.” and “No? Not?”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [194]).

*bee aduis’d (2039)] SCHELING (1910 [1:625]), advise: “consider, bethink oneself, deliberate”; advised: “informed, aware.” KERNAN (1962 [123n]): “persuaded by the argument.”

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"Tis very ftknue: And you are— M O S. Nay, good, Sir.  

C O R V. An errant Locust, by heaven, a Locust. Whore, 

_Crocodile_, that hast thy teares prepar'd, 

Expecting, how thou'lt bid hem flow. M O S. Nay, 'Pray you, Sir,
Shee will consider. C E L. Would my life would serue
To satisfie— C O R V. (S’ death) if she would but speake to him,
And saue my reputation, ’twere somewhat;
But, spightfully to affect my vtter ruine:
M O S. I, now you’ haue put your fortune, in her hands.

Why i’faith, it is her modesty, I must quit her;
If you were absent, shee would be more comming;
I know it: and dare vndertake for her.
What woman can, before her husband? ’pray you,
Let vs departe, and leaue her, here. C O R V. Sweete Celia,

Thou mayst redeeme all, yet; Ile say no more:
If not, esteeme your selfe as lost,— Nay, stay there.
C E L. O God, and his good Angells! whether, whether

pe clyf he sleep him if he may, and þanne he weephe vpon him and swolowep him atte laste." KERNAN (1962 [219]): “the crocodile was proverbially believed to shed tears in order to lure his victims.” ADAMS (1979 [52n]): “the lore of the crocodile says it sheds deceitful tears”; rpt. HARP (2001 [59n]). DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “popularly thought to lure its victims with tears”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [195n]). Cf. n. 2140, “panthers breath.”

that hast thy teares prepar’d, / Expecting, how thou’lt bid hem flow (2043–44)) An imitation of Juvenal, Sat 6.672–75, first noted by UPTON (1749 [43–44]): ‘... plorat, / uberibus semper lacrimis semperque puratis / in statione sua atque expectantibus illam, / quo iubeat manare modo’’ [“...weeping,... She has an abundant supply of tears always ready in their place, awaiting her command in which fashion they should flow” (Ramsay, trans., 9); rpt. WHALLEY (1756 [2:345n]), GIFFORD (1816 [2:252n]), REA (1919 [203]), H&S (1950 [9:718]), PARKER (1999 [195n]).

Expecting (2044)) PARKER (1999 [195n]): “waiting to see.”

consider (2045) PARKER (1999 [195n]): “think again, reconsider.”
affect (2048) PARKER (1999 [195n]): “seek to attain.”
more comming (2051) H&S (1950 [9:718]): “ready to meet advances; so in [1550] and SilWom 5.1.77.” KERNAN (1962 [123n]): “agreeable.” ADAMS (1979 [52n]): “forthcoming”; rpt. HARP (2001 [59n]). DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “acquiescent.” PARKER (1999 [195]): “(a) forthcoming, responsive, yielding; cf. 2.6.74; (b) sexual pun? (cf. also ’undertake,’ line [2052], leading to line [2053]).”

vndertake for (2052) KERNAN (1962 [123n]): “warrant.”
SD (2053–56) KERNAN (1962 [123]) inserts the SD “[She begins to kave with kirn.]” between Corvino’s “esteem your selfe as lost” and his “Nay, stay there”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [196n]). DONALDSON (1985 [58]): “[Celia begins to leave].”
SD (2056) GIFFORD (1816 [3:252]) adds the marginal SD “[Shuts the door, and exit with Mosca.]” to Corvino’s “Nay, stay there”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [52]), HARP (2001 [59]). KERNAN (1962 [123]) adds SD “[Exit Mosca and Corvino.]”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [58]), HUTSON (1998 [277]), PARKER (1999 [196]).

whether (2057) H&S (1950 [9:718]): “the old form of ‘whither,’ which I frequently uses.”
Is shame fled humane brests? that, with such ease,  
Men dare put off your honors, and their owne?  

Is that, which ewer was a cause of life,  
Now plac'd beneath the basest circumstance?  
And modesty an exile made, for money?  
V O L P. I, in Corinno, and such earth-fed mindes,  
That neuer tasted the true heau'n of loue.  

Assure thee, Celia, he that would sell thee,  
Onely for hope of gaine, and that vnscertaine,  
He would haue sold his part of Paradise  
For ready money, had he met a Cope-man.  
Why art thou maz'd, to see mee thus reuiu'd?  

Rather, applaud thy beauties miracle;  
'Tis thy great worke: that hath, not now alone,
But sundry times, 'raes'd mee, in seuerall shapes,
And, but this morning, like a Mountebanke;
To see thee at thy windore. I, before
I would haue left my practise, for thy loue,
In varying figures, I would haue contended
With the blew Proteus, or the horned Floud.

Now, art thou welcome. CEL. Sir. VOLP. Nay, flie mee
Nor, let thy false imagination
That I was bedrid, make thee thinke, I am so:
Thou shalt not find it. I am, now, as fresh,
As hot, as high, and, in as 

At recitation of our Comedie,
For entertainment of the great Valoys)
I acted yong Antinōus; and a racted

man eith the front of an ox; rf. Sophocles, Trachiniae 9–14. This embodiment of a river-god symbolized both the roar of the torrent and the branchings of the stream”; rpt. CORRIGAN (1961 [58n]), ADAMS (1979 [53n]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]), HARP (2001 [59n]). KERNAN (1962 [220]) adds: “Volpone, it should be noticed, here defines his genius as the ability to change shape at will, and so great is his power, he feels, that he could contend with water itself, the very element of change”; rpt. PARKER (1999 [197n]).

For entertainment of the great Valoys ... (2086ff.)

HARP (2001 [60n]). DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “Henri, Duke of Anjou, King of Poland and later France; entertained by the Doge and senates of Venice, 1574.” PARKER (1999 [197n]): “about which I probably read in the app. from Sansovino’s Venetia (1581) in LEWKENOR (1599), and in FLORIO (1598).”

Antinōus (2087)

REASOBANTS (2087) REA (1919 [204–5]): “The favorite of the Emperor Hadrian. On his drowning in the Nile, Hadrian had him worshipped as a god, and a temple built to him. He was famous for his youthful beauty, and many statues of him were made”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:718]), KERNAN (1962 [220]). ADAMS (1979 [53n]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]) adds: “more probably, one of Penelope’s suitors in the Ody”; rpt. HARP (2001 [60n]). FIZDALE (1973 [459]): “It seems likely, then, that J’s allusion goes beyond the purely historical. Certainly, using Bithynian Antinous permits him to ironize at Volpone’s expense, and to suggest once again the unhealthy, abnormal sexuality that so pervades the play. But a Homeric allusion seems equally to the point here, since Volpone is in the process of repeating the actions which Antinous is noted for in the Ody.” See SIMMONS (1975) and CRAIK (1982). PARKER (1999 [197n]) adds; “since he attracted ‘all the ladies present,’ more probably the wealthy, handsome Antinous who was chief suitor to chaste Penelope in the Ody. CRAIK (1970) notes that the latter Antinous figures as a paragon of courtly love in stanza 5 of Davies’s Orchestra (1596), a poem J quoted to Drummond, and that Volpone’s ‘comedy’ must therefore have been about the return of Ulysses—an appropriate theme for the occasion of Henry’s return to France. As Henry was well known as both a transvestite and sexual pervert, however, the first identification seems equally probable.”

185

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The eyes, and eares of all the Ladies, present,
T' admire each gracefull gesture, note, and footing.

SONG.

Come, my Celia, let vs prowe,
While wee can, the sports of loue;
Time will not be ours, for euer,
He, at length, our good will seuer;

Spend not then his guifts, in vaine.
Sunnes, that set, may rise againe:
But if, once, we loose this light,
'Tis with vs perpetuall night.

Why should wee deferre our ioyes?

Fame, and rumor are but ioyes.
 Cannot wee delude the eyes
Of a few poore household-spies?
Or his easier eares beguile,
Thus remooed, by our wile?

Tis no sinne, loues fruicts to steale;
But the sweete thefts to reveale:
To be taken, to be seene,
These haue crimes accounted beene.

a racted (2087) corrected in other copies of Q and F as "attracted." PARKER (1999 [331]), re: Sheet H (inner), sig. H2": "this is a correction, not damage, because the space in the first variant is adequate for only one 't.' Presumably, there was an original state 'atracted.'"


SONG. (2090–2108) Imitated from Catullus' "Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus," and later collected in J's For (5) and reprinted in F as "Song. To Celia." For a fuller discussion of the song and its dramatic significance, Cf. app. Sources; Extra-Dramatic Texts; Technique. GIFFORD (1816 [3:254]) replaces the extra-dramatic title "SONG" with the SD "[Sings." PARKER (1999 [197]) adds the preceding marginal SD "[He sings]."

proue (2091) KERNAN (1962 [125n]): "try, test." Also cf. n. 1669.

ioyes (2100) KERNAN (1962 [125n]): "trifles"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [624]).
CEL. Some serene blast me, or dire lightning strike

This my offending face. VOLP. Why droopes my Celia? [H2']

Thou hast, in place of a base husband, found
A worthy lover: use thy fortune well,
With secrecy, and pleasure. See, behold,
What thou art Queene of; not in expectation.

As I feede others: but posses'd, and crown'd.

See, here, a rope of pearle; and each, more orient

Then that the braue Ægyptian Queene carrous'd:

houshold-spies (2102) DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “Cf. ‘His Parting From Her,’ formerly attributed to Donne, line 101; Yeats, ‘Parting,’ line 3.”

our wile (2104) DONALDSON (1985 [674]) notes that two MSS. of the song read instead “Many a mile.”

Some serene blast me (2109) UPTON (1749 [44-45]): “I found this passage thus printed in a modern edition, ‘Some Siren blast me.’ And the editor hug’d himself with thoughts of this emendation, I dare say. But the poet alludes to a disease in the eye called by physicians, Gutta serena. Hence Milton is to be explained: ‘So thick a drop serene hath quench’d their orbs, / Or dim suffusion veild.’” Upton may have in mind one of two modern eds. printed prior to 1749 which print “Siren” in the place of “Serene”: (1) the 1732 London ed. of Volp printed for J. Walthoe, et al. [rf. p. 54], or (2) the 1739 London ed. of Volp printed for D. Midwinter, et al. [rf. p. 56]. Among later variants: the 1749 Dublin ed. of Volp printed for Joseph Cotter reads “Sirene” [p. 47]; the 1766 Glasgow ed. of Volp printed for Robert Urie reads “Siren” [rf. p. 54]; Colman’s altered ed. of Volp printed in Bell’s British Theatre (1778, vol. 19) reads “fyren” [p. 56].

WHALLEY (1756 [2:348n]): “Serene is here, not that disorder in the eyes called gutta serena, which often occasions blindness; but it means a calm, moist, warm air, or evening, which is frequently the cause of blasts or blights. I uses the same word again in his Epig 32.9-10: ‘... where euer death doth please t’appear, / Seas, serenes, swords, shot, sickness, all are there.’ And it is also used by Daniel, Queen’s Arcadia, 1.1 in the same sense: ‘The fogs and the serene offend us more / Or we may think so, than they did before’”; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:255-56n]), who responds directly to Upton: “O Nemesis, how watchful art thou!— and Upton, ‘I dare say, hugged himself’; although his explanation is just as little to the purpose as the emendation of his predecessor. A serene, as Whalley discovered in COTGRAVE (1910), while his work was in the press, (for the word is pure French), is ‘a mildew, or that harmful dew of moist summer evenings, which occasions blights.’ In his gloss of Epig 32, GIFFORD (1816 [8:169n]) notes: “i.e., a blast of warm air; a blight, or mildew.” SCHELLING (1910 [1:639]): “harmful dew of evening.” H&S (1950 [9:719]), per OED: “a light fall of moisture or fine rain after sunset in hot countries, formerly regarded as a noxious dew or mist,” from the French serene; cf. Epig 32.10. CORRIGAN (1961 [59n]): “serene; blight, unwholesome air, mildew.” KERNAN (1962 [126n]): “poisonous mist.” ADAMS (1979 [53n]): “mist from heaven, malignant influence”; rpt. HARP (2001 [60n]). DONALDSON (1985 [624]): “noxious mist.” DUNCAN-JONES (1997 [119]) illuminates the “siren tears” of Sh., Son 119. HUTSON (1998 [496]): “mist, once believed poisonous.”

offending (2110) KERNAN (1962 [126n]): “i.e. because its beauty attracts Volpone.”

SD (2113) KERNAN (1962 [126]) applies the marginal SD “[Pointing to his treasure:]” to Volpone’s “See, behold....”


Ægyptian Queene (2117) Cleopatra (ca. 69-30 BCE). UPTON (1749 [45]): “The story here alluded to concerning Cleopatra is well known”; rpt. WHALLEY (1756 [2:34812]). REA (1919 [205]): “HOLT (1905) notes the similarity in the descriptions of luxury in the present passage and that given by Mammon in Alch. For the well-known story of Cleopatra and the pearl, he quotes Pliny, NatHist 9.58: ‘ex praecepto ministri unum tantum vas ante eam posuere aceti cuisis asperitas visque in tabem margaritas resolvit. gerebat
Dissolue, and drinke 'hem. See, a Carbuncle,

May put out both the eyes of our S' Marke;

A Diamant, would haue bought Lollia Paulina.
When she came in, like star-light, hid with jewells,
That were the spoyles of Provinces; take these,
And weare, and loose 'hem: Yet, remains an Eare-ring
To purchase them againe, and this whole State.

A Gem, but worth a priuate patrimony,
Is nothing: we will eate such at a meale.
The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingalles,
The braynes of peacocks, and of estriches
Shall be onr fbode: and, conld we get the phœnix,
(Though Nature lost her kind) she were our dish.

CEL. Good Sir, these things might moue a minde affected
With such delights; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can thinke wealthy, or worth th’ enjoying,
And, which once lost, I haue nought to loose beyond it,

Cannot be taken with these sensuall baytes:
If you haue conscience— V O L P. ’Tis the Beggars vertue,
If thou hast wisdome, heare mee Celia.

Thy bathes shall be the iuyce of Iuly-flowers,
Spirit of roses, and of violets,

The milke of v unicornes, and panthers breath

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convivis...’ ['He promised a phoenix to some guests...’ (Magie, trans., 2:151)], and 30.2: ‘sescentorum struthionum capita una cena multis mensis exhibuit ad edenda cerebella’ ['At one dinner where there were many tables he brought in the heads of six hundred ostriches in order that the brains might be eaten” (Magie, trans., 2:165)].

*struthionum* (2128) SCHELLING (1910 [1:630]): “ostrich(es).”

*phœnix* (2129) REA (1919 [206]): “The descriptions of extravagance in Athenaeus probably were in J’s mind while writing this scene. Cf. Aristophanes, The Acharnians 88–89: ‘Maiorem triplo Cleonymo / Volucrem ille nobis apposuit, cui nomen erat Phenax’” [(and they set before us / Whole pot-baked oxen ...) And an enormous bird, three times the size / Of our Cleonymus: its name was—Gull” (Rogers, trans., 1:13)]. KERNAN (1962 [126n]): “mythical bird. Only one was believed to exist at a time, and from his ashes another was born”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [54n]), who adds: “eating him would eradicate the species”; rpt. HARP (2001 [61n]).

*Though Nature lost her kind* (2130) KERNAN (1962 [127n]): “(the phoenix) became extinct.”

*Thy bathes* (2133) H&S (1950 [9:720]): “‘Lampridius, Antoninus Elagabalus 19.8: ‘hic non nisi unguento nobili aut croco piscinis infectis natavit’ [‘He would refuse to swim in a pool that was not perfumed with saffron or some other well-known essence” (Magie, trans., 2:145)].


*milke of unicorns* (2140) GIFFORD (1816 [3:257–58n]): “I know not for what particular quality the milk of unicorns is celebrated, the animal being confined to the terra incognita of Africa, where few can go to such it. Pliny, indeed, observes that ‘the milk of camels is extremely sweet’; and this may have been in J’s mind:—but his knowledge was so universal, that it is very hazardous, at least in one so little read as myself, to decide upon his authorities.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:506]): “Few of these famous old legends stand the test of close inquiry and observation, but the blood of hyænas is till believed in as a sovereign remedy for consumption, and I myself knew a young lady in India who went through a course of it.” REA (1919 [206]) repr. Gifford; but adds: ‘The point seems to be rather the rarity, as in the case of the various dainties mentioned above.´’ H&S (1950 [9:720]): “imaginary, even in an age which believed in the unicorn and used its powdered horn as medicine.”

*panthers breath* (2140) GIFFORD (1816 [3:258n]): “The sweetness of the panther’s breath, or, rather, body, is sufficiently notorious. It is remarked in Pliny, NatHist 21.18: ‘[No animal has a smell, unless we
Gather'd in bagges, and mixt with Cretan wines.
Our drinke shal be prepared gold, and amber;
Which we will take, vntill my roofe whirle round
With the vertigo: and my Dwarfes shall dance,
My Eunuch sing, my Foole make vp the antique.

Whil'st, we, in changed shapes, act Oiuds tales,
Thou, like Europa now, and I like Ioue,
Then I like *Mars*, and thou like *Erycine*.

So, of the rest, till we haue quite run through

2150 And weary’d all the *fables of the Gods*.

Then will I haue thee, in more moderne formes,

Attired like some sprightly Dame of France,

Braue *Tuscan* Lady, or proud *Spanish* Beatitude;

Sometimes, vnto the *Persian Sophies Wife*;

2155 Or the *grand-Signiors Mistresse*; and, for change,

To one of our most arte-full Curtezans,

Or some quick *Negro*, or cold *Russian*;

And I will meete thee, in as many shapes:

Where we may, so, trans-fuse our wandring soules,

Out at our lippes, and score vp summes of pleasures,

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**shades (2146)** See n. 1013, “shape.”

*act Ouid’s tales (2146)** KERNAN (1962 [127n]): “The *Metamorphoses*, a series of stories dealing with human transformations.” ADAMS (1979 [54n]): “i.e., to enact all the fables in the *Met*”; rpt. HARP (2001 [61n]).

*Thou, like Europa now, and I like Ioue (2147)* REA (1919 [207]): “Europa, Daughter of Phoenix, or, as some say, of Agenor, was loved by Zeus. He saw her as she was gathering flowers, and fell in love with her. Changing himself into a bull, he enticed her to mount upon his back, and then swam with her across the sea to Crete. Their crossing the sea, surrounded by Tritons and Nereids, was a favorite theme with ancient painters”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [500]).

*Erycine (2148)* REA (1919 [207]): “The name Erycine was given to Venus from Mount Eryx in Sicily, an important seat of her worship. For an example of its use see Horace, *Carm. 1.2.19*”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:720]), KERNAN (1962 [127n]), ADAMS (1979 [54n]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]), HARP (2001 [61n]).

HUTSON (1998 [500]) adds “she deceived her husband Vulcan with Mars, god of war.”

*weary’d all the *fables of the Gods (2150)* H&S (1950 [9:720]): “cf. Martial, *Epig. 10.5.17*: ‘delasset omnis fabulas poetarum’” [“may he weary out all the fabled torments of the poets” (Ker, trans., 2:157)]; and HERRICK (1648 [87]), ‘To Electra’: ‘Ie come to thee in all those shapes / As Jove did, when he made his rapes: ... And kissing, so as none may heare, / We’ll weary all the Fables there.’”


*grand-Signiors (2155) KERNAN (1962 [128n]), Grand Signior: “Sultan of Turkey, noted for cruelty”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [54n]), HARP (2001 [61n]).

*quiek (2157) KERNAN (1962 [128n]): “lively.”

*shapes (2158)* See n. 1013, “shape.”

*SD (2159) KERNAN (1962 [128]) applies the SD “[Kissing her.]” to Volpone’s “Where we may, so, trans-fuse our wandring soules / Out at our lippes, and score vp summes of pleasures”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [61]): “[Kisses her.]”

Where we may, so, trans-fuse our wandring soules, / Out at our lippes, and score vp summes of pleasures (2159–60) REA (1919 [207]): “This is from Petronius, *Satyricon* 79: ‘Et transfudimus hinc et hinc labellis / errantes animas’” [“so twined in love, so crossed upon a kiss, / it seemed his soul was mine and mine was his” (Arrowsmith, trans., 85)]; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:720]).

192

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That the curious shall not know,
How to tell them, as they flow;
And the envious, when they find
What there number is, be ping.

2165 C E L. If you have eares, that will be pierc'd—or eyes,
That can be open'd—a heart, may be touch'd—
Or any part, that yet sounds man, about you—
If you have touch of holy Saints—or Heauen—
Do mee the grace, to let me scape—if not,

2170 Be bountifull, and kill mee—you do knowe,
I am a creature, hether ill betrayd,
By one, whose shame I would forget it were—
If you will daigne mee neither of these graces,
Yet feede your wrath, Sir, rather then your lust—

2175 (It is a vice, comes nearer manlinesse—)
And punish that vnhappy crime of nature,
Which you miscall my beauty—Flea my face,
Or poison it, with oynments, for seducing
Your bloud to this rebellion—Rub these hands,

2180 With what may cause an eating leprosie,
E'ene to my bones, and marrow— Any thing,
That may dis-fauour mee, saue in my honour—

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\textbf{SD (2161–64)} GIFFORD (1816 [3:259]) adds the marginal SD “[Sings.” prior to the four concluding lines of Volpone’s song/speech [2161–64]; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [54]), DONALDSON (1985 [61]), HARP (2001 [62]).

\textit{tell (2162)} KERNAN (1962 [128n]): “count.”

\textit{That the curious shall not know ... be ping (2161–64)} I also adapted these lines from Catullus, \textit{Ode} 7, lines 9–12, and reprinted them in \textit{For} 6, lines 19–22. See apps. Sources and Major Scenes.

\textit{ping (2164)} KERNAN (1962 [128n]): “eaten up with envy.” ADAMS (1979 [55n]): “envious, depressed.”

\textit{sounds man (2167)} KERNAN (1962 [128n]): “announces you to be a man (rather than beast).”

\textit{rebellion (2179)} KERNAN (1962 [128n]): “i.e. because reason and virtue should control passion, ‘blood.’”

\textit{leprosie (2180)} KERNAN (1962 [128n]): “any serious disease of the skin.”

\textit{dis-fauour (2182)} KERNAN (1962 [129n]): “make the face ugly.” ADAMS (1979 [55n]): “disfigure”; rpt. HARP (2001 [62n]).
And I will kneele to you, 'pray for you, pay downe  
A thousand howrely vowses, Sir, for your health—  
2185 Report, and thinke you vertuous— V O L P. Thinke me cold,  
Froen, and impotent, and so report me?  
That I had Nestor's hernia, thou wouldst thinke.  
I do degenerate, and abuse my Nation,  
To play with opportunity, thus long:  
2190 I should haue done the act, and then haue parlee'd.  
Yeeld, or lie force thee. C E L. Oh, just God. V O L P. In vaine-  
B O N. Forbeare, foule rauisher, libidinous swine,  
Free the forc'd lady, or thou dy'st, Impostor.  
But that I am loath to snatch thy punishment  
2195 Out of the hand of Iustice, thou shouldst, yet,  
Be made the timely sacrifice of vengeance,  
Before this Altar, and this drosse, thy Idoll.  
Lady, lets quit the place, it is the den  

If you haue eares, that will be pierc'd ... and thinke you virtuous— (2165–85) PARKER (1999 [203n]): “Q’s punctuation of this speech with dashes suggests Celia’s breathless panic; F regularises the punctuation; cf. marginal note to Cat 5.140–47, where a speech of eight lines contains nine dashes: ‘He anwers with fear and interruptions.’ In some modern productions Celia made several attempts to escape during the speech, only to be vlocked at the various exits by Volpone’s freaks (whose voyeuristic presence may be deduced from lines [2145–46]).”  
Nestor’s hernia (2187) WHALLEY (1756 [2:351n]): “Alluding to ... Juvenal, Sat 6.324–25: ‘quibus incendi iam frigidus aevum / Laomedontiades et Nestoris hernia possit’” (“all is enacted to the life) in a manner that would warm the cold blood of a Priam or a Nestor” (Ramsay, trans., 109); rpt. REA (1919 [208]), H&S (1950 [9:721]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]). KERNAN (1962 [129n]): “Nestor is the very old and wise Greek of the Iliad—the hernia suggests impotence”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [55n]), HUTSON (1998 [502]), HARP (2001 [62n]).  
SD (2191) GIFFORD (1816 [3:260]) adds the marginal SD “[Seizes her,” to Volpone’s “Yeeld, or Ile force thee”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [129]), ADAMS (1979 [55]), HARP (2001 [62]).  
SD (2192–94) F (1616 [491]) adds the marginal SD “He leaps out from where | Mojea had | plac’d him,” which corresponds to 2192–94; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [281]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:351]) inserts the F SD after Bonario’s “Free the forc’d lady, or thou dy’st, Impostor” (2193); rpt. KERNAN (1962 [129]), with a five-line marginal SD which corresponds to 2192–96; DONALDSON (1985 [62]) inserts the F SD between Bonario’s SP and his lines. GIFFORD (1816 [3:260]) inserts the marginal SD “[rushing in,” prior to Bonario’s “Forbeare, foule rauisher” (2192); rpt. ADAMS (1979 [55]), HARP (2001 [63]), each with the SD between Bonario’s SD and his line. SALE (1951 [158]): “Bonario’s leap should have been into a new scene.” Also see app. Major Scenes.  
Impostor (2193) KERNAN (1962 [129n]): “pretender.”  
SD (2197) KERNAN (1962 [129]) applies the marginal SD “[Pointing to the gold.]” to Bonario’s “this Altar, and this drosse, thy Idoll.”  

194
Of villany; feare nought you haue a guard:

And he, ere long, shall meete his iust reward.

V O L P. Fall on mee, roofe, and bury mee in ruine,
Become my graue, that wert my shelter. O,
I am vn-masqu'd, vn-spirited, vn-done,
Betray'd to beggary, to infamy—

ACT. 3, SCENE. 8.

M O S C A. V O L P O N E.

WHere shall I runne, most wretched shame of men,

To beate out my vn-luckie braines? V O L P. Here, here.

What? dost thou bleede? M O S. O, that his well-driu'n sword

Had bee so courteous, to haue cleft mee downe,

Vnto the nauell; ère I liu'd to see

My life, my hopes, my spirits, my Patron, all

Thus desperately engaged, by my error.

V O L P. Woe, on thy fortune. M O S. And my follies, Sir.

V O L P. Thou hast made mee miserable. M O S. And my selfe,
Sir.

Who would haue thought, he would haue harken'd, so?

V O L P. What shall wee do? M O S. I know not, if my heart

Could expiate the mischance, I'll pluck it out.

Will you be pleas'd to hang mee? or cut my throate?

And Ile requite you, Sir. Let's die like Romanes,

Since wee haue liu'd, like Grecians. V O L P. Hearke, who's

---

he (2217)] KERNAN (1962 [130n]): “i.e. Bonario.”

harken’d (2217)] KERNAN (1962 [130n]): “listened.”

requisite (2221)] KERNAN (1962 [130n]): “do the same for.”

die like Romanes (2221)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:261n]): “i.e., by our own hands, fearlessly.” H&S (1950 [9:721]): “kill ourselves fearlessly, like Cato or Brutus.” CORRIGAN (1961 [62n]): “Let us die on each others’ swords, since we have lived to the hilt.” KERNAN (1962 [130n]): “referring to Rom. custom of committing suicide in adversity”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [56n]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]), HARP (2001 [63n]).

liu’d, like Grecians (2222)] UPTON (1749 [48]): “Pergræcarci in Plautus is to spend the hours in mirth, wine, and banquets. Hence the proverb, ‘as merry as a Greek’ (TwelNighy 4.1.18). Sebastian calls the clown ‘foolish Greek,’ for his unseasonable mirth. This I mention, reader, lest thou again shouldst be misled.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:261–62n]): “like debauchees”; regarding Upton’s note on pergræcarci, “all this is very well,” but with the parallels drawn from TwelNighy “he talks as idly, as the commentators on Shakespeare usually do, on this subject. How often will it be necessary to observe, that our old dramatists affixed no appropriate idea to these patronymic appellations; which were used merely as augmentatives, and must be understood from the context? To be as mad or as merry, as foolish or as wise, as Greeks, Tojans, Lacedemonians, &c. (for all these terms were indiscriminately used) was simply to be very mad, merry, foolish, &c. and nothing can be more absurd than the attempts to fasten upon such expressions a constant and determinate sense. One happy specimen of this is before me. In the Lover’s Melancholy, Cuculus, a foolish courtier, says: ‘I come to speak with a young lady, the old Tojan’s daughter of this house.’ To explain this obscure speech, the editor musters up all his wisdom. ‘The popularity,’ he says, ‘of the achievements of the Greeks and Trojans led to an application of their names not very honourable to them’ (Mr. Weber wanted Partridge at his elbow), ‘the former being used for cheats, and the latter for thieves’—So that ‘old Trojan’ in the text, means old thief, and being applied to the general of the Famagostan armies, and the most respectable character in the drama, does as much credit to the judgment of Ford, as to the sagacity of Mr. Weber. It would be a pity to withhold the grave conclusion of this note from the reader: ‘It is difficult to conceive a greater degradation, if we except the common misapplication of the venerable names of Hector, Caesar, Pompey, &c. to dogs. —venerable!—but let it go: it is some praise to be uniform even in folly.’ REA (1919 [208]): ‘Of this Upton says: ‘Pergræcarci in Plautus is to spend the hours in mirth, wine, and banquets. Hence the proverb, As merry as a Greek.’’’
there?
I heare some footing, Officers, the Saffi,
Come to apprehend vs! I do feele the brand
Hissing, already, at my fore-head: now,
Mine eares are boring. M O S. To your couch, Sir, you
Make that place good, how euer. Guilty men
Suspect, what they deserve still. Signior Corbaccio!

A C T . 3. S C E N E . 9.

C O R B A C C I O. M O S C A. V O L T O R E.


Saffi (2224)] Florio (1598 [339]), s.v. Saffo: “a catchpole, a fargeant, a bale rakkull, a snatchar”; repr. Cunningham (1875 [3:511]), H&S (1950 [9:721]). Gifford (1816 [3:262n]), per Whalley (1756a): “These,” says Whalley, “as we learn from Coryat (1611), are officers subordinate to the Podestaes and Pretors; of whom some have authority only by land, and some by sea. Their habit is a red camlet gown with long sleeves.’ It is impossible that Coryat could say this; for the saffis are mere bailiffs’ followers, and subordinate to the commandadori. Whalley, probably mistook saiv for saffi. The saivi, indeed, wear a red gown, as doctors of law; but they rank above the Podestaes and Pretors, not below them as he says. In short, his whole note is a blunder.” Schelling (1910 [1:638]): “bailiffs”; rpt. Kernan (1962 [201n]). Corrigan (1961 [62n]): “policemen”; rpt. Kernan (1962 [131n]). Adams (1979 [56n]) adds: “investigators”; rpt. Harp (2001 [63]). Donaldson (1985 [624]): “sergeants.” Hutson (1998 [496]): “low-ranking policemen.”

the brand / Hissing, already, at my fore-head: now, / Mine ears are boring (2225–27)] Kernan (1962 [131n]): “branding on the forehead and cutting the ears was common punishment for criminals”; rpt. Adams (1979 [56n]), Harp (2001 [64n]).

Make that place good, how euer (2228)] Kernan (1962 [131n]): “maintain your disguise as a sick man whatever happens.”

SD (2228)] Gifford (1816 [3:262]) inserts the marginal SD “[Volpone lies down, as before.]” between Mosca’s “Make that place good, how euer” and “Guilty men”; rpt. Kernan (1962 [131]), Adams (1979 [56]), Donaldson (1985 [63]), Harp (2001 [64n]).

Guilty men / Suspect, what they deserve still (2228–29)] Gifford (1816 [3:262n]): “The occasional qualms of these two knaves, who pass with the rapidity of Falstaff ‘from praying to purse-taking,’ are marked throughout this scene with admirable truth and humour.” Cunningham (1875 [3:506]): “On this Mr. Alexander Dyce notes that the thought is from Petronius, Satyr 125: ‘Dii deaeque, quam male est extra legem viventibus: quicquid meruunt semper expectant’” (“Ah! gods and goddesses! the outlaw has a hard life; he is always waiting to get what he deserves” (Heseltine, trans., 325–27); Rea (1919 [208]) repr. Cunningham’s quot. of Dyce; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:721]), who add: “in his [i.e., Dyce’s] MS. notes he adds that the thought is found in Cicero and Seneca.”

SD (2229)] Kernan (1962 [131]) inserts the SD “[Mosca opens door.” between the conclusion of Mosca’s speech, “... Suspect, what they deserve still” and his greeting, “Signior Corbaccio!”; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [63]): “Opens door.”
MOSCA. O, undone, amaz'd, Sir. 
Your sonne (I know not, by what accident)

Acquainted with your purpose, to my Patron,
Touching your Will, and making him your heire;
Entred our house with violence, his sword drawne,
Sought for you, call'd you wretch, unnaturall,
Vow'd he would kill you. CORB. Mee? MOS. Yes, and my Patron.

CORB. This act, shall disinherit him indeed:
Here is the Will. MOS. 'Tis well, Sir. CORB. Right, and well.
Be you as carefull, now, for me. MOS. My life, Sir,
Is not more tender, I am only yours.

CORB. How do's he? will hee die shortly, think'st thou? MOS. [H4']
I feare
He'll out-last May. CORB. To day? MOS. No, last-out May, Sir,

SD (2230–32) GIFFORD (1816 [3:263]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD “Enter Corbaccio,” which he inserts between Mosca’s “what they deserve still.” and his “Signior Corbaccio!” [2229]; KERNAN (1962 [131]) adds to the opening of 3.9 the SD “[Enter Corbaccio.]”; rpl. ADAMS (1979 [56]), DONALDSON (1985 [63]), HUTSON (1998 [283]), HARP (2001 [65]).

amaz'd (2233) KERNAN (1962 [131n]): “confused.”
purpose (2235) KERNAN (1962 [131n]): “intention.”
Your sonne (I know not, by what accident) / Acquainted with your purpose, to my Patron, / Touching your Will, and making him your heire; / Entred our house with violence, his sword drawne, / Sought for you, call'd you wretch, unnaturall, / Vow'd he would kill you (2234–2201) DENNIS (1695a [2:384]), as with Mosca’s “uneasonable” introduction of Bonario into both the plot and Volpone’s house, “the Reason which the Poet makes Mosca give [here] appears to be a very Absurd one.” Cf. app. Technique below.
careful (2243) KERNAN (1962 [132n]): “concerned for benefit.”
purpose (2243) GIFFORD (1816 [3:263]) inserts the SD “Enter VOLTORE behind” between Corbaccio’s “Be you as carefull, now, for me” and Mosca’s “My life, Sir” [2243]; rpl. KERNAN (1962 [132]), ADAMS (1979 [57]), DONALDSON (1985 [63]), HARP (2001 [64]). HUTSON (1998 [283]) adds the SD “[Enter VOLTORE]” after Corbaccio’s “Why! how now? Moscal” [2233]. REA (1919 [208]): “HOLT (1905) thinks the suggestion for this scene in which Voltoire enters and overhears all the conversation between Mosca and Corbaccio may be from Terence, Andria 783–85, where Chremes overbears Mysis and Davus. He compares [2250–51] with the following: ‘DAVUS. quis hic loquitur? o Chremes, per tempus advenis: auscula. CHREMES. audivi iam omnia. DAVUS. ait tu? haec omnia? CHREM. audivi, inquam, a principio’” (“DAVUS. Who’s there? Oh, it’s you, Sir, just at the right moment. Attend to this. CHREMES. I’ve heard it all already. DAVUS. Really? heard it all? CHREMES. I say so, everything from the start” (Sargeant, trans., 1:85)).
tenderd (2244) KERNAN (1962 [132n]): “watched over.”
**Corbaccio**: Couldst thou not gi' him a dram? *Mosca*, O by no meanes, Sir.

2250 **Corbaccio**: Nay, Ile not bid you. *Voltore*. This's a knaue, I see.

**Mosca**: How, Signior *Voltore!* did he heare mee? *Voltore*. Parasite.

**Mosca**: Who's that? O, Sir, most timely welcome— *Voltore*. Scarce, To the discouery of your tricks, I feare.

You are his, onely? and mine, also? are you not?


**Mosca**: Did you not heare it? *Voltore*. Yes, I heare, *Corbaccio*

Hath made your Patron, there, his heire. *Mosca*. Tis true,

2260 By my devise, drawn to it by my plot, With hope-- *Voltore*. Your Patron should reciprocate?

And, you haue promis'd? *Mosca*. For your good, I did, Sir.

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**SD (2247)** KERNAN (1962 [132]) inserts the SD "[Shouting.]" between Mosca's SP and his "No, last-out May, Sir."

**dram (2248)** KERNAN (1962 [132n]): "drink (of poison)."

**Mosca** (2248): A comma appears at the end of the abbreviated SP "Mos." instead of the usual period.

**SD (2250)** GIFFORD (1816 [3:263]) inserts the SD "[coming forward.]" between Voltore's SP and his line, "This 's a knaue, I see"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [57]), HARP (2001 [64]). KERNAN (1962 [132]): "[Stepping forward.]", DONALDSON (1985 [64]): "[Comes forward]."

**SD (2251)** GIFFORD (1816 [3:263]) inserts the SD "[seeing Volt.]" between Mosca's SP and his "How, Signior *Voltore!*"

**SD (2251)** GIFFORD (1816 [3:263]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside.]" to Mosca's "did he heare mee?"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [132]), DONALDSON (1985 [64]), with SD "[Aside.]" between Mosca's SP and the line "How, Signior *Voltore!* did he heare mee?" ADAMS (1979 [57]) adds the SD "[seeing VOLTRE, aside]" between Mosca's SP and his line; rpt. HARP (2001 [64]).

**SD (2252)** DONALDSON (1985 [64]) applies the marginal SD "[Joints Voltore!]" to Mosca's "O, Sir, most timely welcome— ."

**SD (2254)** KERNAN (1962 [132]) adds the three-line marginal SD "[Corbaccio wanders to the side of the stage and stands there.]" after Voltore's "You are his, onely? and mine, also? are you not?"

**deuise (2255)** KERNAN (1962 [132n]): "scheme."

**plot (2256)** SCHELLING (1910 [1:637]): "plan." See n. 1023.

**Put not your foyst's vpon me, I shall sent 'hem (2257)** GIFFORD (1816 [3:264n]): "Foists are jugglirg tricks, frauds; but the line contains also a punning allusion to a meaning, which our delicate ancestors affixed to the word, when they gave the name of foisting-hounds to the ladies favourites, the small chamber-dogs of those days." H&S (1950 [9:721]): "Voltore quibbles on two distinct words, (1) foist, a rogue, and so a piece of roguary (cf. *EMI* 4.4.17), (2) foist, a stench."

**foyst's (2257)** SCHELLING (1910 [1:637]), *foist*: "cut-purse, sharper." KERNAN (1962 [132n]): "tricks, but word also means 'odor';" rpt. ADAMS (1979 [57n]), DONALDSON (1985 [624]), HARP (2001 [65n]).

**HUTSON** (1998 [492]), *foist*: "cheat, thief."
Nay more, I told his sonne, brought, hid him here,
Where he Im ight heare his father passe the deed;
Beeing perswaded to it, by this thought, Sir,
That the vnnaturalnesse, first, of the act,
And th en, his father's oft disclayming in him,
Which I did meane t' helpe on, would sure enrage him
To do so me violence vpon his parent,

On which the Law should take sufficient hold,
And you be stated in a double hope:
Truth be m y comfort, and my conscience.
My on ely ayme was, to dig you a fortune
Out of these two, old rotten Sepulchers—

V O L T. I cry thee mercy, Mosca. M O S. Worth your patience,
And your gr eat merit, Sir. And, see the change!

_Imight_ (2264)) An accidental capital _I_ appears to have fallen into position before _might_ here
_th en_ (2267)) An accidental and unecessary space separates _then_ here into _th_ and _en._
oft _disclayming in him_ (2267)) _Whalley_ (1756 [2:354n]): “A modern writer would say, _oft_ disclaiming
_him_; but I suppose the phrase to be elliptical; and expressed at large it would be, disclaiming any part in
him. Our poet’s contemporaries use the same diction: so Beaumont and Fletcher. _Philaster_ (1620), 2.3:
‘Thou disclam’st in me; / Tell me thy name.’” _Gifford_ (1816 [3:264–65n]): “i.e., disclaiming him”; repr.
Whalley’s parallel from Fletcher, adds _KingLear_ (2.2.54): “Cowardly rascal! Nature _disclaims in thee._”
The expression is very common in our old writers: it seems, however, to have been wearing out about this
time, since it is found far less frequently in the second than in the first impression of these plays. Two
instances of _disclain in_ occur in the quarto ed. of _EMI_; both of which, in the folio, are simplified into
_disclaim_.” _Cunningham_ (1875 [3:506]): “SadShep is thought by Gifford to be one of J’s very latest works,
and there he might have found the same form of words: ‘They were, gay Robin, but the sourer sort, / Of
[133n]): “frequent denial of kinship.” Cf.  n. 2710.

_so me_ (2269)) An accidental and unnecessary space separates “some” here into _so_ and _me._
sufficient _hold_ (2270)) _Kernan_ (1962 [133n]): “i.e. punish him in such a way that he could not inherit.”
double _hope_ (2271)) _Kernan_ (1962 [133n]): “i.e. inheriting Volpone’s and Corbaccio’s fortunes.”
on ely (2273)) An accidental and unnecessary space separates “only” here into _on_ and _ely._
to _dig you a fortune / Out of these two, old rotten Sepulchers_ (2273–74)) _Whalley_ (1756 [2:355n]):
“The expression is as natural, as the image is just: treasure has been often found in antient monuments and
sepulchers; a title elegantly given to Corbaccio and Volpone”; repr. _Gifford_ (1816 [3:265n]), who omits
una simul / cum suo vicino Calliphone incidere. / ex hoc sepulchro vetere viginti minas / effodiem ego
hodie, quas dem erili filio” [“There’s my master Simo ambling up here along with his neighbour, Callipho.
He’s the old tomb I’ll dig eighty pounds out of today to give to the young master” (Nixon, trans., 4:193–
95)].
cry _thee mercy_ (2275) _Kernan_ (1962 [133n]): “beg your pardon.”
gr eat (2276)) An accidental and unnecessary space separates “great” into _gr_ and _eat._

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Whilst wee expected th' old Rauen, in comes

2280 Coruino's wife, sent hether, by her husband—

V O L T. What, with a present? M O S. No, Sir, on visitation; (Ile tell you how, anone) and, staying long,
The youth, hee growes impatient, rushes forth,
Seizeth the lady, wound's mee, makes her sweare

2285 (Or he would murder her, that was his vow)
T' affirme my Patron would haue done her rape:
Which how vnlike it is, you see! and, hence,
With that pretext, hee's gone, t'accuse his father;
Defame my Patron; defeate you— V O L T. Where's her husband?

Let him bee sent for, streight. M O S. Ile go fetch him.


V O L T. This must be stopt. M O S. O, you do nobly, Sir.

2290 Alasse, twas labor'd ah. Sir, for your good;
Nor was there want of councell, in the plot:
But fortune can, at any time, ore throw
The proiects of a hundred learned Clearkes, Sir.

C O R B. What's that? V O L T O, Wilt please you, Sir, to go along?
M O S . Patron, go in, and pray for our successe.

2300  V O L P. Need makes devotion: Heauen your labor blesse.
For some instructions: I will tell you, Sir,
(Since we are met, here, in this height of Venice)
Some few particulars, I have set downe,
Onely, for this meridian, fit to be knowne
Of your crude Trauailer, and they are these.

I will not touch, Sir, at your phrase, or clothes,
For they are old. P E R. Sir, I have better. P O L. Pardon
I meant, as they are Theames. P E R. O, Sir, proceed:
Ile slander you no more of wit, good Sir.
P O L. First, for your garbe, it must be graue, and serious,
On any termes, not to your father; scarce
A fable, but with caution; make sure choise
Both of your company, and discourse; beware,
You neuer speake a truth— P E R. How? P O L. Not to stran-
For those be they, you must converse with, most;
Others I would not know, Sir, but, at distance,
So as I still might be a sauer, in 'hem:
You shall have tricks, else, past upon you, hourly.

And then, for your Religion, profess none;
But wonder, at the diversity of all;
And, for your part, protest, were there no other
But simply the Lawes, o' th' Land, you could content you:

Nicc: Machiavell, and Monsieur Bodine, both,

Were of this minde. Then, must you learne the vse,
And handling of your siluer forke, at meales;
The mettall of your glass— These are maine matters,
With your Italian, and to know the hower,
When you must eate your melons, and your figges.

P E R. Is that a point of State, too? P O L. Here it is,

borrowed his theory of sovereignty. His *Six Livres de la Republique* (1576) was the starting-point of modern political science. He advocated toleration solely on opportunistic grounds: complete religious unity was impossible; why wreck the State in a vain effort to obtain it? For Sir Politic’s idea, cf. John Day, *The Isle of Gulls* (1606 [F1]), 3.1: ‘Lis. Thou speak’st like a Christian; prethie, what Religion art of? Man. How manie soever I make use of, Ile answere with *Piauano Orloito*, the Italian: I profess the Dukes onely.’’ Corrigan (1961 [65n]): “an influential Fr. political theorist of the 16th c.” Kernan (1962 [221]): “argued in his writings for religious toleration on the grounds that it was obviously impossible to achieve religious agreement.” Adams (1979 [59n]): “Sir Politic is more nearly right in his estimate of Bodin, the Fr. political philosopher, who did advocate religious toleration.” Hutson (1998 [499]): “Fr. political theorist, advocate of religious toleration; his *Six Books of the Commonwealth* was much admired in Eng. intellectual circles at the end of the 16th c.”

*learne the use / And handling of your siluer forke, at meales* (2330–31) Gifford (1816 [3:267n]): “See DevAss 5.4.18–20: ‘The laudable use of forkes, / Brought into custome here, as they are in Italy, / To th’ sparing o’ Napkins’; rpt. Rea (1919 [209–10]), H&S (1950 [9:722]). Rea (1919 [209–10]): “cf. also, Coryat (1611): ‘I observed a custom in all those Italian Cities and Towns through which I passed, that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither do I think that any nation of Christendome doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian and also most strangers that are commodant in Italy, doe alwaies at their meales use a little fork when they cut their meat. For while with their knife which they hold in one hand they cut the meate out of the dish, they fasten their forke which they hold in their other hand upon the same dish; so that whatsoever he be that sitting in the company of any others at meals, should unadvisedly touch the dish of meate with his fingers from which all the table doe cut, he will give occasion of offence to the company, as having transgressed the lawes of good manners, in so much that for his error he shall be at the least brow-beaten, if not reprehended in wordes. This forme of feeding I understand is generally used in all places of Italy, their forkes being for the most part made of yron or steele, and some of silver, but those are used only by Gentlemen. The reason of this their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing that all mens fingers are not alike cleane. Hereupon I my selfe thought good to imitate the Italian fashion by this forked cutting of meate, not only while I was in Italy, but also in Germany, and oftentimes in England since I came home.’” H&S (1950 [9:722]): “knives for eating purposes began commonly to take the place of fingers in 1563, and forks were not in much use before 1611. Nicholas Breton, *The Court and Country* (1618 [D2]), makes a countryman tell a courtier, ‘But for vs in the Country, when we haue washed our hands after no foule worke, nor handling any vnwholesome thing, wee neede no little Forks to make hay with our mouths, to throw our meat into them.’ Coryat (1611) noticed the general use of forks in Italy, and Italy only, in his travels, and gives an elaborate account of it, adding that, on using a fork in England afterwards, he was quipped on the subject by being called ‘furcifer.’” These details have been noted by Kernan (1962 [136n]), Adams (1979 [59n]), Harp (2001 [67n]), Donaldson (1985 [625]).

mettall of your glass (2332) Adams (1979 [59n]): “lit., the composition of your glass (perhaps to know what could or couldn’t be put in it);” rpt. Harp (2001 [67n]).

mettall (2332) Kernan (1962 [136n]): “material.” Donaldson (1985 [625]), per OED 9: “the material used for making glass, in a molten state.”

maine (2332) Kernan (1962 [136n]): “primary.”
For your Venetian, if hee see a man
Preposterous, in the least, he has him straight;
Hee has: hee strippes him. Ile acquaint you, Sir,
I now haue liu’d here ('Tis some fourteene monthes)

Within the first weeke, of my landing here,
All tooke mee for a Citizen of Venice:
I knew the formes, so well— P E R. And nothing else.
P O L. I had read Contarene, tooke mee a house,
Dealt with my Iewes, to furnish it with moueables--

Well, if I could but finde one man-one man,
To mine owne heart, whome I durst trust—I would--
P E R. What? what, Sir? P O L. Make him rich; make him a fortune:
He should not thinke, againe. I would command it.


has him straight (2337) KERNAN (1962 [136n]): “at once.” DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “has his measure at once.”

'Tis some fourteene monthes (2339) REA (1919 [210]): “See Introduction.”

SD (2342) GIFFORD (1816 [3:268]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.]” to Peregrine’s “And nothing else”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [137]), ADAMS (1979 [60]), DONALDSON (1985 [67]), HARP (2001 [67]), who each insert the SD between Peregrine’s SP and his line.

Contarene (2343) Cardinal Gasparo Contarini (1483–1542), an It. author generally noted for his De Magistro et Republica Venetorum (1589), which was later trans. into Eng. by Lewis Lewkenor in 1599; rf. WHALLEY (1756 [2:358n]), H&S (1950 [9:722]), CORRIGAN (1961 [66n]), KERNAN (1962 [137n]), DONALDSON (1985 [625]), HUTSON (1998 [500]). GIFFORD (1816 [3:268n]) adds that “Coryat speaks of this work as very elegantly rendered into Eng.; though somewhat deficient in the description of sign-posts, grave-stones, &c., matters in which Tom greatly delighted. But a more valuable testimony to its merits is the approbation of Spenser, who accompanied the publication (as the manner then was) with a commendatory sonnet, now become not a little interesting from the fallen estate of this ‘flower of the last world’s delight.’ Rome in defiance of Spenser’s prophecy, may yet rise from her ashes; but Venice, like Babylon, is sunk for ever.” Gifford quotes the full sonnet, which begins “The antique Babel, Empresse of the East…..”; rpt. REA (1919 [210]), who adds that “the Contarini were one of the most eminent families of Venice, playing a very important part in the history of the city during several centuries. [Contarini authored] various works, the most famous of which was one on the immortality of the soul. The book which Sir Pol had been studying is probably De Magistro.” ADAMS (1979 [60n]) notes that “Sir Politic would be quick to know” this work; rpt. HARP (2001 [67n]).

my Iewes (2344) H&S (1950 [9:722]): “the ‘my’ is unusual: it is modelled on the indefinite use of ‘your,’ as in ‘Your Spanish iennet is the best horse’ (AIch 4.4.9).” ADAMS (1979 [60n]), my Jews, “in the indefinite sense—the usual Jews that everybody goes to for furniture to set up a Venetian apartment”; rpt. HARP (2001 [67n]).

moueables (2344) KERNAN (1962 [137n]): “furnishings”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [625]).

man-one man (2345) What appears as a hyphenated compound here is actually a shortened m-dash.

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PER. As how? POL. With certaine projects, that I haue:

2350 Which, I may not discouer. PER. If I had
But one to wager with, I would lay odds, now,
Hee tells me, instantly: POL. One is, (and that
I care not greatly, who knowes) to serue the State
Of Venice, with red herrings, for three yeares,
2355 And at a certaine rate, from Roterdam,
Where I haue correspondence. There's a letter,
Sent me from one o'th' States, and to that purpose;
He cannot write his name, but that's his marke.

PER. He is a Chaundler? POL. No, a Cheesemonger.

2360 There are some other two, with whom I treate
About the same negotiation;

projects (2349) H&S (1950 [9:723]): “Sir Politic is a mild example of the projector; the type was fully developed in Merrechert in DevArs.”
KERNAN (1962 [221]): “Sir Politic is an example of the type of man known as a projector, the idea man of his time who proposed schemes—projects—for making money.”
JAMIESON (1966 [121n]): “speculative enterprises.”
ADAMS (1979 [60n]): “schemes for social improvement or making money (or preferably both) were favorite targets of 17th-c. satire”; rpt. HARP (2001 [68n]).
discouer (2350) KERNAN (1962 [137n]): “disclose”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [60n]), HARP (2001 [68n])
DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “reveal.”

discordent (2351) KERNAN (1962 [137n]) applies the three line marginal SD “[Aside.]” to Peregrine’s “If I had / But one to wager with, I would lay odds, now, / Hee tells me, instantly”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [137n]), ADAMS (1979 [60n]), DONALDSON (1985 [67]), HARP (2001 [68]), each with the SD between Peregrine’s SP and the start of this aside.
servé the State / Of Venice, with red herrings, for three yeares, / And at a certaine rate, from
Roterdam (2353–55) ADAMS (1979 [60n]): “the Venetians have plenty of fresh fish in the Adriatic, and would not like salt herring in any case.”
PROCTER (1989 [1:440]): “the Eng. red herring was a popular delicacy in Italy, so Sir Pol’s scheme is only innovatory in his unpatriotic support of the Flemish fishing industry; and Venice was supplied with fish all the year round. The modern sense of ‘red herring’ did not come into use until the 19th c.”
correspondence (2356) KERNAN (1962 [137n]): “commercial connections.”
SD (2356) KERNAN (1962 [137n]) applies the three-line marginal SD “[Showing a greasy sheet of paper.]” to Sir Politic’s “There’s a letter...”

from one o'th' States (2357) H&S (1950 [9:723]): “[from] a member of the States-General of Holland,”
ADAMS (1979 [60n]), KERNAN (1962 [137n]), DONALDSON (1985 [625]), HARP (2001 [63]).
that purpose (2357) KERNAN (1962 [137n]): “[The ] States-General of Holland.”
Chaundler (2359) KERNAN (1962 [138n]): “seller of candles. Peregrine is commenting on the greasiness of the paper”; rpt. HARP (2001 [68n]).
Cheesemonger (2359) RIA (1919 [210]): “The spot on the paper which Peregrine takes for wax is presumably cheese instead. The importance of the ‘correspondence’ is indicated by the occupation of the person who writes; a cheesemonger whose stationery shows traces of the wares he deal in would be a
And—I will undertake it: For, tis thus,
Ille do't with ease, I' haue cast it all. Your hoigh]
Carries but three men in her, and a boy;
And she shall make me three retumes, a yeare:
So, if there come but one of three, I saue,
If two, I can defalke. But, this is now,
If my mayne proiect faile. PER. Then, you haue others?
POI. I should be loath to draw the subtil ayre
Of such a place, without my thousand aymes.
Ille not dissemble, Sir, where ere I come,
I loue to be consideratiue; and, 'tis true,
I haue, at my free houres, thought vpon
Some certaine Goods, vnto the State of Venice,
Which I do call my Cautions: and, Sir, which
I meane (in hope of pension) to propound

strange person with whom to carry on a diplomatic correspondence—about fish! The Netherlands were, of course, famous then, as now, for their trade in cheese and fish.

cast (2363) SCHELLING (1910 [1:627]): “forecast, calculate.” KERNAN (1962 [138n]): “figured.”
hoigh] (2363) An ending square bracket has been inserted in the copy-text to represent the damage PARKER (1999 [332]), re: Sheet I, sig. 12’, represents as “hoigh” [with the caron above the underlined “h”] and describes as “leads above and below.” KERNAN (1962 [138n]): “small Dutch coastal boat.” ADAMS (1979 [60n]) adds: “such a boat would have great trouble making a trip to Venice, let alone carrying a worthwhile cargo.”
returns (2365) CORNWALL (1838 [812]): “ventures sent abroad.”
subill ayre (2369) BAMBOUGH (1968 [97n]): “atmosphere of intrigue.”
I loue to be consideratiue; and, 'tis true (2372) REA (1919 [210]): “Holt suggests that the line can be correct metrically by running the last three syllables of consideratius into one. Of Sir Politique’s projects Gifford says: ‘The whole of the scene … absurd as this of Sir Politick.’”
Goods (2374) DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “benefits.”
pension (2376) KERNAN (1962 [138n]): “he hopes for a pension from the state as a reward for his projects.”
To the great Councell, then vnto the Forty,
So to the Ten. My meanes are made already—
PER. By whome? POL. Sir, one, that though his place
   b'obscure,
Yet, he can sway, and they will heare him. H'is
A Commandadore. PER. What, a common sergeant?
POL. Sir, such, as they are, put it in their mouthes,
What they should say, sometimes: as well as greater.
I thinke I haue my notes, to shew you— PER. Good, Sir.
POL. But, you shall sweare vnto mee, on your gentry,
Not to anticipate— PER. I, Sir? POL. Nor reucale
A circumstance— My paper is not with mee.
PER. O, but, you can remember, Sir. POL. My first is
Concerning Tinder-boxes. You must know,
No family is, here, without it's boxe;

the great Councell, then vnto the Forty, / So to the Ten (2377-78) KERNAN (1962 [138n]): “the ruling bodies of Venice in order of importance”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [61n]), DONALDSON (1985 [625]), HARP (2001 [69n]).
My meanes (2378) ADAMS (1979 [61n]): “my approaches to these eminent bodies”; rpt. HARP (2001 [69n]).
Sir, one, that through his place b'obscure (2379-80) BOOKSELLERS (1716-17 [2:185]) break the verse of Q, whose final contraction hang over into the next line, into two separate lines, omitting “one”: “Per. By whom? / Pol. Sir, that though his Place b'obscure”; WHALLEY (1756 [2:359n]): “The sense and metre are both defective; the restoration of a word in the last edition, supplies both: ‘Sir, one that tho' his place b’ obscure.” Whalley’s text reads “Sir, one that though his place b’ obscure.”
Sir, such, as they are, put it in their mouthes, / What they should say, sometimes: as well as greater (2383-84) KERNAN (1962 [139n]): “common sergeants as well as more important people sometimes tell the powerful what to think and say.” DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “i.e., common sergeants may prompt senators just as much as greater men may do.”
SD (2385) GIFFORD (1816 [3:270]) applies the marginal SD “[Searching his pockets.]” to Sir Politic’s “I thinke I haue my notes, to shew you—”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [139]), ADAMS (1979 [61]), HARP (2001 [69]).
on your gentry (2386) ADAMS (1979 [61n]): “as you are a gentleman”; HARP (2001 [69n]).
My first is / Concerning Tinder-boxes ... (2389-90) GIFFORD (1816 [3:270-71n]): “Surely Jack the Painter had stumbled upon Sir Pol's memorandums; for this was precisely the mode which he pursued in firing the naval arsenal at Portsmouth. It would not be much amiss if men in trust would sometimes turn over the pages of our crack-brained projectors; for though their schemes are, as Milton says, 'slothful to good,' yet knowledge of them may occasionally furnish a hint for obviating the effects of any partial and mischievous adoption of them. The whole of this scene is a most ingenious satire on the extravagant passion for monopolies, which prevailed at this time; and which was encouraged by the greedy favourites of the court, who were allowed to receive large sums for procuring the patents. Many of these monopolies were for objects altogether as absurd as this of sir Politick. The subject is resumed with great pleasantry and effect in De/Ass.
Now Sir, it being so portable a thing,
Put case, that you, or I were ill affected
Vnto the State: Sir, with it, in our pockets,
2395 Might not I go into the Arsenale?
Or you? come out againe? and none the wiser?
P E R. Except your selfe, Sir. P O L. Go too, then. I, therefore,
Advertise to the State, how fit it were,
That none, but such as were knowne Patriots,
2400 Sound louers of their country, should be sufferd
T'enjoy them in their houses: And, euen those,
Scald, at some office, and, at such a bignesse,
As might not lurke in pockets. P E R. Admiraible!
P O L. My next is, how t'enquire, and be resolu'd,
2405 By present demonstration, whether a Ship,

_Tinder-boxes (2390)]_ ADAMS (1979 [61n]): “as we would say, matchboxes or cigarette lighters”; rpt. HARP (2001 [69n]).
_Put case (2393)]_ KERNAN (1962 [139n]): “say for example.” DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “suppose.”
_with it, in our pockets, / Might not I go into the Arsenale? / Or you? come out againe? and none the wiser? (2394–96)]_ Gifford (1816 [3:271]) renders this passage “... with it in our pockets, / Might not I go into the Arsenal / Or you, come out again, and none the wiser?” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:506]): “How much more effective this passage reads with J’s own punctuation.”
_Arsenale (2395)]_ REA (1919 [210–11]): “All who visited Venice were much impressed by the Arsenal. THOMAS (1549 [74–75]) has a description of it: ‘Finally, the Arsenale in myne eye exceedeth all the rest: For there they haue well neere two hundred galeys in such an order, that upon a very small warneynge they may be furnished out vnto the sea. Besydes that for euery daye in the yeare (whan they would goe to the coste) they should be able to make a newe galey. Havinge such a staple of timber (whereby in the water within Th’arsenale hath lyen a seasoninge, some 20 yeare, and some 40 some an 100 and some I wot not how longe) that it is a wonder to see it. And euerye of these galeys hath his coueryng or house by hym selfe on drye londe: so that the longe liying unoccupyed can not hurte them. their mastes, cables, sailes, ankers, rodders, ores, and euery other thing are rede in houses of offices by them selves, that vnseen it is almost incredible: with such a quantitie of artillerie, both for sea and lande, as made me to wonder, besides the harneise and weapons, that suffise (as they saye) to arme 100,000 men. Finally the number of woorkemen waged for terme of life aboute those exercises, is wonderfull. For by all I could leame, theyr ordinarie is neuer lesse than 600 working in the Arsenale, be it peace or warre’”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:723]). Generally glossed, following KERNAN (1962 [139n]), as a “famous Venetian building which housed all their ships and weapons”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [625]). ADAMS (1979 [61n]) adds: “Venice being largely a maritime power, the Arsenal where ships were built and repaired was (and still is) an important part of the city”; rpt. HARP (2001 [69n]).
_them (2401)]_ KERNAN (1962 [139n]): “i.e. tinderboxes.”
_resolu’d (2404)]_ CORNWALL (1838 [812]): “convinced.”
Newly arrived from Soría, or from
And suspected part of all the Leuant,
Be guilty of the Plague: And, where they use
To lie out forty, fifty dayes, sometimes,
About the Lazaretto, for their triall;
Ile saue that charge, and losse vnto the merchant,
And, in an houre, cleare the doubt. P.E.R. Indeede, Sir?
P.O.L. Or— I will loose my labour. P.E.R. ’My faith, that’s much.
P.O.L. Nay, Sir, conceiue me. ’Twill cost mee, in onions,
Some thirty Liu’re—— P.E.R. Which is one pound sterling.

Present demonstration (2405) Kernan (1962 [140n]): “immediate experiment.”
Soría (2406) Whalley (1756 [2:360n]): “i.e., Syria, which is so called by the Italians. The city Tyre, from whence the whole country Syria has its name, was antiently called Zur or Zor; and since the Arabs erected their empire in the East, it is again called Sor, and is at this day known by no other name in those parts. Hence the Italians formed their Soría”; repr. or rpt. by Gifford (1816 [3:271–72n]), Rea (1919 [211]), H&S (1950 [9:723]), who add: “Sir Politic out of affectation uses the It. form.” Simply printed or glossed by later eds. as “Syria”; rf. Adams (1979 [61]), Donaldson (1985 [625]), Hutson (1998 [497]), Harp (2001 [69]).
Leuant (2407) Adams (1979 [61n]): “the Middle East”; rpt. Harp (2001 [69n]).
guilty (2408) Kernan (1962 [140n]): “infected with.”
where (2408) H&S (1950 [9:723]): “whereas.”
vse (2408) Kernan (1962 [140n]): “are accustomed.”
Lazaretto (2410) Rea (1919 [211]): “Thomas (1561 [83]) gives an account of the lazarettos: ‘For the plague, there is an house of many lodgeings, two miles from Venice, called the Lazaretta, vnto the whiche all they of that house, wherein one hath been infected of the plague, are incontinently sent, and a lodgeyng sufficienct appointed for them till the infection cesse, that they may retourne.’ There were two Lazarettos, according to Fynes Moryson, itinerary (1617), 1:183: ‘The old Lazaretto is a pest-house, where the Prior and Physitian have yeerely fee to attend the sicke. Not farre from that, is the new Lazaretto, whither they are sent who are suspected to have the the plague: but as soone as they begin to be sicke they are sent thence to the old Lazzaretto: and hithe all suspected men are sent to try their health, which if the[e]y kepe for forty daies, then they are set free.’” H&S (1950 [9:723]): “the first lazaretto or pest-house was established on the island of Santa Maria di Nazaret after the plague of 1576 on the island of Saint’ Erasmo.” Generally glossed, following Kernan (1962 [140n]), as “a quarantine hospital”; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [625]), Hutson (1998 [493]). Adams (1979 [61n]) adds: “bubonic plague, carried by lice living on shipboard rats, was a constant peril in Venice, where trade with the Middle East was particularly busy. Ships had to wait several months in port before debarking crew, passengers, cargo”;
rpt. Harp (2001 [70n]).
Cleare the doubt (2412) Kernan (1962 [140n]): “make sure (whether they are infected).”
onions (2415) H&S (1950 [9:723]): according to Wilson (1927 [9]), onions were “regarded as ‘the best fortification against the plague. …Three or four peeled onions left on the ground for ten days would gather all the infection in the neighbourhood’; his authority is Present Remedies against the Plague (1594 [B3]).” Fletcher, The Mad Lover, 2.1.124–25: “The plague … I’ll cure it with an onion.”” Kernan (1962 [140n]): “onions were believed to collect plague infection.” Adams (1979 [62n]): “onions were reputed to be good against the plague; cut open, they supposedly absorbed the plague germs from the air”; rpt. Harp (2001 [70n]).

211
POL. Beside my water-workes: For this I do, Sir.

First, I bring in your ship, ’twixt two brickwalles;
(But those the State shall venter) on the one

2420
I straine me a fayre tarre-paulin; and, in that,
I stick my onions, cut in halves: the other
Is full of loope holes, out at which, I thrust
The noles of my bellowes; and, tho’ bellowes
I keepe, with water-workes, in perpetuall motion,

2425
(Which is the easi’st matter of a hundred.)

Now, Sir, your onion, which doth naturally
Attract th’ infection, and your bellowes, blowing
The aire vpon him, will shew (inflantly)
By his chang’d colour, if there be contagion;

2430
Or else, remaine as faire, as at the first:

Now ’tis knowne, tis nothing. P E R. You are right, Sir.

POL. I would, I had my note. P E R. ’Faith, I would I:

But, you ha’ done well, for once, Sir. P O L. Were I fale,

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\*Liur’es (2416)\* KERNAN (1962 [140n]), as “French coin[s]”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [62n]), DONALDSON (1985 [625]), HARP (2001 [70n]).

But those the State shall venter (2419)\* REA (1919 [211]): “The speaker wishes it clearly understood that the state is to bear the expense of building, provided he will furnish the onions.”

venter (2419)\* KERNAN (1962 [140n]): “pay for.”

straine (2420)\* ADAMS (1979 [62n]): “stretch”; rpt. HARP (2001 [70n]).

tarre-paulin (2420)\* So F (1616 [496]); GIFFORD (1816 [3:272]) reads “tarpauling.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:506]): “I wrote, as we should write now, tarpaulin [sic].” ADAMS (1979 [62]) prints the modernized “tarpaulm”; rpt. HARP (2001 [70]).

tho’ bellowes / I keepe, with water-workes, in perpetuall motion (2423–24)\* DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “a perpetual-motion machine existed at Eltham at the time: cf. Epig 97.1–2,” which reads: “See you yond motion? Not the old fa-ding, / Nor Captain Pod, nor yet the Eltham thing....” ADAMS (1979 [62n]): “Sir Politic’s waterworks are apparently a water wheel arranged to operate a bellows. Of course there is no spot in the flat country around Venice where streams have enough impetus to turn a wheel”; rpt. HARP (2001 [70n]). DONALDSON (1985 [660]): “cf. S1Wom 5.3.63, and RYE (1865 [232–42]).”

your onion, which doth naturally / Attract th’ infection (2426–27)\* See n. 2415.

SD (2432)\* KERNAN (1962 [141]) applies the SD “[Searching his pockets]” to Sir Politic’s “I would, I had my note” (2432).

falfe (2433)\* KERNAN (1962 [141n]): “traitorous.”

I could shew you reasons, / How I could fell this State, now, to the Turke; / Spight of their Galleys, or their-- P E R. Pray you, Sir Pol. (2434–36)\* ADAMS (1979 [62n]): “here Sir Politic is verging on real subversion, and Peregrine quickly shuts him off”; rpt. HARP (2001 [70n]).
Or would be made lo, I could shew you reasons,

How I could tell this State, now, to the Turke; 

Spight of their Galleys, or their-- P E R. Pray you, Sir Poll. 
P O L. I have 'hem not, about mee. P E R. That I fear'd. 

They're there, Sir? P O L. No. This is my Diary, 

Wherein I note my actions of the day.

P E R. ’Pray you, let’s see, Sir. What is here? Notandum, 

A Rat had gnawne my spur-letters; notwithstanding,

I put on new, and did go forth: but, firft,

---

reasons (2434)] Kernan (1962 [141n]): “feasible methods(?).”

their (2436)] Kernan (1962 [141n]): “i.e. the Venetians.”

Pray you, Sir Poll (2436)] Rea (1919 [212]): “Peregrine protests at such language, which might be dangerous is overheard. It is significant that the knight is speaking thus freely to one whom he has met only a few hours before.”

SD (2436)] Kernan (1962 [141]) applies the SD “[Still frantically searching his pocket.]” to Sir Politic’s “…Spight of their Galleys, or their—” rpt. Adams (1979 [62]), with “[Examining his papers]”; rpt. Harp (2001 [70]).

SD (2438)] Kernan (1962 [141]) applies the SD “[Pulling a book from Sir Pol’s pocket.]” to Peregrine’s “They’re there, Sir.”

Diary (2438)] Kernan (1962 [221]): “I am burlesquing the many travelers of his time who kept and published journals in which they noted every trivial detail of their journeys, like that meticulous observer of petty facts, Captain Lemuel Gulliver.”

note (2439)] See nn. 1117.

Notandum (2440)] Adams (1979 [62n]): “take special note”; rpt. Harp (2001 [71n]).

SD (2240ff.)] Gifford (1816 [3:272]) applies the SD “[Reads.” to Peregrine’s speech, beginning with “Notandum”; rpt. Adams (1979 [62]), Harp (2001 [71]).

A Rat had gnawne my spur-letters; notwithstanding, I put on new, and did go forth: but, firft, / I threw three beans over the threshold (2441-43)] Gifford (1816 [3:272-73n]): “This is from Theophrastus, Characters [as below]; and if superstition were not of all ages and countries, might be thought somewhat too recondite for Sir Pol”; repr. Rea (1919 [212]), who adds: “The omen is too common to make a reference to Theophrastus necessary. If I found it anywhere it was more probably in Del rio, with whose work on magic the notes on the Masques show him to have been very familiar. The following is part of a list of omens in which the superstitious are said to believe foolishly, quoted by Del Rio, Disquisitionum Magicarum (1604 [3:84]): ‘… cum vestis a soricibus roditur, plus timere suspicionem futuri mali, quam praeens damnum dolore. Vnde illud eleganter dictum est Catonis: qui cum esset consultus a quodam, qui sibi erat esse caligas disceret a soricibus: respondit, non esse illud monstrum: sed vere monstro habendumuisse, si soricis a caligas roderentur. ’ It will be noticed that Sir Pol does not refer to his boots, as the story of Cato does, but to his spurre-letters, these being more likely to remind the hearer of his knighthood.” H&S (1950 [9:723]): “cf. Theophrastus. Characters 16.3–6, “The Superstitious Man”: ‘[And if a cat cross his path he will not proceed on his way till someone else be gone by, or he have cast three stones across the street. … If a mouse gnaw a bag of meal, he will off to the wizard’s and ask what he must do, and if the advice be to send it to the cobbler’s to be patched, he neglects the advice and frees himself of the ill by rites of aversion’ (Edmonds, trans., 79–81). Kernan (1962 [221]): “According to Theophrastus … gnawed spur leathers or any other commonplace happening was taken by the superstitious as having supernatural meaning.”

213
I threw three beans over the threshold. Item,
I went, and bought two tooth-pickes, whereof one

2445
I burst, immediately, in a discourse
With a Dutch Merchant, ‘bout Ragion del stato.
From him, I went, and payd a moccinigo,
For peecing my filke flockings; by the way,
I cheapend fpsrats: and at S' Markes, I vrin'd.

2450
'Faith, these are politque notes! P L. Sir, I do flippe

I threw three beans over the threshold (2443) Gifford (1816 [3:272-73n]): “The expiatory virtues of the bean have been acknowledged, since the days of Pythagoras, by every dealer in old wives fables: In faba, says Pliny (NatHist 18.60) with great gravity, peculiaris religio; esp., I presume, when administered by ‘threes,’ the sacred number. Smollet has made good use of this speech in Peregrine Pickle”; repr. Rea (1919 [212]). Kernan (1962 [221]): “beans were traditionally believed to have an expiatory value, something like ‘knocking on wood.’”

two tooth-pickes (2444) Rea (1919 [212-13]): “Cf. EMO 4.1: ‘What a neat case of pick-tooths he carries about him still!’ In DevAss 4.2.39, Meercraft, who is in many ways reminiscent of Sir Pol, has a project ‘for serving the state with tooth-picks.’ The use of tooth-picks, often of gold or silver, was one of the marks of the fashionable young gallant. Cf. Dekker (1609 [2:232]): ‘After dinner you may appear again, having translated yourselfe out of your English cloth cloak, into a light Turky-grogram (if you have that happiness of shifting) and then be feene (for a turne or two) to correct your teeth with some quill or silver instrument, and to cleanse your gums with a wrought handkercher.’ In CynRev 2.3.85-91 is an account of a traveller that would apply very well to Sir Pol: ‘He that is with him is AMORPHVS, a traveller, or so made out of the mixture and shreds of formes, that himselfe is truly deform’d. He walkes most commonly with a cloue, or pick-tooth in his mouth, hee is the very mint of complemt, all his behauiours are printed, his face is another volume of squycs; and his beard an AmphiAUs.’”

burst (2445) Cunningham (1875 [3:506]): “I do not suppose that burst for broke was ever applied to a toothpick before. It is intended to illustrate the tremendous energy with which Sir Politick argued”; repr. Rea (1919 [213]). H&S (1950 [9:723]): “broke. Cf. Poet 3.5.23.”

Ragion del stato (2446) Generally glossed, per Florio (1611 [419]), s.v. “Ragione di fato, the law, reason, or politic of State”; cf. Adams (1979 [62n]), Hutson (1949 [496]), Harp (2001 [71n]). Corrigan (1961 [69n]): “politics.” Kernan (1962 [141n]): “political affairs.” Donaldson (1985 [625]): “statecraft.” Gifford (1816 [2:245n]), in his notes to CynRev 1.4.84 (“ragioni del stato” (F); “discourse of State” (Q)), observes that “[t]his ‘choice remnant of ItaGan’ (which no Italian could pronounce) or, something like it, seems to have been proverbial for the politics of different countries. It is used by Cartwright, Ordinary, 1.4, (and many others): ‘Ragioni di stato generally reek in all!’”; rpt. Rea (1919 [213]), who adds: “Perhaps the phrase was suggested by Giovanni Botero’s Della Ragione di Stato, a well-known work in England as well as Italy”; rpt. Adams (1979 [62n]), who qualifies Botero’s work as “presenting a diluted version of Machiavelli’s thought”; rpt. Harp (2001 [71n]). H&S (1950 [9:723]): “cf. CynRev 1.4.84.”


I cheapend fpsrats (2449) H&S (1950 [9:723]): “Coryat (1611 [258]) notes with surprise that the Venetian ‘Gentlemen and greatest Senators, a man worth perhaps two million of ducksats, will come into the market, and buy their flesh, filth, frutes, and fuch other things as are necessary for the maintenance of their family.’ He commends the Eng. gentleman who ‘employeth his Cooke or Cator about those inferior and fordid affairs.’ W. Thomas, The Historie of Italie (1549 [fol. 83b]) also notes this habit of the Venetian gentleman.” Adams (1979 [63n]): “bargained over some trifling fish”; rpt. Harp (2001 [71n]).
No action of my life, thus, but I quote it.

PER. Beleeue me, it is wife! POL. Nay, Sir, read forth.

ACT. 4. SCENE. 2.

LADY. NANO. WOMEN. POLITIQUE.

PEREGRINE.

Where should this loose Knight be, trow? sure h'is houfd.

NANO. Why, then he's faft. LA. I, he plaies both, with me:

I pray you, flay. This heate will do more harme

To my complexion, then his heart is worth;
(I do not care to hinder, but to take him)
How it comes of! WOM. My maister's, yonder. LAD. Where?
WOM. With a yong Gentleman. LAD. That fame's the party,
In mans apparell. 'Pray you, Sir, iog my Knight:
I will be tender to his reputation,

How euer he demerit. POL. My Lady! PER. Where?
POL. 'Tis fhe indeed, Sir, you shall know her. She is,
Were she not mine, a Lady of that merite,
For fashion, and behauior; and, for beauty
I durft compare— PER. It fheemes, you are not jealous,

That dare commend her. POL. Nay, and for difcourfe—
PER. Beeing your wife, fh ee cannot misse that. POL. Ma-

dame,
Here is a Gentleman, 'pray you, vfe him, fayfely,
He fheemes a youth, but he is— LAD. None? POL. Yes, one

Has put his face, as foone, into the world--

LAD. You meane, as early? but to day? POL. How's this?
LAD. Why in this habit, Sir, you apprehend mee.
Well M'. Would-bee, this doth not become you;
I had thought, the odour, Sir, of your good name,

Had bee more precious to you; that you would not
Haue done this dire massacre, on your honour;
One of your grauitie, and ranke, besides:
But, Knights, I see, care little for the oath
They make to Ladies; chiefly, their owne Ladies.

POL. Now by my Spurres (the Symbole of my Knight-hood)
(PER. Lord! how his brayne is humbled, for an oath)
POL. I reach you not. LAD. Right, Sir, your politie
May beare it through, thus. Sir, a word with you.
I would be loath, to contest pubkely,

With any Gentlewomman; or to seeme
Froward, or violent (as the Courtier sayes)
It comes too neare rusticity, in a Lady,
Which I would shun, by all meanes: and, how-euer I may deferue from Me 'Would-bee', yet,

T'haue one fayre Gentlewoman, thus, be made
Th'vnkind instrument, to wrong another,
And one she knowes not; I, and to perfeuer:
In my poore judgement, is not warranted
From being a foliacim in our fexe,

If not in manners. P E R. How is this! P O L. Sweete Ma-

Come nearer to your ayme. L A D. Mary, and will, Sir.
Since you prouoke me, with your impudence,
And laughter of your light land-Syren, here,

Your Sporus, your Hermaphrodite— P E R. What's here?

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**rusticity (2492)** KERNAN (1962 [144n]): “country manners, vulgarity.”

**vnkind (2496)** HUTSON (1998 [498]): “unnatural.”

**perfeuer (2497)** H&S (1950 [9:724]), per OED: “persuer: the usual pronunciation down to the middle of the 17th c.; Sh. always uses it.” KERNAN (1962 [144n]): “accented on second syllable.”

**warranted (2498)** KERNAN (1962 [144n]): “guaranteed (against).”

**foliacim in our fexe (2499)** REA (1919 [213]): “Probably this is suggested by Juvenal, Sat 6.456: ‘soleocismum licet fecisse marito?’ [‘let husbands at least be permitted to make slips in grammar!’ (Ramsay, trans., 121)]. KERNAN (1962 [144n]): ‘sexual impropriety—the lady’s language is overcharged.’

HARP (2001 [73n]): “lapse in behavior.”

**foliacim (2499)** DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “strictly, an error in grammar rather than conduct, hence itself a solecism here (cf. Mosca [3397], and the general lament of the DedEpist [91]). Yet J himself elsewhere uses the word in a wider sense: Epig 116.16,” PROCTOR (1989 [1:440]): “OED’s first recorded use with the meaning ‘impropriety’ is in the Letters (1599) of Hugh Broughton, one of J’s favourite distorters of language.”

**Come nearer to your ayme (2502)** KERNAN (1962 [144n]): “make your point more clearly.”

Mary (2502) HUTSON (1998 [494]): “indeed.”

**light (2504)** KERNAN (1962 [144n]): “immoral.”

**land-Syren (2504)** REA (1919 [213]): “It must not be overlooked that the siren possessed a double form—half woman, half fish. The supposed duplicity of Peregrine gives point to all three of the terms that the speaker applies to him [i.e. “Sporus” and “Hermaphrodite” (2505)]. Cf. Thomas Nash, Anatomie of Absurditie (1589): ‘Howe euer the Syren change her shape, yet is she inseparable from deceit.' Naturally, Peregrine is totally at a loss, not knowing what her suspicion is.”


**sd (2505-6)** DONALDSON (1985 [65]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Peregrine’s SP and his “What’s here?...”
Poétique fury, and Historique storms?

POL. The Gentleman, believe it, is of worth,
And of our Nation. LAD. I, your white-Friars nation?

Come, I blush for you, Mr. Would-bee, I;

And am ashamed, you should ha’ no more forehead,
Then, thus, to be the Patron, or Saint George

To a lewd harlot, a base fricatrice,
A female deuil, in a male out-side. POL. Nay,
And you be such a one! I must bid, adieu

To your delights. The case appears too liqueur.

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Historique (2506) Adams (1979 [64n]): “with reference to the historical allusion (Sporus), but ‘hysteric’ is not far away”; rpt. Harp (2001 [73n]).

white-Friars nation (2508) Gifford (1816 [3:275–76n]): “White-friars was at this time, a privileged spot, in which fraudulent debtors, gamblers, prostitutes, and other outcasts of society usually resided. They formed a community, adopted the cant language of pick-pockets, and openly resisted the execution of every legal process upon any of their members. To the disgrace of the civil power, this atrocity combination was not broken up till the commencement of the last century”; this info. has been generally repeated by Corrigan (1961 [71n]), Kernan (1962 [222]), Adams (1979 [64n]), Donaldson (1985 [625]), Harp (2001 [73n]), Rea (1919 [213–14]): “The following from H. B. Wheatley and P. Cunningham, London Past and Present, 3 vols. (1891) will explain the point of this: ‘White-friars, a precinct or liberty between Fleet Street and the Thames, the Temple walls and Water Lane. Here was the White Friars’ Church, called ‘Frates Beatae Mariæ de Monte Carmeli,’ first founded by Sir Richard Gray in 1241.... The privileges of sanctuary continued to this precinct after the Dissolution, were confirmed and enlarged in 1608 by royal charter. Fraudulent debtors, gamblers, prostitutes, and other outcasts of society made it a favorite retreat. Here they formed a community of their own, adopted the language of pickpockets, openly resisted the execution of every legal process, and extending their cant terms to the place they lived in, new-named their precinct by the well-known appellation Alzatta, after the province which formed a debatable land between Germany and France.’” H&S (1950 [9:724]) add: “cf. EastHo 5.5.24 [and corresponding n. in 9:676], Epig 12.2.”

nation (2508) Donaldson (1985 [625]): "lot."

Blush for you, Mr. Would-bee, I (2509) Cunningham (1875 [3:507]): “I have observed before that in works of this age the capital letter I stands alike for the personal pronoun and for the exclamation Ay, and the modern editor has to choose between them. Here I am persuaded we ought to read, ‘Come, I blush for you, master Would-be, ay, / And am ashamed,’ &c”; repr. Rea (1919 [214]).


A female deuil, in a male out-side (2513) Orgel (1996 [119–20]): “the association of cross-dressing with prostitution was commonplace; it comes almost as an afterthought in Lady Politic Would-be’s string of hostile epithets.”

Nay, / And you be such a one! I must bid, adieu / To your delights. The case appears too liqueur (2513-15) Rea (1919 [214]): “Sir Pol, always looking for plots, is quite ready to believe the strange suggestion of his wife.” Kernan (1962 [222]): “Rea suggests ... that these lines are addressed to Peregrine. Sir Politic, Rea argues, is so obsessed with plots that he readily accepts his wife’s explanations—though he has had considerable difficulty understanding it—that Peregrine is a disguised courtesan. ‘Liquid’ would
Lady Would-be weeps."

Who here is Bed, for liberty of conscience,
From furious persecution of the Marshall,

Her will I disc'ple. P. E. R. This is fine, I'faith!

then mean ‘clearly to be seen,’ and ‘case’ could mean, as it often does, ‘a mask.’ This explanation is interesting, but there is no way of proving it, and the lines may equally well be an ironic farewell to a crying (‘liquid’) Lady Wouldbe."


carry’t cleare (2516) Kernan (1962 [145n]): “carry on your pretense (of innocence).”

State-face (2516) H&S (1950 [9:724]): “cf. Revenge for Honour (1659 [9]), 1.2: ‘Your sage and serious Courtier, who does walk / With a State face, as he had drest himself / In his Emperors glasse, and had his beard turn’d up / By the ‘irons Roial’.” Kernan (1962 [145n]): “grave, official manner—Lady Wouldbe seems to take her husband’s pretenses to statesmanship seriously.” Adams (1979 [65n]): “a solemn expression”; Harp (2001 [73n]).

Carnivale Concipiscence (2517) Kernan (1962 [145n]): “licentious wench—Lady Wouldbe is close to using malapropisms.”

Carnivale (2517) H&S (1950 [9:724]): “Cotgrave (1611), s.v. Carnavalée: ‘Fr. A wench that’s growne as licentious, or is used as licentiously, as the Carnival: (ou qui est chevauchée tout le long du Carnaval).’” Donaldson (1985 [625]): “associated with sexual license, transvestism, and disguise.”

fled, for liberty of conscience (2518) Rea (1919 [214]): “This is, I suppose, another hit at the Puritans, whom J is never tired of assuaging. As to liberty of conscience at Venice, cf. Thomas (1561 [85]): ‘For no man there marketh an others dooynges, or that meddleth with others man liuyng. If thou be a papist, there shalt thou want no kynde of supersticion to feede vpone. If thou be a gospeler, no man shall ask why thou comest not to church. If thou be a Jewe, a Turke, or believest in the Angel (so they spread not Ayne thyne opinions abroad) thou arte free from all controllment.’” Kernan (1962 [145n]): “i.e. freedom to practice her bawdy trade.” Donaldson (1985 [625]): “Lady Would-be’s irony. Venice was known for its religious toleration.”

Marshall (2519) H&S (1950 [9:724]): “an officer of a court of law who had the charge and custody of prisoners; and who kept order; he was frequently entrusted with the keeping of a prison. Dol in Aich 1.1.120–21 tells Subtle and Face: ‘I’ll not be made a prey unto the marshall, / For ne’re a snarling dog-bolt o’ you both.’” Kernan (1962 [145n]): “court officer and keeper of prisoners.” Adams (1979 [65n]) adds: “in England at least (though not in Venice) the marshall was directly charged with catching and punishing prostitutes”; rpt. Harp (2001 [73n]), Donaldson (1985 [625]): “prison officer.”


SD (2520) Donaldson (1985 [72]) applies the marginal SD “[Seizing Peregrine by his clothing; exit Sir Politic]” to Lady Would-be’s “Her will I disc’ple.” Parker (1999 [225n]): “In Guthrie’s productions [Lady Would-be] attacked Peregrine with her handbag at this point, in Devine’s with a fan, and in Richard David’s with an umbrella.”
And do you vse this, often? is this part
Of your wits exercise, 'gainst you have occasion?
Madam— LAD. Go to, Sir. PER. Do you heare mee, Lady?
Why, if your Knight haue set you to begge shirts,
Or to inuite me home, you might haue done it
A nearer way, by farre. LAD. This cannot worke you,
Out of my snare. PER. Why? am I in it, then?
Indeede, your husband told mee, you were fayre,
And so you are; onely, your nose enclines
(That side, that's next the Sunne) to the Queene-apple:
LAD. This cannot be indur'd, by any patience.

ACT. 4. SCENE. 3.

MOSCA. LADY. PEREGRINE.

Hat's the matter, Madame? LAD. If the Senate
Right not my queft, in this; I will proteft 'hem,
To all the world, no Aristocracye.

vse this (2521) KERNAN (1962 [145n]): “act in this way.”
'gainst (2522) KERNAN (1962 [146n]): “in preparation for a time when.”
occasion (2522) KERNAN (1962 [146n]): “real need.”
"if your Knight haue set you to begge shirts, / Or to inuite me home, you might haue done it / A nearer way, by farre (2524–26)]” ADAMS (1979 [65n]): “Peregrine implies that the whole situation is a setup, the knight pimping for his wife”;
rpt. HARP (2001 [74n]).
nearer (2526) KERNAN (1962 [146n]): “more direct”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [625]).
fayre (2528) KERNAN (1962 [146n]): “light complexioned—considered an attribute of beauty.”
your nose enclines / (That side, that's next the Sunne) to the Queene-apple (2529–30) WHALLEY (1756 [2:365n]): “This burlesque similitude seems to have furnished Sir John Suckling, Ballad of a Wedding (Fragmenta Aurea [1646 (38)]) with a very pretty allusion, in his description of the rural bride: 'For streaks of red were mingled there / Such as are on a Katherine Pear, / (The side that's next the Sun)’”; repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:277n]), REA (1919 [214]), and H&S (1950 [9:724]), who add: “it [i.e., Lady Would-be’s nose] was red [cf. n. 1761]. <The same simile> occurs earlier in Sidney, Arcadia (1590): her cheeks ‘like the fresh Queene-apples side / Blushing at sight qf Phoebus pride.’”
enclines (2529) KERNAN (1962 [146n]): “tends.”
Queene-apple (2530) KERNAN (1962 [146n]): “i.e. bright red.” ADAMS (1979 [65n]): “Lady Politic has a fiery red nose”; rpt. HARP (2001 [74n]). DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “a red apple; see n. 1761”; “nose is red.” HUTSON (1998 [496]): “the queening, a red apple.”
SD (2532–33) GIFFORD (1816 [3:277]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD “Enter Mosca.” KERNAN (1962 [146]) adds to 4.3 the SD “[Enter Mosca.]”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [65]), DONALDSON (1985 [73]), HUTSON (1998 [293]). HARP (2001 [74]).
M o s . What is the injurie, Lady? L a d . Why, the callet, You told mee of, here I haue tâne disguis’d.
M o s . Who? this? What meanes your Ladiship? The creature
I mention’d to you, is apprehended, now,
Before the Senate, you shall see her— L a d . Where?
M o s . Ile bring you to her. This yong Gentleman
I saw him land, this morning, at the Port.
L a d . Is’t possible! how has my judgement wander’d?
Sir, I must, blushing, say to you, I haue err’d:
And plead your pardon. P e r . What! more changes, yet?
L a d . I hope, you ha’ not the malice to remember
A Gentlewoman’s passion. If you stay,
In Venice, here, please you to use mee, Sir—
M o s . Will you goe, Madam? L a d . ’Pray you, Sir, use mee.
In faith,
The more you use mee the more I shall conceive,
You haue forgot our quarrell. P e r . This is rare!

Right not my queft, in this (2535)] Adams (1979 […]): “don’t do me justice”; rpt. Harp (2001 [74n]).
queft (2535)] Kernan (1962 [146n]): “petition.”
callet (2537)] Gifford (1816 [3:277n]): “callot, callat, or calot, is used by all our old writers for a strand of the basest kind. It is derived, as Urry observes, from calote, Fr. a sort of cap once worn by country-girls; and, like a hundred other terms of this nature, from designating poverty or meanness, finally came, by no unnatural progress, to denote depravity and vice.” Cunningham (1875 [3:507]): “Both Todd and Robert Nares reject the derivation given in Gifford’s n., and consider it much more likely that the word came from the Kit Callot, mentioned in GypMet 252.” Schelling (1910 [1:627]): “woman of ill repute.” H&S (1950 [9:724–25]): “Bullokar (1616), s.v. Callette: ‘a Lewd Woman.’ Harrington, Orlando Furoso (1591), 20.97: ‘this old illword spitefull callet,’ comments in the margin: ‘Callet is a nickname that they vse to a woman, it signifies in Irish a witch.’” Otherwise variously glossed as “prostitute,” “slut,” or “whore”; rf. Kernan (1962 [146n]), Adams (1979 [65n]), Donaldson (1985 [625]), Hutson (1998 [490]), Harp (2001 [74n]).
I saw him land, this morning, at the Port (2544)] Rea (1919 [214]): “A definite indication that the author is observing strictly the unity of time.”
SD (2545)] Donaldson (1985 [73]) inserts the SD “(Releasing Peregrine)” between Lady Would-be’s SP and her “Is’t possible!…”
vse (2550)] Kernan (1962 [222]): “employ, make use of in social matters; bu the word has also a sexual meaning, as does ‘conceive’ in [2553], which Peregrine picks up quickly. Lady Wouldbe is as clumsy as her husband in her choice of language.”

222
Sir Politique Would-be? No, Sir Politique Baud.

To bring me, thus, acquainted with his wife!

Well, wife Sir Pol: since you have practized, thus,

Upon my freshman-ship, Ile trie your salt-head,

What proofe it is against a counter-plot.

ACT. 4. SCENE. 4.

VOLTORE. CORBACCIO. CORVINO.
MOSCA.

Pray you, Sir, vfe mee. | In faith, / The more you vfe mee the more I fhall conceive (2551-53)] REA (1919 [215]): “One of the lady’s most unfortunate malapropisms, worthy of Mistress Quickly; both use and conceive are open to misunderstanding. No wonder Peregrine comments, ‘This is rare!’ [2555].” vfe mee (2553)] Revised as ‘fee me’ in F (1616 [499]), and subsequently reprinted in F3 (1692 [171], TONSON (1709 [46]), JOHNSON (1714 [85]), BAKER (1715 [64]), BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:190]), POWELL (1729 [58]), FEALES (1732 [66]), MIDWINTER (1739), COTTER & HAMILTON (1749 [58]), WHALLEY (1756 [2:366]), GIFFORD (1816 [3:278]), CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:271]), ADAMS (1979 [66]), HARP (2001 [74]), et al. DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “Q ‘u’se,’ intensifying the innuendo (and giving rise to a prosecution for indecency in 1701; see H&S (1950 [9:198]).” H&S (1950 [9:725]): “see in F: altered from the ‘vse’ of Q because of the equivoque with ‘conceive’ [2553]. Peregrine takes it for an overture.”

SD (2554)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:278]) applies the marginal SD “[Exeunt Lady Would-be, Mosca, Nano, and Waiting-women” to Lady Would-be’s “You have forgot our quarrell”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [147]), ADAMS (1979 [66]), DONALDSON (1985 [73]), HARP (2001 [74]). HUTSON (1998 [294]): “[Exeunt MOSCA, LADY WOULD-BEE and WOMEN].”

Baud (2555)] KERNAN (1962 [147n]): “pander.”

bring (2556)] KERNAN (1962 [147n]): “make.”

practiced (2557)] KERNAN (1962 [147n]): “intrigued.” Also ref. nn. 54 and 2075.

freshman-ship (2558)] KERNAN (1962 [147n]): “newness, greenness—Peregrine seems to believe that Sir Pol has been having a joke at his expense.” ADAMS (1979 [66n]): “innocence, as of a freshman, but in opposition to Sir Pol’s ‘salt-head’: salacity”; rpt. HARP (2001 [75n]).

salt-head (2558)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:507]): “Lady Would-be ought to be flattered by having the same epithet applied to her that Sh. bestowed on the queen of Egypt, AntCleo: ‘All the charms of love, / Salt Cleopatra, softened thy waned lip.’” REA (1919 [215]) repr. Cunningham; but a note from HOLT (1905): “Cunningham has made an evident slip here. Salt-head refers not to Lady Would-be, but to the knight, her husband. Peregrine is led to believe that Sir Pol has practised, i.e., plotted or schemed, against him because he was unacquainted with the manners and customs of the country, and he determined to try the seasoned and experienced Sir Pol with a counter-plot.” H&S (1950 [9:725]): “a quibble as in EMO 4.3.80: (1) ‘salt’ as opposed to ‘fresh;’ (2) ‘salacious’, cf. ‘Sir Politique bawd’ [2555].” KERNAN (1962 [147n]): “experienced in the world—spoken ironically.” DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “Sir Politic’s mind is seasoned, but also, Peregrine suspects, salacious.” HUTSON (1998 [496]): “seasoned.” HARP (2001 [75n]): “lowness.”

SD (2559)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:278]) applies the marginal SD “[Exit,” to Peregrine’s “What proofe it is against a counter-plot”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [147]), ADAMS (1979 [66]), DONALDSON (1985 [73]), HUTSON (1998 [294]), HARP (2001 [75]).

SD (2560–62)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:278]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD “SCENE II. | The Scrutineo, or Senate House. | Enter VOLTORE, CORBACCIO, CORVINO, and MOSCA”; rpt. at 4.4 by KERNAN (1962 [148]), ADAMS (1979 [66]), DONALDSON (1985 [74]), HARP (2001 [75]). HUTSON (1998 [294]): “[Enter VOLTORE, CORBACCIO, CORVINO and MOSCA].”

223
Ell, now you know the carriage of the businesse,
Your constancy is all, that is requir'd
Unto the safety of it. Mos. Is the lie
Safely conuai'd amongst? Is that sure?
Knowes every man his burden? Corv. Yes. Mos. Then,
shrinke not.
Corv. But, knowes the Advocate the truth? Mos. O, Sir,
By no meanes. I deuis'd a formall tale,
That salu'd your reputation. But, be valiant, Sir.
Corv. I feare no one, but him; that, this his pleading
Should make him stand for a co-heire— Mos. Co-halter,
Hang him: wee will but vse his tongue, his noise,
As we do Croakers, here. Corv. I, what shall he do?
Mos. When we ha'done, you meane? Corv. Yes. Mos. Why,
wee'll thinke,
Sell him for Mummia, hee's halfe dust already.
Do not you smile, to see this Buffalo,

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carriage (2563) KERNAN (1962 [148n]): “management, way of handling.”
lie (2565) ADAMS (1979 [66n]): “untruth, but also the shape of things, as in the lie or lay of the land”; rpt. HARP (2001 [75n]).
conuai’d (2566) KERNAN (1962 [148n]): “spread to all.”
burden (2567) KERNAN (1962 [148n]): “refrain in a song, i.e. what he is to say at the right moment.” ADAMS (1979 [66n]): ‘part,’ as in part-singing. Mosca must be sure everyone has his story straight”; rpt. HARP (2001 [75n]). DONALDSON (1985 [625]): “refrain.”
sd (2569) KERNAN (1962 [148]) inserts the sd “[Aside to Mosca.]” between Corvino’s sp and his “But, knowes the Advocate the truth?”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [66]), HARP (2001 [75]).
salu’d (2571) KERNAN (1962 [148n]): “saved.”
Croakers (2575 + sd) Generally glossed as a possessive reference to Corbaccio; rf. GIFFORD (1816 [3:279n]), CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:507]). ADAMS (1979 [66n]), HARP (2001 [75n]).: UPTON (1749 [50]) reads “croakers” as “crackers, i.e. squibs”; repr. WHALLEY (1756 [2:366-67n]), who adds: “It seems to be a cant term given to Corbaccio, since Corvino immediately replies, ’I if you but croak a syllable, all comes out’” [3116]. GIFFORD (1816 [3:279n]): “This word would not have required a note, had not its meaning been overlooked by Upton, who wishes to read “crackers, that is squibs!”” REA (1919 [215]) repr. Upton and Whalley. Cf. n. 334 above, esp. Florio’s definitions. KERNAN (1962 [148]) applies the sd “[Pointing to Corbaccio,]” to Mosca’s “As we do Croakers, here”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [74]).
Mummia (2578) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:507]): “Mummia till recently formed a part of the recognized Materia Medica. Bailey describes it as ‘the liquor or juice that oozes from human bodies, aromatized and

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How he do's Iport it with his head?— I shou'd
If all were well, and paft. Sir, onely you
Are hee, that shall enjoy the crop of all,
And thefe not know for whom they toile. C O R B . I, peace.
M O S . But you shall eate it. Much. Worhipfull Sir,

embalmed.' In J's time it was so highly prized that it became an object of home manufacture. 'The French method of counterfeiting mummy,' says Harris, is very simple. Out of the carcase of a person hanged they take the brains and entrails, and dry the rest in an oven, steeping it in pitch and other drugs.' George Steevens adds that it 'is still much coveted by painters, as a transparent brown colour that throws a warmth into their shadows.' Was this the 'glazing' of Sir Joshua's time?' REA (1919 [215]) repr. Cunningham; but adds: "Professor Albert S. Cook in MLN (Dec 1906), discusses the use of mummy in medicine, and gives many passages referring to it." H&S (1950 [9:725]): "Egyptian mummy was formerly a recognized article of medicine. Sir Thomas Browne, Urn Burial: 'The Egyptian Mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummie is become Merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.' Counterfeit mummy, procured by drying dead bodies in ovens, was once an extensively practised fraud. SHIRLEY (1633 [sig. C; 2:382]), 1.1: 'make mummy of my flesh, and sell me to the apothecaries.' CORRIGAN (1961 [73n]): "a preparation containing mumified flesh which supposedly has medicinal value." KERNAN (1962 [222]): "the juice that oozes from embalmed human bodies. It was much prized until fairly recent times as an ingredient in certain medicines. This passage is part of the theme of cannibalism which runs through the play: e.g. 1.1.36, 'or men, to grind 'em into powda-' [427], or 1.5.92, 'Or fat, by eating once a month a man' [975]. ADAMS (1979 [66n]): "allegedly the powdered remains of the Pharaohs, popularly sold as medicine''; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [625]), HUTSON (1998 [494]), HARP (2001 [75n]).

Do not you smile, to see this Buffalo, / How he do's Iport it with his head?— (2579-80) DONALDSON (1985 [625]): "i.e., relishes the story of his cuckolding." KERNAN (1962 [149n]): "play about [how Corvino is] unconscious of his horns.,"

Do not you smile (2579) GIFFORD (1816 [3:279]) reads "Do you not smile." CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:507]), noting Gifford's change: "This is altered for no discoverable reason.

Buffalo (2579) CORRIGAN (1961 [73n]): "an allusion to cuckoldry"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [66n]), HARP (2001 [75n]). KERNAN (1962 [149n]): "referring to Corvino's horns.

Do not you smile (2580-81) GIFFORD (1816 [3:279]) applies the SD "[Aside.]" to Mosca's "I shou'd / If all were well, and paft"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [74]). ADAMS (1979 [66]) inserts this SD prior to Mosca's "I shou'd / If all were well ..."; rpt. HARP (2001 [75]).

eate it (2584) KERNAN (1962 [149n]): "i.e. enjoy all the gold.

Much (2584) UPTON (1749 [50-51]): "i.e., much good may it do you. Elliptically, and ironically. So the passage is to be explained and stopped in EMO 1.3." Upton also locates a parallel passage in Alch 5.4: "so the place is to be pointed. The same elliptical manner of expression is some where or other in Sh., but the passage does not occur." WHALLEY (1756 [2:367n]): "'But you shall eat it. Much!'" that is, 'Much good
2585 Mercury sit upon your thundring tongue,
Or the French Hercules, and make your language
As conquering as his club, to beate along,
(As with a tempest) flat, our aduersaries;
But, much more, yours, Sir. Volt. Here they come, ha' done.

2590 Mos. I have another witnesse, if you neede, Sir,
I can produce. Volt. Who is it? Mos. Sir, I haue her.

ACT. 4. SCENE. 5.

AVOCATORI. 4. BONARIO. CELIA. VOLTORE.
CORBACCIO. CORVINO. MOSCA.

may it do you'; elliptically and ironically spoken. Other instances of this use of the word much, have been remarked before.” Gifford (1816 [3:279n]): “Upton and Whalley constantly mistake the sense of this interjection; they will have it to be elliptical, for ‘Much good may it do you!’ whereas it is merely ironical, as I have already observed, and means, Not at all”; repr. Rea (1919 [215]). Schelling (1910 [1:635]): “expressive of irony or incredulity.” H&S (1950 [9:725]): “the ironic use as in EMI 4.6.53.” Kernan (1962 [149n]): “not at all.” Adams (1979 [67n]): “i.e., ‘fat chance!’”; rpt. Harp (2001 [75n])

SD (2584–86) F (1616 [500]) adds the three-line marginal SD “To Corvino, then to Voltore a- | gaine;,” which corresponds to 2584–86; rpt. Hutson (1998 [295]). Booksellers (1716–17 [2:192]) breaks Mosca’s speech into two separate lines with two different SDS: “Mos. But you shall eat it. [To Corvino],” and “Much Worshipfull Sir, [Then to Voltore again.]” Whalley (1756 [2:367 + n10]) notes that “This is corruptly printed; the true reading [is] exhibited by the old books” and reassigns Mosca’s speech according to the separate addressees cited by the marginal SDS: “Mos. But you shall eat it. Much! [To Corvino],” and “Worshipfull Sir, Then to Voltore again.” Gifford (1816 [3:279]) inserts the SD “[turning to Corvino,]” between Mosca’s SP and “But you shall eat it.”; he applies the SD “[Aside.]” to Mosca’s “Much!” and the SD “[to Voltore]” to “Worshipful Sir…”; rpt. Adams (1979 [67n]), Harp (2001 [75n]). Kernan (1962 [149]) inserts the SD “[To Corvino,]” between Mosca’s SP and his edition’s “But you shall eat it.—Much!—”; the SD “[To Voltore.]” precedes Mosca’s “Worshipful Sir…” Donaldson (1985 [74]) inserts the SD “[To Corvino]” between Mosca’s SP and his edition’s “But you shall eat it”; the SD “[Then to Voltore again]” precedes Mosca’s “Much!”


French Hercules (2586) Upton (1749 [51–52]): “The Gallic, or Celic Hercules, was the symbol of eloquence. Lucian has a treatise on this French Hercules, surnamed Omnis: he was pictured old and wrinkled, and drest in his lion’s skin; in his right hand he held his club, in his left his bow: several very small chains were figured reaching from his tongue to the ears of crowds of men at some distance. If the reader has any curiosity to know more of this God of Eloquence he may, at his leisure, consult Lucian” rpt. Whalley (1756 [2:367n]), Gifford (1816 [3:280n]), Rea (1919 [215–16]), Kernan (1962 [149n]), Adams (1979 [67n]), Donaldson (1985 [625]), Harp (2001 [76n]). H&S (1950 [9:725]) add: “the link between the Greek hero and the Celts was supplied by the quest of Geryon’s cattle in the West: Hercules, returning homeward through Gaul, founded there Alesia and Nemausus, and became the father of the Celts.”

another witnesse (2590) Donaldson (1985 [625]): “Lady Would-be.”
her (2591) Kernan (1962 [149n]): “i.e. Lady Wouldbe.”
The like of this the Senate neuer heard of.

AVOC. 2. Twil come most strange to them, whè we report it.

AVOC. 4. 'The Gentlewòman has beene euer held
Of vn-reprooved name. AVOC. 3. So has the youth.

AVOC. 4. The more vnunnaturall part that of his father.

AVOC. 2. More of the husband. AVOC. 1. I not know to giue
His act a name, it is so monfrous!

AVOC. 4. But the Impostor, he is a thing created
T'exceed example! AVOC. And all after times!

AVOC. 2. I neuer heard a true voluptuary
Discrib'd, but him. AVOC. 3. Appeare yet those were cited?
NOTA. All, but the old Magnifico, Volpone.

AVOC. 1. Why is not hee here? MOS. Please your Father-
hoods,

Here is his Aduocate. Himselfe's, so weake,
So feeble— AVOC. 4. What are you? BON. His Parasite,
His Knaue, his Pandar— I beleech the Court,
He may be forc'd to come, that your graue cies
May beare strong witnesse of his strange impostures.

V O L T. Upon my faith, and credit, with your vertues,
Hee is not able to endure the ayre.
A V O C . 2. Bring him, howe euer. A V O C . 3. We will see him.
A V O C . 4. Fetch him.

V O L T. Your Father-hoodes fit pleasures be obey'd,
But sure, the sight will rather moue your pittyes,
Then indignation; may it please the Court,
In the meane time, hee may be heard in me:
I know this Place most voide of prejudice,
And therefore craue it, since we haue no reason
To feare our truth should hurt our cause. A V O C . 3. Speake free.

V O L T. Then know, most honor'd Fathers, I must now
Discouer, to your strangely' abused eares,
The most prodigious, and most frontlesse piece
Of solid impudence, and trechery,

That euer vicious Nature yet brought forth
To shame the State of Venice. This lewd woman

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**Father-hoodes** (2619) KERNAN (1962 [222–23]): “This is a correct title of respect to apply to the venerable judges of Venice, but Voltore makes good use of this fact. By his frequent references to the judges as fathers he establishes prejudice on their part for the outraged father, Corbaccio; makes them feel the wrongs done Corbaccio the father are done to them, the fathers of the city. Volpone, a splendid rhetorician himself, is properly appreciative of the fine points of Voltore’s art and comments particularly on this device, 5.2.33–37 [2942–46].

SD (2618–19) CHIFFORD (1816 [3:281]) applies the marginal SD “[Exeunt Officers.” to Voltore’s “Your Father-hoodes fit pleasures be obey’d”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [68]), HARP (2001 [77]). DONALDSON (1985 [75]) inserts the SD after 4 Avocatore’s “Fetch him” [2618].

it (2624) KERNAN (1962 [151n]): “i.e. to be heard.”
strangely' (2627) An accidental apostrophe appears here at the end of “strangely.”
prodigious (2628) SCHELING (1910 [1:637]): “monstrous, unnatural.”

SD (2631) KERNAN (1962 [150]) applies the marginal SD “[Pointing to Celia.]” to Voltore’s “This lewd woman....”

228
(That wants no artificiall lookes, or teares,  
To helpe the visor, she has now put on)  
Hath long beene knowne a close adultresse,  
To that lasciuious youth there, not suspected,  
I say, but knowne; and taken, in the act,  
With him; and by this man, the easie husband,  
Pardon'd: whose timelesse bounty makes him, now,  
Stand here, the most vnhappy, innocent person,  
That euer mans owne vertue made accus'd.  
For these, not knowing how to owe a gA  
Of that deare grace, but with their shame; being plac'd  
So' aboue all powers of their gratitude,  
Began to hate the benefit; and, in place

wants (2632)] KERNAN (1962 [151n]): “lacks”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [68n]), HUTSON (1998 [498]). HARP (2001 [77n]).
visor (2633)] KERNAN (1962 [151n]): “mask. Celia is crying and distraught, and Voltore is accusing her of pretending.” ADAMS (1979 [68n]): “artificial features, outward appearance”; rpt. HARP (2001 [77n]). DONALDSON (1985 [625–26]): “mask; i.e., air of innocence.”
close (2634)] KERNAN (1962 [151n]): “secret”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [626]).
SD (2635)] KERNAN (1962 [152]) applies the marginal SD “[Pointing to Bonario.]” to Voltore’s “that lascious youth there.”
SD (2637)] KERNAN (1962 [152]) applies the marginal SD “[Pointing to Corvino.]” to Voltore’s “this man, the easie husband.”
timelesse bounty (2638)] BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:193]) reads “timely.” WHALLEY (1756 [2:369n]): “The epithet to bounty destroys the sentiment intended; the true reading is timeless, i.e., ill-timed bounty.” Whalley reads “timeless.”
timelesse (2638)] ADAMS (1979 [68n]); “ill-timed”; rpt. HARP (2001 [77n]). DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “untimely.”
vertue (2640)] F (1616 [501]) reads “goodnesse.”
gift (2641)] DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “pardon.”

Of that deare grace, but with their shame; being plac’d / So’ aboue all powers of their gratitude, / Began to hate the benefit (2642–44)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:508]): “Mr. Dyce point out that this is taken from Tacitus, Annals 4:18. The same passage is imitated by B&F, The False One (1647), 5.3: ‘Service done, / For such as only study their own ends, / Too great to be rewarded, are returned / With deadly hate.’ This, however, is one of the moral reflections which when uttered by Lord Mahon brought down upon him the ridicule of Macaulay as being a class of remark which ‘might have seemed strange at the court of Nimrod or Chedorlaomer!’” REA (1919 [216]): “Dyce, quoted by Cunningham, points out that this is from Tacitus, Annals 4.18.3: ‘Nam beneficia eo usque laeta sunt, dum videntur exsolvi posse: ubi multum antevenere, pro gratia odium redditur’ [“For services are welcome exactly so long as it seems possible to requite them: when that stage is left far behind, the return is hatred instead of gratitude” (Jackson, trans., 3:35)]. Perhaps I found it in Tacitus; but he is just as likely to have found it in a note of Justus Lipsius on Seneca, Epist 19: ‘Et idem in beneficis, quae usque eo laeta sunt, donec exsolvi posse videantur; supra odium pro gratia redditur. Tacitus alibi, et Seneca.’” I quote from the Antwerp ed. of 1652; Lipsius’ Seneca was first published in 1605. I was so familiar with the Epistles that it seems quite likely he found the

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Of thankes, devise t’ extirpe the memory
Of such an act: wherein, I pray your Father-hoods,
To obserue the malice, yea, the rage of creatures
Discouer’d in their euils; and what heart
Such take, euen, from their crimes. But that, anone,
Will more appeare. This Gentleman, the father,
Hearing of this foule fact, with many others,
That dayly strooke at his too-tender eares,
And, grieu’d in nothing more, then that he could not
Preserue himselfe a parent (his sonnes ills
Growing to that strange floud) at last decreed
To dis-inherit him. A V O C. I. These be strange turnes!
A V O C. 2. The yong mans fame was euuer faire, and honest.
V O L T. So much more full of danger is his vice,
That can beguile so, vnder shade of vertue.

But as I said (my honour’d Sires) his father
Having this setted purpose, (by what means
to him betray’d, we know not) and this day
Appointed for the deed, that Parricide,
(I cannot stile him better) by confederacy

Preparing this his Paramour, to bee there,
Entred Volpone’s house (who was the man
Your Father-hoods must vnderstand, design’d
For the inheritance) there, sought his father;
But, with what purpose sought he him, my Sires?

(I tremble to pronounce it, that a sonne
Vnto a father, and to such a father
Should have so foul, felonious intent)
It was, to murder him. When, being preuented
By his more happy absence, what then did hee?

Not check his wicked thoughts; no, now new deedes:
(Mischief doth ever ende, where it begins)

his vice, / That can beguile so, vnder shade of vertue (2658–59) HOLT (1905b [168]): cf. Juvenal. Sat 14.109: “fallit enim vitium specie virtutis et umbra” ["For that vice <i.e., avarice> has a deceptive appearance and semblance of virtue" (Ramsay, trans., 273)].

shade (2658–59) KERNAN (1962 [153n]): “cover, pretense.”
him (2662) KERNAN (1962 [153n]): “i.e. Bonario.”
stile (2664) SCHELLING (1910 [1:640]): “title.”

confederacy (2664) KERNAN (1962 [153n]): “secret agreement.” ADAMS (1979 [69n]): “conspiracy”; rpt. HARP (2001 [78n]).
design’d (2667) KERNAN (1962 [153n]): “designated.”
intent (2672) SCHELLING (1910 [1:633]): “intention, wish.”

ende, where (2676) A faint comma seems to have been accidentally placed between “ende” and “where” here.

Mischief doth ever ende, where it begins (2676) WHALLEY (1756 [2:370n]): “But the reverse of this seems the truer remark, and what he intended to say; namely, that mischief does not stop where it first began, or set out. So that, notwithstanding the authority of the printed books, it is probable we should read, ‘Mischief doth never end where it begins’”; repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:283]). Whalley’s text reads “ever”; rpt. HARP (2001 [78]). Gifford’s reads “never”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [69]). CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:508]): “Mr. Dyce supports this emendation of Whalley’s by pointing out that I had in view a passage from Valerius Maximus, <i>Lib</i> 9.1.2, ‘Neque enim ullam linitur vitium ibi ubi oritur.”’ REA (1919 [216]) repr. Whalley and Cunningham. H&S (1950 [9:725]): “i.e., goes on consistently. Whalley’s plausible conjecture ‘Mischief doth never end’ is supported by the passage of Valerius Maximus [as above]. ‘Euer,’ which J twice passed in the proofs of Q and F, cannot be regarded as a misprint.” ADAMS (1979 [69]): “J’s text reads ‘ever,’ and
An act of horror, Fathers! he drag'd forth
The aged Gentleman, that had there lien, bed-rid,
Three yeares, and more, out off his innocent couch,
Naked, vpon the floore, there left him; wounded
His servant in the face; and, with this strumpet
The stale to his for'gd practise, who was glad
To be so actiue, (I shall here desire
Your Father-hoods to note but my collections,
As most remarkable) thought, at once, to stop
His fathers ends; discredit his free choise,
In the old Gentleman; redeeme themselves,
By laying infamy, vpon this man,
To whome, with blushing, they should owe their liues.

A V O C . I. What proofes haue you of this? B O N. Most honour'd
Fathers,
I humbly craue, there be no crédite giuen
To this mans mercenary tongue. A V O C . 2. Forbeare.

the sense is defensible, but the stronger meaning comes from ‘never.’” DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “i.e.,
keeps to the same path, varying Valerius Maximus, 9.1.2.” Procter (1989 [1:440]) adds: “The play proves
both versions of the saying.”
lien, bed-rid (2678) F (1616 [502]): lien, bed-red / GIFFORD (1816 [3:283]): lain bed-rid / CUNNINGHAM
(1875 [3:508]) notes that “‘lain bedrid’ [sic] is ‘lien bed-red’ in the folio.”
lien (2678) H&S (1950 [9:725]): “I. EngGram 1.19.37 gives the past participle ‘lyne or layne.’”
b ed-rid (2678) H&S (1950 [9:725]): “[the F reading was] in use from the 14th to the 18th c. (OE
bedreda).”
stale (2682) CORNWALL (1838 [812]): “a decoy or cover.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:508]): “A stale
is anything set up as an object of allurement to mislead the judgment. So Dryden, Don Sebastian (1690):
‘This easy fool must be my stale, set up / To catch the people’s eyes.’” SCHELLING (1910 [1:640]):
KERNAN (1962 [153n]): “lure.” ADAMS (1979 [69n]): “pretext”; rpt. HARP (2001 [78n]). DONALDSON
(1985 [626]): “prostitute used as decoy by thieves” rpt. HUTSON (1998 [497]).
for’gd practise (2682) KERNAN (1962 [153n]): “contrived scheme.” DONALDSON (1985 [626]):
“fabricated plot.” Cf. nn. 54 and 2075.
collections (2684) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “conclusions”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [490]). ADAMS (1979
[69n]): “deductions”.; rpt. HARP (2001 [78n]). DONALDSON (1985 [626]) adds “summaries.”
ends (2686) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “intentions.”
In (2687) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “of.”
old Gentleman (2687) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “i.e. Volpone.”
this man (2688) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “i.e. Corvino”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [69n]), HARP (2001 [78n]).
should owe (2689) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “acknowledge due”; DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “ought to
pay.”
BON. His soule moues in his fee. AVO.3. O, Sir. BON. This fellow,

For six sols more, would pleade against his Maker.

AVOC.I. You do forget your selfe. VOLT. Nay, nay, graue Fathers,

Let him haue scope; can any man imagine

That hee will spare’his accuser, that would not

Haue spar’d his parent? AVOC.I. Well, produce your proofes.

CEL. I would, I could forget, I were a creature.

VOLT. Signior Corbaccio. AVOC.4. What is hee? VOLT.

The father.

AVOC.2. Has he had an oath? NOT. Yes. CORB. What must I doe now?

NOT. Your testimony’s crau’d. CORB. Speake to the knaue?

Ile ha’ my mouth, first, stopt with earth; my heart

Abhors his knowledge: I disclaime in him

---

His soule moues in his fee (2694) REA (1919 [217]): “It was a common question for debate whether man’s soul were situated in his brain, heart, or blood. Bonario thinks the question an easy one to answer in the case of the lawyer, Voltore: his soul is to be found in his pocket-book.”

For six sols more, would pleade against his Maker (2696) REA (1919 [217]): “Cf. MagLady 2.1: ‘He is a lawyer, and must speak for his fee, / Against his father and mother, all his kindred, / His brothers or his sisters.’”

sols (2696) H&S (1950 [9:725]): “CORYAT (1611 [250.29–30]) values the sol at a halfpenny.”


scope (2699) KERNAN (1962 [154n]): “freedom (to insult).”

spare’his (2700) This misshaped apostrophe may in fact be an error in either the original printing, or its modern reproduction.

creature (2703) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “And answerable to the Creator; suicide is in her mind. Contrast Mosca’s show of Roman confidence [2221–22].”

SD (2704) GIFFORD (1816 [3:284]) inserts the marginal SD “[Corbaccio comes forward.” after Voltore calls “Signior Corbaccio”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [69]), HARP (2001 [79]).

SD (2708) KERNAN (1962 [155]) inserts the SD “[Cupping his ear;]” between Corbaccio’s SP and his “Speake to the knaue?”

Abhors his knowledge (2710) ADAMS (1979 [70n]): “shudders to recognize him”; rpt. HARP (2001 [79n]).

his knowledge (2710) KERNAN (1962 [155n]): “knowing him.”

disclaim in him (2710) CORNWALL (1838 [809]): “the expression disclaim in, i.e., any part in, is common in old writers, and conveys the same meaning as the more modern term disclaim, without the preposition.” KERNAN (1962 [155n]): “deny kinship to him.” Cf. n. 2267 above.

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AVOC.I. But, for what cause? CORB. The mere portent of nature.

Hee is an utter stranger to my loynes.

BON. Have they made you to this? CORB. I will not heare thee,

Monster of men, swine, goate, wolfe, Parricide,

Speake not, thou viper.\(^\text{1675}\) BON. Sir, I will fil downe,

And rather with my innocence should suffer,

Then I refil the authority of a father.

2720 VOLT. Signior Corvino. AVOC.2. This is strange! AVOC.I.

Who’s this?

NOT. The husband. AVOC.4. Is he sworne? NOT. Hee is.

AVOC.3. Speake then.

CORV. This woman (please your Father-hoods) is a whore,

Of most hot exercise, more then a partrich,

Vpon record— AVOC.I. No more. CORV. Neighes, like a gennet.
NOT. Preferre the honour of the Court. CORV. I shall, And modesty of your most revered eares.

AND, yet, I hope that I may say, these eyes
Haue seene her glew’d vnto that peece of Cedar;
That fine well-timber’d gallant: and that, here,
The letters may be read, thorough the horne,
That make the story perfect. MOS. Excellent, Sir.

CORV. There is no harme in this, now, is there? MOS.

None.

CORV. Or if I said, I hop’d that she were onward
To her damnation, if there be a hell

well-timber’d gallant (2732) H&S (1950 [9:726]): “cf. EMO Ind. 327.” KERNAN (1962 [156n]):
“handsome young man (i.e. Bonario).”
well-timber’d (2732) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “well-built.”
and that, here, / That letters may be read, thorough the horne, / That make the story perfect (2732–34 +SD) GIFFORD (1816 [3:226n]) notes Corvino’s reference to “here” as “pointing to his forehead; the allusion, in the next line, is to the horne-book of children. Our old writers are never weary of their ridiculous jests on the transparency of these badges of cuckoldom: thus 2Hen4 1.2.46–47: ‘He hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of his wife shines through it.’” H&S (1950 [9:726]); cf. Poet 4.5.68. CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:508]): “This symbol was so well recognized that the letter V in the margin of an old play stood for a stage direction to that effect. In this way it appears in print in George Chapman, May Day: ‘That dare not I doe, but as often as he turns his backe to me I shall be here V with him that’s certain.’ The late ingenious Mr. Staunton imagined the explanation of this mysterious symbol to be a discovery of his own, and communicated it as such to the Athenaeum in Apr 1874, immediately before his death; but it had been published to the world more than fifty years before, by Archdeacon Nares, in his admirable glossary.” KERNAN (1962 [156]) applies the two-line marginal SD “[Tapping his forehead.]” to Corvino’s “here, / The letters may be read, thorough the horne”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [79]), with the SD “[Touching his forehead]” corresponding to Corvino’s “here.”

thorough (2733) KERNAN (1962 [156n]): “through.”

borne (2733) KERNAN (1962 [223]) adds: “the joke also involves the ‘horn-book,’ the Eliz. Primer from which the schoolboy learned his letters. These books were single printed sheets covered with thin, transparent horn to preserve them. The letters were thus read ‘through the horn.’ It should be noted that in this scene the animal imagery present throughout the play is greatly intensified. Not only is Corvino reduced to an ox by his own efforts but all the characters are brought down by the language and lies of the fools to the level of ‘jennet’ or ‘swine, goat, wolf’?;” rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [626]), HUTSON (1998 [493]).

perfect (2734) KERNAN (1962 [156n]): “complete.”

SD (2734) KERNAN (1962 [156]) adds the marginal SD “[Mosca and Corvino whisper.]” to Mosca’s “Excellent, Sir”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [79]), with the SD “[Aside to Corvino]” between Mosca’s SP and his line.

harme (2735) F (503) reads “hame.”

SD (2735) GIFFORD (1816 [3:285]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside to Mosca.” to Corvino’s “There is no harme in this, now, is there?;” rpt. ADAMS (1979 [70]), HARP (2001 [80]). DONALDSON (1985 [79]): “[To Mosca].”
onward (2737)] KERNAN (1962 [156n]): “well along.”
Greater then whore, and woman; a good Christian

May make the doubt.  A v o c . 3. His grieue hath made him frantique.

A v o c . I. Remove him, hence.  A v o c . 2. Looke to the woman.  C o r v . Rare!
Prettily fain'd! againe!  A v o c . 4. Stand from about her.

A v o c . I. Give her the ayre.  A v o c . 3. What can you say?

M o s . My wound

(May't please your wifdomes) speakes for mee, receiu'd

In ayde of my good Patron, when he miff

His fought for father, when that well-taught dame

Had her Qu: given her, to crie out a rape.

B o n . O, Moft lay'd impudence!  F a t h e r s .  A v o c . 3. Sir, be silent,

You had your hearing free, so mulit they theirs.

if there be a hell / Greater then whore, and woman (2738-39)] Dusinberre (1975 [182]): Corvino's misogyny draws upon contemporary satirical works such as Swetnam's Woman-Hater. "The dramatists could be confident of their audience's alienation from the satirist."

if there be a hell / Greater then whore, and woman; a good Christian / May make the doubt (2738-40)] Adams (1979 [71n]): "if there's any hell worse than being a woman and a whore, Corvino thinks of saying Celia may be headed for it; because he doesn't say flatly that she is so headed, he can claim the virtue of charity, and remain a good Catholic."


make the doubt (2740)] Kernen (1962 [156n]): "question (whether whore, woman, and hell be not equivalent)."

SD (2742-43)] F (1616 [503]) adds the marginal SD "She sownes," which corresponds to 2742-43; rpt. Hutson (1998 [300]) at 2743. Whalley (1756 [2:373]) applied the marginal SD "She sownes," to 2 Avocatore's 'Looke to the woman'; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [79]); Gifford (1816 [3:286]): "[Celia sownes.] Kernen (1962 [156]) inserts the SD "She [Celia] sownes." after 1 Avocatore's "Remove him, hence" (2742); rpt. Adams (1979 [71]), Harp (2001 [80]), with "[Celia sownes]."

SD (2745)] Gifford (1816 [3:285]) applies the marginal SD "[to Mosca.]" to 3 Avocatore's "What can you lay?"; rpt. Kernen (1962 [156]), with same SD between 3 Avocatore's SP and his line; rpt. Adams (1979 [71]), Harp (2001 [80]).

he (2748)] Kernen (1962 [156n]): "i.e. Bonario."

father (2749)] Adams (1979 [71n]): "i.e., Corbaccio"; rpt. Harp (2001 [80n]).

Qu: (2750)] F (1616 [503]) reads 'cue.' H&S (1950 [9:726]): "cf. Disc 2188-90: 'For the consequence of Sentences, you must bee sure, that every clause doe give the Q. one to the other, and be bespoken ere it come.' The etymology of the word, with this abbreviation, has not been satisfactorily explained."

lay'd (2751)] Whalley (1756 [2:373n]): "i.e., plotted, designed, or well contrived; as we now say, The scheme was well laid"; rpt. Gifford (1816 [3:286n]); H&S (1950 [9:726]), who add: "cf. Poet 3.1.153"; Donaldson (1985 [626]). Kernen (1962 [157n]): "carefully planned."

free (2752)] Kernen (1962 [157n]): "without interference."
AVOC. 2. I do begin to doubt th' imposture, here.

AVOC. 4. This woman, has too many moods. VOL. Graue Fathers,

She is a creature, of a most profest,
And prostituted lewdness. CORV. Most impetuous,
Unsatisfied, graue Fathers. VOL. May her faynings
Not take your wildomes: but, this day, she bayted

2760 A stranger, a graue Knight, with her loose eyes,
And more lascivious kisses. This man saw 'hem
Together, on the water, in a Gondola.
MOS. Here is the Lady herselfe, that saw 'hem too,
Without; who, then, had in the open fireetes

2765 Pursued them, but for sauing her Knights honour.

AVOC. 1. Produce that Lady. AVOC. 2. Let her come.

AVOC. 4. These things
They strike, with wonder! AVOC. 3. I am turn'd a stone!

ACT. 4. SCENE. 6.

MOSCA. LADY. AVOCATORI. & C.

Be resolute, Madam. LAD. I, this same is shee.
Out, thou Chameleon harlot; now, thine eyes
Vie teares with the Hyæna: dart thou looke
Vpon my wronged face? I crie your pardons.

2775    I feare, I haue (forgettingly) transgrest
Against the dignity of the Court—    A vot. 2. No, Madame.
L A D.    And beene exorbitant—    A vot. 4. You haue not, Lady.
A vot. 4. These proofes are strong. L A D. Surely, I had no
purpose,

2780    To scandalize your Honors, or my lexes.

thou Chameleon harlot; now, thine eyes / Vie teares with the Hyæna (2772–73)
Kernan (1962 [223]):
“Lady Wouldbe is simply hurling insults, but here again is an excellent instance of J’s ironic use of
imagery.”

Chameleon (2772) Rea (1919 [217]): “The speaker evidently believes that Celia is the same person she
had earlier seen in man’s attire in company with her husband. On the power of the chameleon to change its
color, see Topsell (1608 [676, 674]), who has a long ch. on this ‘fraudulent, ravening, and glutonous
Beast’ as he calls it: ‘Being black, it is not unlike the Crocodile, and being pale, it is like to the Lizard, let
over with black spots like a Leopard. It changeth colour both in the eyes, tail, and whole body, always into
the colour of that which is next it, except red and white, which colours it cannot eafily undertake, fo that it
deceiveth the eyes of the beholders, turning black into green, and green into blew, like a Player, which
putteth off one person, to put on another.’” Kernan (1962 [223]): “The chameleon was considered a
‘fraudulent, ravening, and glutonous beast,’ and was famed then as now for its ability to change color to

Vie teares with the Hyæna (2773)
Rea (1919 [217]): “The lady is probably confused in her literary-
natural history. I can, at any rate, find no example of the hyena weeping crocodile tears; it was, however,
famous for being able to imitate the tones of the human voice. Cf. EastHo 5.4.32–34: ‘Touch. I am deafe
still, I say; I will neither yeeld to the song of the Syren, nor the voice of the Hyæna, the teares of the
out Hyæna; these are thy wonted arts. / And arts of every woman false like thee.’” Kernan (1962 [223])
adds: “it was believed able to imitate the voices of human beings. Thus—like the animals mentioned
earlier, the crocodile with its teeth and the panther with its sweet smells—the images of hyena and
chameleon define the activities of fools and villains in Volp: they are basically ‘ravening and glutonous’
beasts who are able to change color like the chameleon and imitate the voices of men like the hyena.
The most useful book of the period describing the strange natures of the animals as the Elizabethans and their
predecessors understood them is Topsell (1607 [343]),’ which “describes one type of hyena, the
Manticora, who seems to resemble the characters of the play most closely: he has a face like a man, a
trebie row of teeth top and bottom, ‘his wildenesf fuch as can never be tamed, and his appetite is especiably
to the fleth of man.’” Adams (1979 [71n]) adds: “an eater or carrion”; rpt. Harp (2001 [81n]).
Donaldson (1985 [626]) adds: “its semi-human voice, not its tears, were thought to delude.”

SD (2774) Kernan (1962 [158]) applies the marginal SD “[To the Court.]” to Lady Would-be’s “I crie
your pardons.”

means ‘excessive’”; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [626]), Harp (2001 [81n]).

A vot. 4. You haue not, Lady. / A vot. 4. These proofes are strong (2777–78)
Per the faulty speech
prefixes of Q and F (1616 [504]), the 4 Avocatore has been assigned the consecutive lines “You haue not,
Lady,” and “These proofes are strong.” Whalley (1756 [2:374]) and Gifford (1816 [3:287]) reassign the
first line to 2 Avocatore.

These proofes (2778) Kernan (1962 [158n]): “i.e. those offered for Celia and Bonario’s guilt.”

238
AVOC. 3. We do beleeue it. LAD. Surely, you may be-
leeue it.

AVOC. 2. Madame, wee doe. LAD. Indeede, you may; my
breeding

2785 Is not so courfê— AVOC. 4. Wee know it. LAD. To offend
With pertinacy— AVOC. 3. Lady. LAD. Such a pre-
fence;
No, surely. AVOC. I. Wee well thinke it. LAD. You may
thinke it.

2790 AVOC. I. Let her o’recome. What witneses haue you,
To make good your report? BON. Our consciences:
CEL. And heauen, that neuer fayles the innocent.
AVOC. 4. These are no testimonies. BON. Not, in your
Courts,

2795 Where multitude, and clamour, overcomes.

AVOC. I. Nay, then you do waxe infolent. VOLT. Here,
here,
The testimony comes, that will conuince,
And put to vttter dumbneffe, their bold tongues.
See here, graue Fathers, here's the Rauisher,
The Rider on mens wiues, the great Impostor,
The grand Voluptuary: Do you not thinke,
These limbes should affect Venery? or these eyes
Couet a concubine? 'Pray you, marke these hands,
Are they not fit to stroke a Ladies frets?
Perhaps, he doth difemble. B O N. So he do's.
V O L T. Would you haue 'him tortur'd? B O N. I would haue him
prou'd.
V O L T. Best trie him, then, with goades, or burning Irons;

Put him to the strappado; I haue heard,
The Rack hath cur'd the gout; faith, give it him,
And helpe him of a malady, bee courteous:
Ille vndertake, before these honor'd Fathers,
He shall haue, yet, as many left diseases,

As she has knowne adulterers, or thou flirmpets.
O, my most equall Hearers, if these deedses,
Acts, of this bold, and most exorbitant siraine,
May pafle with suffrancce; what one Citizen,
But owes the forfeit of his life, yea fame,

To him that dares traduce him? Which of you
Are fash, my honord Fathers? I would aske
(With leave of your graue Father-hoods) if their plot
Haue any face, or colour like to truth?
Or if, vnto the dulleft nostrill, here,

It smell not ranke, and most abhorred flaander?
I craue your care of this good Gentleman;
Whole life is much indanger'd, by their fable;
And, as for them, I will conclude with this,

---

great torments that his ioynts are for the time loofed and pulled asunder; besides such abundance of blood is gathered into his hands and face, that for the time he is in the torture, his face and hands doe looke as red as fire””; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:726]). Generally glossed, per Kernan (1962 [160n]), as “a form of torture in which the victim is hoisted up by his arms, which are first tied behind him, and then dropped”; rpt. Adams (1979 [72n]), Donaldson (1985 [626]), Hutson (1998 [497]), Harp (2001 [82n]).


helpe (2815) Donaldson (1985 [626]): “relieve.”
of (2817) Kernan (1962 [160n]): “be rid of.”
left (2814) Donaldson (1985 [626]): “cured.”
equall (2816) Donaldson (1985 [626]): “just.”
exorbitant siraine (2817) Kernan (1962 [160n]): “disordered type.”
pafle with suffrancce (2818) Kernan (1962 [160n]): “be permitted and condoned.”
face, or colour (2823) Kernan (1962 [160n]): “appearance or seeming.” Donaldson (1985 [626]): “appearance.”
fmell not ranke, and most abhorred flaander (2825) Rea (1919 [218]): “Cf. Ham 3.3.36: ‘O my offence is rank, it smells to heaven.’”
fable (2827) Kernan (1962 [160n]): “falsehood.”
That vicious persons when they are hot; and fleh'd
damn'd deedes are done with greate confidence.

AVOC.1. Take 'hem to custody, and seuer them.

AVOC.2. Tis pitty, two such prodigies should liue.
VOLT. Wee thanke your Father-hoods. How like you it? MOS.

Rare.

I'd ha' your tongue, Sir, tipt with gold, for this;

2845 I'd ha' you be the heyre to the whole Citty;
The earth I'd haue want men, ere you want liuing:
They're bound t' erect your Statue, in St' Markes.

Signior Corvino, I would haue you goe,
And shew your selfe, that you haue conquer'd. CORV. Yes.

2850 MOS. It was much better, that you should professe
Your selfe a cuckold, thus; then that the other
Should haue beene prou'd. CORV. Nay, I confir'd that;
Now it is her fault: MOS. Then, it had beene yours.

CORV. True, I do doubt this Advocate, still. MOS. I'faith,

2855 You need not, I dare ease you of that care.

CORV. I tru't thee, Moffa. MOS. As your, owne foule, Sir.

CORB. Moffa.

MOS. Now for your businesse, Sir. CORB. How? ha' you
busineses?

2860 MOS. Yes, yours, Sir. CORB. O, none else? MOS. None else,
not I.

CORB. Be carefull, then. MOS. Reft you, with both your eies,
Sir.

CORB. Dispatch it, MOS. Instantly. CORB. And looke, that

all,

What-euer, bee put in, iewells, plate, moneyes,

House-holdstuffle, bedding, curtines. MOS. Curtine-rings, Sir.

Onely, the Advocates fee muft be deducted.

CORB. Ile pay him, now: you'll be too prodigall.

MOS. Sir. I muft tender it. CORB. Two CgccZiine; is well?

MOS. No, Sir. CORB. 'Tis too much. MOS. He talk'd a great while,

You muft consider that, Sir. CORB. Well, there's three—

MOS. Ile giue it him. CORB. Doe fo, and there's for thee.

MOS. Bountiffull bones! What horndeGrange offence

Did he commit 'gainst nature, in his youth,
Worthy this age? You see, Sir, how I work
Vnto your ends; take you no notice. V O L T. No,
Ile leaue you. M o s. All, is yours; the Deuill, and all,
Good Advocate. Madame, I'le bring you home.
L A D. No, Ile go fee your Patron. M o s. That you shal not:
Ile tell you, why. My purpofe is, to vrge
My Patron to reforme his Will; and, for
The zeale, you, haue shew'n to day, whereas before
You were but third, or fourth, you shal be now
Put in the firft; which would appeare as beg'd,
If you be prelenL Therefore— L A D. You shal fway mee.

SD (2875-77) Gifford (1816 [3:291]) applies the SD “[Aside.]” to Mosca’s speech “Bountifull bones! What horrid strange offence / Did he commit ‘gainst nature, in his youth, / Worthy this age?”

What horrid strange offence / Did he commit ‘gainst nature, in his youth, / Worthy this age? (2875-77) Upton (1749 [52]): “From Juvenal, Sat 10.254–55: ‘... the King of Pylos <i.e., Nestor> was an example of long life second only to the crow.... But marks ... how he bewails the decrees of fate and his too-long thread of life, when he beholds the beard of the brave Antilochus in the flames, and asks of every friend ... what crime he has committed to deserve such length of days’ (Ramsay, trans. 211–13)).” Gifford (1816 [3:291]) adds: “There are other imitations of Juvenal in this scene, which, like this, are all sufficiently obvious.”

Worthy this age (2877) Kernan (1962 [163n]): “to have justified his horrible state in old age.”

SD (2877–78) Gifford (1816 [3:291]) inserts the SD “[to Volt.” between Mosca’s “You see, Sir” and his “how I work”; rpt. Kernan (1962 [163]), Adams (1979 [74]), Donaldson (1985 [83]), Adams (1979 [84]), each with the SD inserted prior to Mosca’s “You see, Sir....”

take you no notice (2878) Donaldson (1985 [626]): “as Lady Would-be approaches.”


the Deuill, and all (2879) H&S (1950 [9:727]) cite the OED: “the whole confounded lot; all or everything bad”; and add: “the phrase, here addressed to Voltore, is used with reference to lawyers in Nashe (1592 [1:162]): ‘they say the Lawyers haue the Deuill and all,’ and Dekker, <i>tests to Make You Merie</i> (1607 [B.3]): ‘And what newes (quoth he) at Westminster; Mary sayes the other Lawyers get the DiueAl and aA; What an Asse repAed tM  Citizen is the diueAl: i f  I  were as he I  would get some of them.’”

SD 2880) Kernan (1962 [163]) inserts the SD “[To Lady Wouldbe.]” prior to Mosca’s “Madame, I’le bring you home.”

That you shal not (2881) Rea (1919 [218]): “Mosca speaks out in sudden alarm, and then is compelled to explain in the next lines with one of his ready falsehoods.”

reforme his Will (2883) Adams (1979 [74n]): “rewrite his testament, though always with the other connotation of improving his disposition”; rpt. Harp (2001 [84n]).

reforme (2883) Kernan (1962 [163n]): “rewrite.”

you’haue (2884) A faint apostrophe appears above the space between “you” and “haue.”

fway (2887) Kernan (1962 [163n]): “persuade.”

Well, I am here; and all this brunt is past:

I nere was in dislike with my disguife,

Till this fled moment; here, 'twas good, in priuate,

But, in your publike, Cauce, whil'st I breathe.

'Fore God, my left legge 'gan to haue the crampe;

And I apprended, straight, some power had stooke mee

With a dead Palsey: Well, I must be merry,

And shake it off. A many of these feares

2895


fled (2892) ADAMS (1979 [75n]): "moment just past"; rpt. HARP (2001 [85n]).

cauce (2893) CORRIGAN (1961 [83n]): "beware" (Lat.); rpt. KERNAN (1962 [164n]), HUTSON (1998 [490]).

my left legge 'gan to haue the crampe; / And I apprended, straight, some power had stooke mee / With a dead Palsey (2894-96) UPTON (1749 [52-53]) notes that "Volpone, just escaped from the utmost peril ... whilst he was in court and apprehensive of punishment, ... is alluding to a piece of ancient superstition, that all sudden conceptions of mind, and sudden pains of the body, such as crampes, palpitations of the heart, &c. were ominous, and presages of evil. Hence we may explain a passage in Plautus, Miles Gloriosus: 'SCHEL, timeo quod rerum gesserim hic, itsa dorsus to tu prurit.' And in his Bacchides 1193, Nicobulus says, 'Caput prurit, perii!' ['My head does itch!'] (Nixon, trans., 1:453); rpt. WHALLEY (1756 [2:378n]); repr. GIFFORD (1816 [3:292n]), who adds: "This note, the whole of which Whalley took from Upton, is carefully retained in his corrected copy. That two men of learning (for Whalley was also a scholar) should fall into such absurdities, is truly pitiable. Volpone, by lying so long immovable in his constrained situation, naturally begins to feel the cramp: this, his fears, magnified by his guilt, represent as the commencement of a divine punishment. Such is the plain sense of the passage." REA (1919 [219]): "Upton thinks this an allusion to the 'piece of ancient superstition ... evil.' This Gifford ridicules: 'Volpone ... plain sense of this passage.' HOLT (1905) compares Juvenal, Sat 13:229-32: 'praetera lateris vigili febre dolorem / si coepere pati, missum ad sua corpora morbura / infestuo credunt a numine, saxa deorum / haec et tella putant'" ['If, again, they begin to suffer from pains in the side, with a fever that robs them of their sleep, they believe that the sickness has been inflicted on them by the offended Deity'] (Ramsay, trans., 263.)."

apprended (2895) H&S (1950 [9:727]): F (1616 [506]) reads "apprehended." H&S (1950 [9:727]): "copying the Lat. 'prendo,' the syncopated form of 'prehendo.' So it would scan here and in 3.8.17 [2225] and 4.3.7 [2541], but the word has three syllables in 4.2.21 [2477], 5.4.40 [3208]." KERNAN (1962 [164n]): "felt." ADAMS (1979 [75n]), whose text reads "apprehended," notes that "the word is printed and pronounced 'apprended.'" HARP (2001 [85n]) reads "appre'nded," with the gloss: "apprehended immediately."

straight (2895) KERNAN (1962 [164n]): "at once."
Would put mee into some villainous disease;
Should they come thick vpon mee: Ile preuent 'hem.

Glue mee a boule of lusty wine, to fright
This humor from my heart; (Hum, hum, hum)
'Tis almost gone, already: I shall conquer.
Any devise, now, of rare, ingenious knauery,
That would possesse mee with a violent laughter,

This heate is life; 'tis blood, by this time: Mosca!

ACT. 5. SCENE.2.

MOSCA. VOLPONE. NANO.
CASTRONE.

How now, Sir? do's the day looke cleare againe?
Are we recouerd? and wrought out of error,

Any devise, now, of rare, ingenious knauery, / That would possesse mee with a violent laughter, / Would make mee vp, againe: So, fo, fo, fo.

This heate is life; 'tis blood, by this time: Mosca!
Into our way? to see our path, before vs?
Is our trade free, once more? V O L P. Exquisite Mosca!
M O S. Was it not carry’d learnedly? V O L P. And stoutly.

Good wits are greatest in extremities.
M O S. It were a folly, beyond thought, to trust
Any grand act vnto a cowardly spirit:
You are not taken with it, enough, mee thinkes?
V O L P. O, more, then if I had enjoy’d the wench:

The pleasure of all wóman-kind’s not like it.
M O S. Why, now you speake, Sir. We must, here, be fixt;
Here, we must rest; this is our maister-peice;
We cannot thinke, to goe beyond this. V O L P. True.
Thou’ hast playd thy prise, my precious Mosca. M O S. Nay Sir,

To gull the Court— V O L P. And, quite diuert the torrent,
Vpon the innocent. M O S. Yes, and to make
So rare a Musique, out of Discordes— V O L P. Right.

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extremities (2915) KERNAN (1962 [165n]): “dangerous situations.”
It were a folly, beyond thought, to trust / Any grand act vnto a cowardly spirit (2916-17) HOLT (1905b [168-69]): cf. Plautus, Pseudolus 576: ‘nam ea stultitiast, facinus magnum timido cordi credere’ [“Ah, the folly of entrusting a weighty venture to a weakling heart!” (Nixon, trans., 4:209)]. REA (1919 [219]) adds: “The whole tone of this speech in Pseudolus is very similar to that of the present passage.”

beyond thought (2916) KERNAN (1962 [165n]): “unthinkable.”
taken with it (2918) ADAMS (1979 [75n]): “pleased, satisfied with it”; rpt. HARP (2001 [86n]).
Here, we must rest; this is our maister-peice; / We cannot thinke, to goe beyond this (2922-23) COOK (1962 [43]): “The speech has a double value. As from the dramatist to the audience it makes a true estimate of the situation, so that we cannot miss the rogues’ error; as an utterance by Mosca, it reveals how he sees and approves what is prident, while submitting to what is rash. [...] Mosca, in fact, has no hand in the fatal and superficue piece of planning; he seizes the chance to build on Volpone’s mistake; he does not engineer the opportunity. Nevertheless his vision too is evidently found wanting: when Mosca estimates Volpone’s reactions by his own standards, he disastrously underestimates his master.”

playd A y prise (2924) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3.509]): “This expression is of constant occurrence. The Fencer in PanAnn says, ‘Room for one that hath played prizes at all the games of Greece in his time.’ It did not necessarily imply that the person spoke of was the conqueror, but only that he played an honourable part in an arduous public contest. In the SDs of Richard Brome, Antipodes (1640), 4.3: ‘Enter Buffe woman, her head and face bleeding, and many women as from a Prize.’ Here it means much the same as our prize-fight”; repr. REA (1919 [219]). H&S (1950 [9:727]): cf. CynRev 5.3.9.

prise (2924) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “part.”
gull (2925) KERNAN (1962 [165n]): “trick.”
torrent (2925) KERNAN (1962 [165n]): “i.e. the law.”
Discordes (2927) KERNAN (1962 [165n]): “referring to the various fools each striving to be sole heir.”
That, yet, to mee’s the strangest! how th’hast borne it!
That these (being so diuided ’mongst them selues)
Should not sent some-what, or in mee, or thee,
Or doubt their owne side. M o s. True. They will not see’t;
Too much light blinds ’hem, I thinke: each of’hem
Is so possest, and stuft with his owne hopes,
That any thing, vnto the contrary,

2930 Neuer so true, or neuer fo apparent,
Neuer fo palpable, they will refit it—
V O L P. Like a temptation of the Deuill. M o s. Right Sir.

Merchants may talke of trade, and your great Signiors
Of land, that yeelds well; but if Italy

2940 Haue any glebe, more fruitfull, then these fellowes,
I am deceiu’d. Did not your Advocate rare?

V O L P. O, my most honor’d Fathers, my graue Fathers,

Vnder correctfon q/’yonr Father-hoods,

What face of truth is, here? If these strange deedes
May passe, most honour’d Fathers— I had much a doe
To forbear laughing. M O S . ’T seem’d to mee, you sweate,
Sir.
V O L P . In truth, I did a little. M O S . But confesse, Sir,
Were you not daunted? V O L P . In good faith, I was
A little in a mist; but not detected:
Neuer, but still my selfe. M O S . I thinke it, Sir.
Now (so truth helpe mee) I must needes say this, Sir,
And, out of conscience; for your Advocate:
He’ has taken paynes, in faith, Sir, and deserre’d,
In my poore judgement, I speake it, vnder fauour,
Not to contrary you, Sir, very richly—
Well— to be cosend. V O L P . ’Troth, and I thinke so too,
By that I heard him, in the latter ende.
M O S . O, but before, Sir; had you heard him, first,
Draw it to certaine heads, then aggreguate,
Then use his vehement figures— I look’d stil,

O, my most honor’d Fathers, my grave Fathers, / Vnder correction of your Father-hoods, / What face of truth is, here? If these strange deedes / May passe, most honour’d Fathers— (2942–45) REA (1919 [220]): “Without much doubt this is suggested by Erasmus, MorEnc 54: ‘Hic demum Theologicum attollunt supercilium, Doctores solennes, Doctores subtiles, Doctores subtilissimos, Doctores seraphicos, Doctores sanctos, Doctores irrefragabiles, magnifica nomina auiibus mculcantes’B” [“At this point there really is a display of theological arrogance as they bombard the ears of their listeners with such high-sounding titles as Worthly Doctors, Subtle or Most Subtle Doctors, Seraphic Doctors, Cherubic Doctors. Holy Doctors and and Incontrovertible Doctors” (Radice, trans. 171)].
in a mist (2950)) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “lost, uncertain.”
innder fauour (2955)) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): “dimness of eyesight caused by bodily disorders.”
thinke (2951)) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): “believe.”
vnder fauour (2955)) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): “with permission.”
contrary (2956)) BAMBOROUGH (1963 [104n]): “contradict.”
cosend (2957)) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): “bilked.” BAMBOROUGH (1963 [104n]): “tricked.”
By that I heard him, in the latter ende (2958) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): “[i.e.] to judge by the latter part of his speech. Volpone was brought in halfway through Voltore’s performance.”
Draw it to certaine heads (2960) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): “gather his material into topics.”
heads (2960) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “main points.”

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When he would shift a shirt; and, doing this
Out of pure loue, no hope of gaine— V O L P . 'Tis right.
I cannot answer him, Mosca, as I would,
Not yet; but, for thy sake, at thy intreaty,
I will beginne, even now, to vex 'hem all:
V O L P . Shall we have a lig, now? M O S . What you please, Sir.

V O L P . Goe,
Stright, give out, about the streetes, you two,
That I am dead; doe it, with constancy,
Sadly, do you heare? impute it to the griefe

I look'd stil, / When he would shift a shirt (2961-62) WHALLEY (1756 [2:381n]): "Thro' the violence of action, accompanying his eloquence. The modern Italian preachers are known to use great vehemence of gesture in their declamatory harangues; and perhaps it may be equally so with the advocates at the bar. Nor was it otherwise with the advocates of old: the death of the great orator Hortensius, was occasioned by a cold he got, after pleading with his usual energy and warmth in behalf of a client." GIFFORD (1816 [3:295n]) adds: "Could Whalley have heard the Neapolitan 'advocates' of the present day plead the cause of an ass-driver, or a basket-woman, where the value of the whole matter in dispute (grapes or apples) frequently falls short of three-pence, he would have found his conjecture amply verified. The fees which stimulate the supernatural exertions of these 'poor rags' of the law, are not unworthy of the magnificent questions agitated. The stecus petasunculus et vas Pelamidum [Juvenal, Sat 7.119-20: "a dried-up ham and a jar of sprats" (Ramsay, trans., 147)], which, in Juvenal's days, rewarded the toil and skill of their learned predecessors, are now seldom heard of. The joint labours of the whole fraternity would scarcely be estimated at the price of the humblest of such dainties." KERNAN (1962 [167n]): "so violent were the actions Voltoire used to accompany his speech that Mosca humorously compares him to a man trying to change a shirt; or perhaps he means that Voltoire worked up such a sweat that he needed to change his shirt."

answer (2964) KERNAN (1962 [167n]): "repay"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [626]).

lig (2969) GIFFORD (1816 [3:296n]): "A piece of low humour, a farce; such as that which he immediately proposes"; repr. REA (1919 [220]), SChELLING (1910 [1:633]); "merry ballad or tune; a fanciful dialogue or light comic act introduced at the end or during an interlude of a play." KERNAN (1962 [168n]): "literally a dance, but a trick is meant." KERNAN (1962 [224]): "Jigs were stock-in-trade of the low comedians in the Eliz. theater, where performances usually ended with a jig." DONALDSON (1985 [626]): "piece of sport." Cf. n. 1971.

Stright (2971) KIGHTLEY (1868 [603]), for the sake of metrical regularity, suggests inserting "And" prior to "Stright." KERNAN (1962 [168n]): "at once."

with constancy (2972) KERNAN (1962 [168n]): "firmly, i.e. seriously.
Sadly (2973) GIFFORD (1816 [3:296n]): "Not sorrowfully; but with a confirmed sense and serious countenance." In his notes to Poet 4.1.2, GIFFORD (1816 [2:465n]) glosses "in sadness" as "in seriousness
I shall have, instantly, my Vulture, Crow, Raven, come flying hither (on the newes)
To peck for carrion, my shee-Wolfe, and all,
Greedy, and full of expectation ——

And then, to have it rauish'd from their mouths?

'*Tis true, I will ha' thee put on a gowne,
And take vpon thee, as thou were mine heire;
Shew 'hem a Will; Open that chest, and reach
Forth one of those, that has the Blankes. Ile straight

Put in thy name. It will be rare. Sir. When they e'ene gape, and finde themselves deluded,
Yes. And, thou vse them skiruily. Dispatch,
Get on thy gowne. But, what, Sir, if they aske
After the body?

Ile say, it stunke. Sir; and was fain t' haue it
Coffin'd vp instantly, and sent away.

Any thing, what thou wilt. Hold, heres my Will.
Get thee a cap, a count-booke, pen and inke,

or earnest. Sad is used by all our old writers for grave, sober, staid, also for dark-coloured, &c. Thus Stow, in Izaak Walton, The Lives, says of Fitz-William, the Recorder, the great and good Bishop Sanderson, 'About the time of printing the excellent preface to his Sermons (in Cromwell's usurpation) I met him accidentally in London, in sad-coloured cloathes, and, God knows, far from being costly.' SCHELLING (1910 [1:638]): "seriously, with gravity." BAMBOOROUGH (1963 [105n]): "soberly.

SD (2974) GIFFORD (1816 [3:296]) applies the marginal SD "Exeunt Cast. and Nano" to Volpone's "impute it to the griefe / Of this late slander"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [168]), ADAMS (1979 [77]), DONALDON (1985 [86]), HUTSON (1998 [308]), HARP (2001 [87]).

Vulture, Crow, / Raven (2887–88) WHALLEY (1756 [2:382n]): "i.e., Voltore, Corvino, Corbaccio."

take vpon thee, as (2982) KERNAN (1962 [168n]): "assume such manners and airs." DONALDON (1985 [626]): "act as if."

SD (2985) GIFFORD (1816 [3:296]) inserts the marginal SD “[Gives him a paper.” after Mosca’s “It will be rare, Sir”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [77]), HARP (2001 [88]).

When they e'ene gape, and finde themselves deluded (2986) REA (1919 [220]): “Another reference to Horace, Sat 2.5, and the fable of the fox and the crow.” See note on TLN 580–82 above.

Dispatch (2987)) KERNAN (1962 [169n]): "hurry."

SD (2988) GIFFORD (1816 [3:297]) inserts the SD “[putting on a gown.]” between Mosca's speech prefix and his line, “But, what, Sir, if they aske / After the body?”

was fain (2990) KERNAN (1962 [169n]): “it was necessary.”

Hold (2992) See n. 457.
Papers afore thee; sit, as thou were taking

2995 An inuentory of parcels: Ile get vp,

Behind the curtine, on a stoole, and hearken;

Sometime, peepe ouer; see, how they do looke;

With what degrees, their bloud doth leau their faces;

O, 'twill afford me a rare meale of laughter.

3000 MOS. Your Advocate will turne starke dull, vpon it.

VOLP. It will take of his Oratories edge.

MOS But your Clarissimo, old round-backe, hee

Will crumpe you, like a hog-louse, with the touch.

VOLP. And what Coruino? MOS. O, Sir, looke for him,

3005 To morrow morning, with a rope, and a dagger,

To visite all the streetes; he must runne madd.

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parcles (2995) KERNAN (1962 [169n]): “parts (of his possessions).” DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “items”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [495]).

Ile get vp, / Behind the curtine, on a stoole, and hearken; / Sometime, peepe ouer (2995–97) REA (1919 [220]): “Probably at the rear of the stage, behind the curtain shutting off the inner stage. The SD in the following scene describes Volpone as peeping ‘from behind a traverse.’” KERNAN (1962 [224–25]): “In 5.3 J has the SD ‘Volpone peeps from behind a traverse’ [see n. 3039–40]. Either he has retreated into an inner stage across which a curtain is drawn, or a curtain is placed on a wire across part of the main stage. A ‘traverse’ may be, however, a movable screen of some variety. Whatever the arrangement, the ‘curtain’ is probably the same one used to cover the bed ordinarily, and the effect is once again to create a stage on a stage, a theater within a theater.”

peepe (2997) SCHELLING (1910 [1:636]): “speak in a small or shrill voice.”

SD (3000) GIFFORD (1816 [3:297]) inserts the SD “putting on a cap, and setting out the table, &c.” between Mosca’s SP and his line, “Your Advocate will turne starke dull, vpon it”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [78]), HARP (2001 [88]).

starke dull (3000) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “utterly numbed (but Volpone plays on ‘dull’ = blunt).”

MOS (3002) The abbreviated SP for Mosca here lacks its period; F (1616 [509]) reads “Mos.”


old round-backe (3002) Reference to the stooped Corbaccio; rt. CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:509]), KERNAN (1962 [169n]), DONALDSON (1985 [626]).

crumpe you, like a hog-louse, with the touch (3003) REA (1919 [220]): “cf. SilWom 2.4.141–42: ‘I would roule my selfe vp for this day, intruth, they should not vnwinde me’”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:727]).

crumpe you (3003) ADAMS (1979 [78n]): “curl up on you”; rpt. HARP (2001 [88n]).


you (3003) H&S (1950 [9:727]): “you is ethic dative.”

like a hog-louse, with the touch (3003) ADAMS (1979 [78n]): “there is a species of wood louse (the names are interchangeable) which curls up in a ball when touched”; rpt. HARP (2001 [88n]).
My Lady too, that came into the Court,
To beare false wimesse, for your Worship. V.O.L.P. Yes,

And kist mee 'fore the Fathers; when my face
Flow'd all with oyles. M.O.S. And sweate-- Sir. Why, your gold
Is such another med'cine, it dries vp
All those offensive sauors! It transforms
The most deformed, and restores 'hem louely,
As't were the strange poëtical Girdle. I.O.V.E

Could not inuent, t' himselfe, a shroud more subtle,
To passe Acrisius guardes. It is the thing
Makes all the world her grace, her youth, her beauty.

with a rope, and a dagger, / To visite all the streetes (3005–6)] Gifford (1816 [3:297]) reads “with a rope and dagger”; Cunningham (1875 [3:509]) notes this error or alteration. Kernan (1962 [225]): “Carrying these props was probably a standard symbol of extravagant madness on the Eliz. stage. See SpanTrag 4.4, where Hieronimo runs mad. J had once played Hieronimo’s part. See also FQ 1.9.29, and Skelton, Magnificence 2312ff.” Adams (1979 [78n]): “i.e., looking for a place to commit suicide”; rpt. Harp (2001 [88n]). Donaldson (1985 [626]): “stock properties of the desperate or suicidal: e.g., Hieronimo, SpanTrag 3.12.”

kist mee 'fore the Fathers (3009)] Donaldson (1985 [626]): “possibly (with greatest comic effect) at [2805].”

And sweate-- (3010)] Kernan (1962 [170n]): “Mosca will not allow Volpone to forget that he was nervous at the trial.”

your gold / Is such another med'cine, it dries vp / All those offensive sauors! It transforms / The most deformed, and restores 'hem louely, / As't were the strange poëtical Girdle (3010–14)] Upton (1749 [53]): “This is literally from Lucian, Dream 14,” for which he quotes the Gr. text and Lat. trans: “You see, don’t you, what blessings gold is able to bestow, when it transforms ugly people and renders them lovely, like the girdle in poetry” (Harmon, trans., 2.201), adding that “Homer’s description of Venus’ girdle [Iliad 14.214ff.] is imitated by Tasso, Gierusalemme Liberata 16.25. Spenser alludes to it (FQ 4.5.6).” H&S (1950 [9:727]) add: “cf. Horace, Odes 3.16.1–8.”

Girdle (3014 + SD)] F (1616 [509]) adds the non-theatrical marginal note “Ceftus.” [Lat. “girdle”], which corresponds to 3014; rpt. Hutson (1998 [309]). Cunningham (1875 [3:509]) notes: “One of the Cupids in ChaffTilt 50–51 asks, ‘was not the girdle about her, he was to vntie, my mothers? wherein all the joyes and delights of loue, were woven.’” Rea (1919 [220–21]): “Upton remarks that this is litely from Lucian’s Dream,... j himself has a n. on this girdle, on the following lines of Heh 47: ‘this that beauteous CESTON is / Of lowers many-colom’d blisse.’ The n. reads: ‘Venus girdle, mentioned by Homer [Iliad 14:214–17] which was fain’d to be variously wrought with the needle, and in it wouen Loue, Desire, Softnesse, Parlece, Gracefulness, Perswasion, and all the Powers of Venus’”; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:727–28]). Generally glossed, after Corrigan (1961 [87n]), as “J’s marginal note [refers to] Venus’ girdle which had the power of exciting love”; ref. Kernan (1962 [225]), Adams (1979 [78n]), Harp (2001 [89n]). Parker (1999 [253n]) regards J’s note in Volp as a “gloss”

medicine (3011)] Donaldson (1985 [626]): “playing on the fact that gold was indeed used medicinally.”

IOVE / Could not inuent, t' himselfe, a shroud more subtle, / To passe Acrisius guardes (3014–16)] Gifford (1816 [3:298n]): “allusion ... to the well-known fable of Danië, the daughter of Acrisius.” Rea (1919 [221]): “This also is from Lucian, Dream 13: ‘Quin et ipse deorum omnium hominumque pater, ille Saturno Rheaque progenitus, quum Argolicam illam puellam adamaret: ubi nihil inveniret amabilius in quod sese transformatet, neque quo Acrisii custodias posset corrumpere: audisti videlicet, ut aurum sit

254

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V O L P . I think, she loves me. M O S . Who? the Lady, Sir?

3020

Hearke,
There's forme, already. V O L P . Looke. M O S . It is the V ul-

ture:
Hee has the quickest fent. V O L P . Ille to my place,
Thou, to thy posture, M O S . I am set. V O L P . But, Mosca,

3025

Play the Artificer now, torture 'hem, rarely.

A C T . 5 . S C E N E . 3 .

C O R V I N O . L A D Y .
V O L P O N E .

factus' ["(MICYLLUS. ... it is of little moment that you, the son of a Panthous, honoured gold,) but what of
the father of gods and men, the son of Cronus and Rhea? When he was in love with that slip of a girl in
Argos, not having anything more attractive to change himself into nor any other means of corrupting the
sentries of Acrisius, he turned into gold, as you, of course, have heard (and came down through the roof to
visit his beloved)" (Harmon, trans., 2:197-99)]. Horace adopts this same cynical interpretation of the
meaning of the shower of gold into which Jupiter transformed himself in order to visit Danae, daughter of
Acrisius." Generally glossed, per CORRIGAN (1961 [87n]), as "Danae's father, who shut her in a bronze
house open only at the top. Zeus obtained entrance in the form of a golden shower"; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:728]),
HARP (2001 [89n]).

shroud (3015) BAMBOROUGH (1963 [106n]): "disguise."

jealous of (3019) DONALDSON (1985 [626]): "lustful for."
SD (3019) GIFFORD (1816 [3:298]) applies the marginal SD "[Knocking within." to Volpone's "Do'st thou
say so?"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [78]), HARP (2001 [89]), KERNAN (1962 [170]); "[Knocking without."]
SD (3021) KERNAN (1962 [170]) inserts the SD "[Peering out.]" between Mosca's SP and his "It is the V ul-
ture."

my place (3023) BAMBOROUGH (1963 [107n]): "i.e., behind the curtain."
SD (3023-24) GIFFORD (1816 [3:298]) applies the marginal SD "[Goes behind the curtain." to Volpone's
"Ille to my place, / Thou, to thy posture"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [78]), HARP (2001 [89]).

posture (3024) KERNAN (1962 [170n]): "pretense, act."
Artificer (3025) KERNAN (1962 [170n]): "player(?), maker of schemes." BAMBOROUGH (1963 [107n]):
"artist." DONALDSON (1985 [626]): "(i) contriver; (ii) rogue."
SD (3025) DONALDSON (1985 [88]) applies the marginal SD "[He retires]" to Volpone's "... torture 'hem,
rarely."
SD (3026-29) GIFFORD (1816 [3:298]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation
with the SD "Enter Volto:re"; rpt. at 5.3 by KERNAN (1962 [171]), ADAMS (1979 [78]), DONALDSON

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How now, my Mosca? Mos. Turkie Carpets, nine—

VOLT. Taking an inventory? that is well.

Mos. Two Sutes of bedding, Tissee— VOLT. Where's the Will?

Let me read that, the while. CORB. So, set me downe:

And, get you home. VOLT. Is he come, now, to trouble vs?

Mos. Of Cloth of gold, two more— CORB. Is it done, Mosca?

Mos. Of seuerall vellets, eight— VOLT. I like his care.

CORB. Dost thou not heare? CORV. Ha? is th' houre come,

Mosca?

VOLP. I, now, they muster. CORV. What do's the Advocate,

SD (3030) GIFFORD (1816 [3:298]) inserts the SD "[writing:]" between Mosca's SP and his "Turkie Carpets, nine—"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [171]), ADAMS (1979 [78]), HARP (2001 [89]).

Turkie Carpets (3030) REA (1919 [221]), per HOLT (1905): "When carpets were first introduced, they were used to cover tables, and we find as late as 1736, in Nathan Bailey, Dictionarium Britannicum (1736), a carpet defined as a table cover. In early times all the carpets used in Europe were imported from the East, and the trade was largely in the hands of the Italian cities"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [171n]), HUTSON (1998 [490]). ADAMS (1979 [78n]): "Turkey carpets (not necessarily from Turkey) were particularly thick and luxurious"; rpt. HARP (2001 [89n]).

Sutes of bedding (3032) REA (1919 [221]) reproduces Holt's note: "In the latter part of the 16th c. came a rage for heavy stuffs as covers and hangings—velvets, brocades, and damasks—so that a suite of bedding in the house of an Italian magnifico formed no inconsiderable item."

Sutes (3032) KERNAN (1962 [171n]): "sets."

bedding (3032) KERNAN (1962 [171n]): "covers, hangings."

Tissew (3032) KERNAN (1962 [171n]): "woven gold cloth." BAMBOUGH (1963 [107n]): "rich fabric." ADAMS (1979 [78n]): "cloth described as tissue often had threads of gold or silver interwoven."

the while (3033) KERNAN (1962 [171n]): "during the time (the inventory continues)."

So, set me downe (3033 + SD) GIFFORD (1816 [3:299]) inserts the SD "Enter Servants with CORBACCO in a chair." following Voltore's "Let me read that, the while"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [79]), HARP (2001 [89]).

KERNAN (1962 [171]): "[Enter bearers carrying CORBACCO in a chair]." DONALDSON (1985 [88]): "[CORBACCO is carried in]." HUTSON (1998 [310]): "[ENTER CORBACCO]." REA (1919 [221]) notes that Corbacco's order is "[a]dressed to the bearers of the chair in which Corbacco has come—in spite of the fact that a sedan chair is hardly appropriate for the streets of Venice. From the fact that the bearers are ordered to return home, it would seem that Corbacco is so certain of the situation that he expects to take possession immediately, and remain."

And, (3034) A faint comma appears here after "And"; no corresponding mark appears in F (1616 [510]).

SD (3034) GIFFORD (1816 [3:299]) inserts the marginal SD "[Exit Servants."

改正後のSD (3034) KERNAN (1962 [171]): "separate velvets hangings."

vellets (3036) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:509]): "Velvet is a word in the spelling of which J followed no apparent rule. Here the word is vellet. Elsewhere it is vellicate"; repr. REA (1919 [221]). H&S (1950 [9:728]): "a 16th-c. form of 'velvet.' Cf. CynRev Ind.203." HUTSON (1998 [498]): "velvet hangings."

SD (3037) GIFFORD (1816 [3:299]) inserts the SD "Enter CORVINO." after Corbacco's "Dost thou not heare?"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [171]), ADAMS (1979 [79]), DONALDSON (1985 [88]), HUTSON (1998 [310]). HARP (2001 [89]).

SD (3039–40) F (1616 [510]) adds the marginal SD "Volpone ppees [from behind a] traverfe.," which corresponds approximately to 3039–40; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [310]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:384]) correlates the
Or this Corbaccio? CORB. What do these here? LAD.

Mosca?

Is his thread spunne? MOS. Eight Chests of Linen—VOLP.

O,

My fine Dame would-bee, too! CORV. Mosca, the Will,
That I may shew it these, and rid them hence.

MOS. Six Chests of Diaper, four of Damaske—There.

CORB. Is that the Will? MOS. Downe-Beds, and Boulsters—VOLP. Rare!

Bee busie still. Now, they begin to flutter:
They neuer thinke of me. Looke, see, see, see!
How their swift eies runne ouer the long deed,
Vnto the Name, and to the Legacies,
What is bequeath’d them, there— M O S .  Ten Sutes of Hangings—

V O L P . I, i’ their garters, Mofca. Now, their hopes
Are at the gaspe. V O L T . Mofca the heire! C O R B . What’s that?

V O L P . My Advocate is dumbe, Looke to my Merchant,
Hee has heard of some strange storme, a ship is lost:
He faintes My Lady will swoone. Old Glazen-eies,
He hath not reach’d his despaire, yet. C O R B . All these
Are out of hope, I am sure the man. C O R V . But, Mofca—

One

Of Ebony— C O R V . Or, do you but delude mee?
M O S . The other, Mother of Pearle— I am very busie.
Good faith, it is a fortune throwne vpon me —
Item, one Salt of Agat— not my seeking.

Sutes of Hangings (3054–55) ADAMS (1979 [79n]): “sets of tapestries on the walls”; rpt. HARP (2001 [90n]).
Sd (3056) KERNAN (1962 [172]) inserts the Sd “[Aside.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “I, i’ their garters, Mofca…”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [89]).
I’ their garters (3056) REA (1919 [221]): “Holm and Wilkins are both puzzled by this expression. It is, of course, merely a play upon the word hangings of the preceding line: Bid them hang themselves in their garters. Cf. MND 5.1.358–59; Hen4 2.2.43–44.” H&S (1950 [9:728]): “suicide, as in Harington, Orlando Furioso (1591), 10.37: ‘Nor maist thou die in quiet and tranquillitie: But burned might’st thou be, or cut in quarters, / Or druien to hang thy selfe in thine owne garters.’” KERNAN (1962 [172n]): “[i.e.] hang themselves in their own garters, a mocking formula for suicide”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [79n]), HARP (2001 [90n]). DONALDSON (1985 [626]) adds: “a proverbial formula; Tilley (1950), G42.”
Gaspe (3057) KERNAN (1962 [172n]): “last gasp”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [626]).
Sd (3057–58) DONALDSON (1985 [89]) applies the marginal Sd “[Takes the will]” to Corbaccio’s “What’s that?”
Sd (3059) KERNAN (1962 [172]) inserts the Sd “[Aside.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “My Advocate is dumbe…”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [89]).
Glazen-eies (3061) ADAMS (1979 [79n]): “i.e., Corbaccio”; rpt. HARP (2001 [90n]). DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “Corbaccio wears spectacles.” Also rf. 3103, “fowre eies.”
He hath not reached his despaire, yet (3062) REA (1919 [221]): “Corbaccio, with his defective senses, has not yet taken in the import of the situation. See [3103], where he finally realizes it.”
Sd (3063) GIFFORD (1816 [3:300]) applies the marginal Sd “[Takes the Will.”’ to Corbaccio’s “I am sure the man”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [80]), HARP (2001 [90]).
Cabinets (3064) HUTSON (1998 [490]): “repositories.”
L A D. Do you heare, Sir? M O S. A perfum’d Boxe— 'pray you forbear,

You see I am troubled— made of an Onyx— L A D. How!

M O S. To morrow, or next day, I shall be at leasure,

To talke with you all. C O R V. Is this my large hopes issue?

L A D. Sir, I must have a fayrer answere. M O S. Madame?

Mary, and shall: 'pray you, faiiely quit my house.

Nay, raise no tempest with your lookes; but, hearke you:

Remember, what your Ladyship offered mee,

To put you in, an heire; go to, thinke on’t.

And what you said, eene your best Madames did

For maintaynance, and why not you? Inough.

Go home, and vse the poore Sir Poll. Your Knight, well;

For feare I tell some riddles; Go, be melancholique.

V O L P. O, my fine Deuill! C O R V. Mosca, 'pray you a

word.


large (3074)] SCHELLING (1910 [1.638]): “abundant.”

data (3076)] KERNAN (1962 [173n]): “this word has roughly the present-day sense of ‘just’ in ‘just leave the house.’” ADAMS (1979 [80n]): “once and for all”; rpt. HARP (2001 [91n]).

Remember, what your Ladyship offered mee. / To put you in, an heire (3078–79)] REA (1919 [221–22]): “This particular malapropism is not recorded in the play, but is quite in Lady Would-be’s style. Presumably it belonged to the conversation she had with Mosca after the trial, while he was escorting her home; see [2887]. The unfortunate wording into which the lady, as usual, falls, allows Mosca maliciously to interpret you in the next line [3079] as dative instead of accusative.” KERNAN (1962 [173n]): “Lady Wouldbe has obviously offered her favors to Mosca. This fact explains the tone of [2887]. ADAMS (1979 [80n]): “this aspect of Lady Politic J has saved for the present moment.” DONALDSON (1985 [626]): “possibly after [2887].” HARP (2001 [91n]): “Lady Would-be has apparently offered sexual favors to Mosca.”


tell some riddles (3083)] BAMBOROUGH (1963 [109n]): “tell some secrets.”

melancholique (3083)] CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:510]): “Here and in [3100; 3258], I wrote melancholique, which he regarded as the established form of the adjective.”

SD (3083)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:301]) applies the marginal SD “[Exit Lady Would-be.” to Mosca’s “Go, be melancholique”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [173]), ADAMS (1979 [80]), DONALDSON (1985 [90]), HUTSON (1998 [312]), HARP (2001 [91]).

SD (3084)] KERNAN (1962 [173]) inserts the SD “[Aside.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “O, my fine Deuill!”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [90]).

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Mos. Lord, will not you take your dispatch hence, yet?
Me thinkes (of all) you should haue bee th' example.
Why should you stay, here? with what thought? what pro-
mise?
3090 Heare you; do not you know, I know you an asse?
And, that you would; most faine, haue bee a wittoll,
If fortune would haue let you? that you are
A declar'd cuckold, on good termes? This Pearle,
You'll say, was yours? right. This Diamant?

Ill not deny't, but thanke you. Much here, else?
It may be so. Why, thinke that these good workes
May helpe to hide your bad: Ile not betray you,
Although you be but extraordinary,
And haue it onely in title, it sufficeth.

3100 Go home; be melancholique, too: or mad.
Vol. Rare Mosca! how his villany becomes him.
Vol. Certaine, he doth delude all these, for mee.
Corb. Mosca the heire? Vol. O, his four eies haue

dispatch (3086) Kernan (1962 [173n]): “dismissal.”
example (3087) Kernan (1962 [174n]): “i.e. by leaving first show the others the way.”
bee a wittoll (3091) H&S (1950 [9:728]): “connived at your wife’s dishonour.” Kernan (1962 [174n]):
SD (3093–94) Kernan (1962 [174]) applies the two-line marginal SD “[Holding up jewels.]” to Mosca’s
“This Pearle, / You’ll say, was yours? right. This Diamant?”
else (3095) Kernan (1962 [174n]): “otherwise.”
Although you be but extraordinary, / And have it onely in title, it sufficeth (3098–99) Kernan (1962
[174n]): “[i.e.] although you are an unusual cuckold, being one in title but not in fact, this will do for you”; rpt. Adams (1979 [80n]), Donaldson (1985 [627]), Harp (2001 [91n]).
extraordinary (3098) Donaldson (1985 [627]): “supernumerary.”
SD (3100) Gifford (1816 [3:301]) indicates Corvino’s departure with the marginal SD “[Exit Corvino.”,
which follows Mosca’s “Go home; be melancholique, too: or mad”; rpt. Kernan (1962 [174]), Adams
SD (3101) Kernan (1962 [174]) inserts the SD “[Aside.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “Rare Mosca! how
his villany becomes him”; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [90]).
SD (3103) Kernan (1962 [174]) applies the SD “[Still straining to read the will.]” to Corbaccio’s “Mosca
the heire?”
SD (3103) Kernan (1962 [174]) inserts the SD “[Aside.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “O, his four eies
haue | found it”; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [90]).
found it.

3105 CORB. I am cosen'd, cheated, by a Parafite-slaue;  
Harlot, t'hast guld mee. MOS. Yes, Sir. Stop your mouth,  
Or I shall draw the only tooth, is left.  
Are not you he, that filthy couetous wretch,  
With the three legges, that, here, in hope of prey,

3110 Haue, any time this three yeare, snuft about,  
With your most grouling nose; and would haue hir'd  
Mee to the pois'ning of my Patron? Sir?  
Are not you he, that haue, to day, in Court,  
Profess'd the dis-inheriting of your sonne?

3115 Periur'd your selfe? goe home, and die, and stinke;  
If you but croake a sillable, all comes out:  
Away, and call your porters, go, go stinke.

V O L P . Excellent varlet! VOLT. Now, my faithfull Mosca,

**Table**

*Of Porphiry*-- I mar'le, you'll be thus troublesome.

**VOL.** Nay, leaue off now, they are gone. **Mos.** Why? Who are you?

What? who did send for you? O'erie you mercy,

**Mos.** Reuerend Sir: good faith, I am grieu'd for you,

That any chance of mine should thus defeate

Your (I must needs say) most deserving travailes:

But, I protest, Sir, it was cast vpon me,

And I could, almost, wish to be without it,

But, that the will o' th' dead must be obseru'd.

Mary, my ioy is, that you need it not,

You haue a gift, Sir, (thanke your education)

Will neuer let you want, while there are men,

And malice, to breed causes. Would I had

But halfe the like, for all my fortune, Sir.

If I haue any sutes (as I do hope,

Things being so easie, and direct, I shall not)

I will make bold with your obstreperous aide,
(Conceiue mee) for your fee, Sir. In meane time, You, that haue so much law, I know ha’ the conscience, Not to be couetous of what is mine.

Good Sir, I thanke you, for my plate; ’twill helpe
To set vp a yong man. Good faith, you looke
As you were costiue; best goe home, and purge, Sir,
V O L P. Bid him, eate lettuce well: my witty mistiehe, Let me embrace thee. O, that I could now
Transforme thee to a Venus— Mosca, goe,
Straight, take my habite of Clariifimo,
And walke the streets; bee seene, torment ’hem more:

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Conceiue mee (3139)] DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “don’t mistake me.”
Conceiue (3139)] KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “understand.”
for your fee (3139)] KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “i.e. I will not ask your services gratis but will pay the standard price.”
haue (3140)] KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “know.”
plate (3142)] KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “the one Voltore gave earlier as a persenL”
yong man (3143)] ADAMS (1979 [82n]): “i.e., himself [Mosca]”; rpt. HARP (2001 [93n]).
costiue (3144)] KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “constipated”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [82n]), HUTSON (1998 [491]),
HARP (2001 [93n]).
purge (3144)] ADAMS (1979 [82n]): “take a laxative”; rpt. HARP (2001 [93n]).
SD (3144)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:303]) indicates Voltore’s departure with the marginal SD “[Exit Voltore,” which follows Mosca’s “best goe home, and purge, Sir”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [176]), ADAMS (1979 [82]), DONALDSON (1985 [91]), HUTSON (1998 [313]), HARP (2001 [93]).
SD (3145)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:303]) inserts the SD “[comes from behind the curtain.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “Bid him, eate lettuce well”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [82]), HARP (2001 [93]). KERNAN (1962 [176]) adds the marginal SD “[Coming from behind curtain.]” after Volpone’s “my witty mistiehe” [3145], DONALDSON (1985 [91]): “[Emerging].”
Bid him, eate lettuce well (3145)] Lettuce has been generally noted as a soporific, purgative, or laxative; rf. H&S (1950 [9:728]), CORRIGAN (1961 [92n]), KERNAN (1962 [176n]), ADAMS (1979 [82n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HARP (2001 [93n]). GIFFORD (1816 [3:303n]): “Jo. Cooke, Greene’s Tu Quoque (1614): ‘Did I eat any lettuce to supper, last night, that I am so sleepy?; and Alexander Pope, Sat 1.18–19: ‘if your point be rest, / Lettuce, and cowslip-wine; probatum est.’” REA (1919 [222]): “Gifford says as a soporific; but this is surely not the point. HOLT (1905) better compares Martial, Epig 3.89: ‘Utere lactucis et mollibus utere malvis: / nam faciem durum, Phoebe, cacantibus habeas’ [‘Take lettuces and take aperient mollows, for you have the appearance, Phoebus, of one straining at stool’ (Ker, trans., 1:219)]. This agrees with the preceding line, spoken by Mosca [i.e., 3144, ‘costiue’]. The greenish pallor that has overspread Voltore’s face is the cause of the remark.”
habite of Clariifimo (3148)] H&S (1950 [9:728]): “CORYAT (1611 [259]): ‘Mosfe of their gownes are made of blakke cloth, and over their left shouder they haue a flappe made of the same cloth, and edged with blakke Taffata. Allo mof of their gownes are faced before with blakke Taffata.” ADAMS (1979 [82n]): “Mosca, in putting on the distinctive dress of a nobleman is running a big risk—laws about wearing the costume of one’s rank were strict and severe”; rpt. HARP (2001 [93n]). Cf. n. 3002.
habite (3148)] KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “robe. Special dress was decreed for various social orders.”

263
3150 Wee must pursew, as well as plot. Who would
Have lost this feast? Mos. I doubt, it will loose them.
Volp. O, my recovery shall recover all,
That I could now but thinke on some disguise,
To meete 'hem in: and ask 'hem questions.

3155 How I would vexe 'hem still, at every turne?
One o'the Commandadori, Sir, so like you,
Him will I streight make drunke, and bring you his habite.
Volp. A rare disguise, and answering thy braine!

3160 O, I will be a sharpe disease vnto 'hem.
Mos. Sir, you must looke for curses— Volp. Till they burst;
The FOXE fares euer best, when he is curst.

ACT 5. SCENE 4.

PEREGRINE. MERCATORI.3. WOMAN. POLITIQVE.

A feast (3151) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “ironically recalling [1597].”
loose (3151) KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “get rid of.”
fit you (3156) KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “[i.e.] find just what you want.”
Commandadori (3157) KERNAN (1962 [176n]): “sergeants, or minor officials, of the court.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “officers of the court.”
answering (3159) KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “resembling (the rareness of Mosca’s brain).”
sharpe (3160) KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “painful.”
The FOXE fares euer best, when he is curst (3162) REA (1919 [222]): “This was proverbial. Cf. Robert Greene, FriBac (1594 [1773–75]): ‘Tis no matter, I am against you with the old proverb. The more the fox is curst, the better he fares.’ J. C. Collins in his ed. of Greene cites other instances of the proverb from the Defence of Conny Catching, and Thomas Lord Cromwell.” H&S (1950 [9:728]): “cursed, that is, for escaping. Cf. Harington’s Orlando Furioso (1591), 23.27: ‘Winners may boast, when losers speake their fall, / Best pleas’d was he, when as she wiste him worst, / As still the foxe fares best when he is curst.’ Greene, FriBac (1594 [G3’]) [as above].” KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “a proverbial saying.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “because he escapes; TILLEY (1950), P632.”
SD (3162) GIFFORD (1816 [3:303]) applies the marginal SD “[Exit.”, to Volpone’s “The FOXE fares euer best, when he is curst”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [177]), ADAMS (1979 [82]), DONALDSON (1985 [92]), HUTSON (1998 [314]), HARP (2001 [93]).
SD (3163–65) GIFFORD (1816 [3:304]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD “SCENE II. | A Hall in sir Politick’s House | Enter PEREGRINE disguised, and three Merchants”; rpt. at 5.4 by ADAMS (1979 [82]), HARP (2001 [93]). KERNAN (1962 [177]): “[Sir Politic’s house.”] | “[Enter Peregrine disguised, and three Merchants.”]; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [92]), HUTSON (1998 [314]): “[Enter PEREGRINE and 3 MERCATORI.”]
M I inough disguis’d? M E R. I. I warrant you.

P E R. All my ambition is to fright him, onely.

M E R. 2. If you could ship him away, twere excellent,

M E R. 3. To Zant, or to Alepo? P E R. Yes, and haue’s

Aduentures put i’ th’ Booke of voyages,

And his guld story registred, for truth?

Well, Gentlemen, when I am in, a while;

And that you thinke vs warme in our discourse,

Know your approaches. M E R. I. Trust it, to our care.

P E R. ’Saue you faire Lady. Is Sir Poll. within?

W O M. I do not know, Sir. P E R. ’Pray you, say vnto him,

Here is a merchant, vpon earnest businesse,

Desires to speake with him. W O M. I will see, Sir. P E R. ’Pray

warrant (3166)] KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “assure.”

Zant (3169)] KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “one of the Ionian islands.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “Zante, Ionian island then in Venetian possession.” ADAMS (1979 [82n]): “in Byzantium, Constantinople, or (now) Istanbul.” HARP (2001 [94n]): “famous for its currants; modern name, Zakynthos; from there Sir Politic could be shipped to Aleppo, Smyrna, or any other remote city of the Middle East.”

Alepo (3169)] ADAMS (1979 [82n]): “in Syria, still carries its old name.”

Booke of voyages (3170)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:304n]): “I know not what particular book J had in view here, unless he may be thought to allude to the early volumes of Hakluyt, a man never to be mentioned without praise and veneration. Collections of voyages, however, were sufficiently numerous in the poet’s time, when they formed the delight of all classes of people; many of them, too, contained ‘stories’ not only ‘registered’ but received ‘for truth,’ altogether as extravagant as this ridiculous adventure of sir Politick’s, which had nothing in it to shock the taste, or even the credulity of our forefathers”; repr. REA (1919 [222]).

H&S (1950 [9:729]): “one of the numerous collections of travels, such as Hakluyt’s, which were then in vogue.” KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “popular collections of foreign voyages such as Hakluyt’s.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “Such as Hakluyt’s.”

guld story (3171)] H&S (1950 [9:729]): ‘virtually ‘the story of his gulling.’ For this use of a past participle, cf. MerchVen 3.2.97–98: ‘Thus ornament is but the guileful shore / To a most dangerous sea,’ where ‘guileful’ means ‘treacherous’”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [82n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HARP (2001 [94n]).

Know your approaches (3174)] KERNAN (1962 [177n]): “come in at the right time.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “be ready to enter.”

SD (3174)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:304]) applies the marginal SD “[Exeunt Merchants,” to 1 Mercatore’s “Trust it, to our care”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [177]), ADAMS (1979 [82]), DONALDSON (1985 [92]), HUTSON (1998 [314]), HARP (2001 [94]).

SD (3174)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:304]) inserts the SD “Enter Waiting-woman” after 1 Mercatore’s “Trust it, to our care” and the Mercator’s exit; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [177]), ADAMS (1979 [82]), DONALDSON (1985 [92]), HUTSON (1998 [315]), HARP (2001 [94]).

SD (3178–79)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:305]) indicates the Waiting-Woman’s departure with the SD “[Exit.]” which follows her “I will see, Sir”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [83]), DONALDSON (1985 [93]), HARP (2001 [94]).

KERNAN (1962 [178]) adds the marginal SD “[Exit Woman.]” after Peregrine’s “’Pray | you”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [315]).
you.

3180 I see, the Family is all female, here.

WOM. He sai's, Sir, hee has weighty affaires of State,
That now require him whole some other time,
You may possesse him. PER. 'Pray you, say agaime,
If those require him whole; these will exact him,

3185 Whereof I bring him tidings. What might bee
His graue affaire of now? How, to make
Bolognian sausesges, here, in Venice, sparing
One o' th' Ingredients. WOM. Sir, he sai's, he knowes
By your word tidings, that you are no Statef-man,

3190 And therefore, wills you stay. PER. Sweet, 'pray you retume
him,
I have not read so many Proclamations,
And studied them, for words, as hee has done--
But, here he deignes to come.  P O L.  Sir! I must craue
Your courteous pardon; There hath chanc’d (to day)
Unkinde disaster, ’twixt my Lady, and mee:
And I was penning my Apologie
To give her satisfaction, as you came, now.

P E R.  Sir, I am greiu’d, I bring you worse disaster;
The Gentleman you met at th’ Port, to day,
That told you, he was newly arriu’d--  P O L.  I, was
A fugitive- Punke?  P E R.  No, Sir, a Spie, set on you,
And, hee has made relation to the Senate,
That you profest to him, to haue a plot,
To sell the State of Venice, to the Turke.

P O L.  O mee.  P E R.  For which, warrants are sign’d by this
time,
To apprehend you, and to search your study,
For papers—  P O L.  Alasse, Sir. I haue none, but notes,
Drawne out of Play-bookes—  P E R.  All the better, Sir.

SD (3194)) GIFFORD (1816 [3:305]) inserts the marginal SD “[Exit Woman.” after Peregrine’s “here he
deignes to come,” which the ed. followes with the SD “Enter sir POLITICK.”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [83]),
DONALDSON (1985 [93]), HUTSON (1998 [315]), HARP (2001 [94]). KERNAN (1962 [178]) adds only the SD
“[Enter Sir Politic.]”
Vunkinde (3196) HUTSON (1998 [498]): “unnatural.”
I was penning my Apologie (3197) REA (1919 [223]): “Such a diplomat as Sir Pol would disdain to
communicate in a delicate case like the present otherwise than by diplomatic terms.”
fugitive- Punke (3202) REA (1919 [223]): “The speaker has evidently become thoroughly convinced of
the correctness of his wife’s extraordinary theory.” ADAMS (1979 [83n]): “a runaway pimp (the ’gentleman’ [3200]) was, of course, Peregrine himself.” HARP (2001 [95n]): “a whore in flight from the
marshall. (For all his vaulted [sic] subtlety, Sir Politic still believes his wife’s deluded charge, that
Peregrine was a woman in disguise.)”

you profest to him, to have a plot (3204) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “cf. [2435–36],” where Sir Pol’s
says “How I could feil this State, now, to the Turke....”
sell the State of Venice, to the Turke (3205) See n. 2434–36.
Drawne out of Play-bookes (3210) REA (1919 [223]): “Cf. DevAss 2.4.13–14: ‘No, I confesse I ha’t from
the Play-bookes, / And thinke they are more authentique.’ Cf. also Thomas Dekker, Gull’s Hornbook
(1609), ch. 6: ‘To conclude, hoard up the finest play-scrapes you can get, upon which your leane wit may
most savourly feede, for want of other stuffe, when the Arcadian and Euphuiz’d gentlemen have their
tongues sharpened to set upon you: that qualitie (next to your shittlecocke) is the only furniture to a

267

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And some Essayes. What shall I doe? PER. Sir, Best
Conuay your selfe into a Sugar-Chest;
Or, if you could lie round, a Frayle were rare:
And I could send you, aboard. POL. Sir, I but talk'd so,
For discourse sake, merely. PER. Hearke, they are there.
POL. I am a wretch, a wretch. PER. What, will you doe Sir?
Ha you nere a Curren-Butt to leape into?
They'll put you to the Rack, you must be sodaine.

POL. Sir, I haue an ingine—MER.3. Sir Politique Would-be?

MER.2. Where is hee? POL. That I haue thought vpon, be-
fore time.
PER. What is it? POL. I shal nère indure the torture.
Mary, it is, Sir, of a Tortoyse-shell,
Apted, for these extremities: 'Pray you Sir, helpe mee.

Courtier that's but a beginner, and is but in his ABC of complement.'
H&S (1950 [9:729]): “see CynRev 3.5.118-22.”
ADAMS (1979 [84n]): “Sir Pol's exotic information turns out to be very common stuff.
Playbooks in particular had then about the reputation of comic books now”; rpt. HARP (2001 [95n]).

Play-books (3210) KERNAN (1962 [179n]): “printed plays.”

All the better (3210) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “i.e., to convict him; J perhaps remembers his own troubles with the authorities.”
Frayle (3213) CORNWALL (1838 [809]): “a rush basket in which figs or raisins were packed.”
discourse (3215) KERNAN (1962 [179n]): “conversation’s [sake].”

SD (3214-15) F (1616 [513]) adds the marginal SD “They knocke | without,” which corresponds approximately with 3215; rpt. WHALLEY (1756 [2:390]), KERNAN (1962 [179]), DONALDSON (1985 [94]), HUTSON (1998 [316]).

Gifford (1816 [3:306]) inserts the SD “[Knocking within” between Sir Pol’s “Sir, I but talk’d so, / For discourse sake, merely” and Peregrine’s “Hearke, they are there”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [84]), HARP (2001 [95]).

Curren-Butt (3217) Gifford (1816 [3:306]) reads “currant-butt.”
CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:510]): “F (1616 [513] reads currant-but and when the fruit comes to be mentioned again in BartFair 1.3.141, it is spelt the same way.”
ingine (3219) CORNWALL (1838 [810]): “wit, understanding; from the Lat. ingentium.”
SCHELLING (1910 [1:630]): “device, contrivance.”
HARP (2001 [95n]): “the tortoise shell, below.”

SD (3219) Gifford (1816 [3:307]) inserts the SD “[within,]” between 3 Mercator’s SP and his “Sir Politique Would-be”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [84]), DONALDSON (1985 [94]), HARP (2001 [95]).

KERNAN (1962 [180]): “[Calling from off-stage.]”

SD (3220) Gifford (1816 [3:307]) inserts the SD “[within,]” between 2 Mercator’s SP and his “Where is hee?”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [84]), DONALDSON (1985 [94]), HARP (2001 [95]).

Tortoyse-shell (3223) REA (1919 [223]): “Cf. Coryat (1611 [258.12-15]): ‘Amongst many other foreign fishyes that I have obserued in their market places, I haue seene many Tortoilles, whereof I neuer saw but one in all England.’

268

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Here, I' haue a place, Sir, to put back my legsg,  
Please you to lay it on, Sir, with this cap,  
And my black gloues, Ile li e, Sir, like a Tortoyse,  
Till they are gone, PER: And, call you this an ingine?  
P O L. Mine owne devise—Good Sir, bid my wiues women  
To burne my papers. M E R. I. Where's hee hid? M E R. 3. we muft,  
And will, sure, finde him. M E R. 2. Which is his study? M E R. I.  
What  
Are you, Sir? PER. I am a merchant, that came here  
S' Marke!  
What Beast is this? PER. It is a Fish. M E R. 2. Come out, here.
PER. Nay, you may strike him, Sir, and tread upon him:

Hee’ll bear a cart. M ER. I. What, to runne ouer him? PER. Yes.

MER. 3. Letts iumpe, vpon him; MER. 2. Can hee not
goe? PER. He creepes, Sir.

MER. I. Letts see him creepe. PER. No, good Sir, you will

hurt him.

MER. 2. (Heart) Ile see him creepe; or prick his guts.

MER. 3. Come out, here. PER. ’Pray you, Sir, (creepe a little)

MER. I. Forth.

MER. 2. Yet furder. PER. Good Sir. (creepe) MER. 2. Wee’ll

see his legs.

MER. 3. Gods’soo hee has garters! MER. I. I, and gloues!

MER. 2. Is this

Your fearfull Tortoyse? PER. Now, Sir Poll. Wee are euen;

For your next proiect, I shall bee prepar’d:

I am sory, for the funerall of your notes, Sir.

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goe (3245) KERNAN (1962 [181n]): “walk”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [627]).

SD (3244) KERNAN (1962 [181]) applies the SD “[Prodding him.]” to 1 Mercatore’s “Letts see him creepe”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [95]), ADAMS (1979 [85]): “[Pokes him]”; rpt. HARP (2001 [96]).

hurt (3245) The letter “u” in “hurt” has been accidentally inverted, and so appears here as an “n.”

Heart (3246) KERNAN (1962 [181n]): “a mild oath.”

SD (3247) GIFFORD (1816 [3:308]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside to sir Pol.]” to Peregrine’s “’Pray you, Sir, (creepe a little).” ADAMS (1979 [85]) inserts the SD after Peregrine’s “’Pray you, Sir”; rpt. HARP (2001 [96]). KERNAN (1962 [181]) inserts the SD between Peregrine’s sp and his line.

SD (3249) KERNAN (1962 [181]) inserts the SD “[Aside to Sir Politic.]” between Peregrine’s sp and his “Good Sir. (creepe).” ADAMS (1979 [85]) inserts the SD after Peregrine’s “Good Sir”; rpt. HARP (2001 [96]).

SD (3251–54) F (1616 [514]) adds the marginal SD “They pul of the | flel and disco- | uer him,” which corresponds to 3251–54; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [317]). WHALLEY (1756 [2:392]) correlates the SD “[They pull off the flell and discover him.” with 2 Mercatere’s “Wee’ll | see his legs” [3249–50]; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:308]), KERNAN (1962 [181]), ADAMS (1979 [85]), HARP (2001 [96]). KERNAN (1962 [181n]) glosses discover as “disclose.” DONALDSON (1985 [95]) adds the F SD after 2 Mercatere’s “Is this / Your fearfull Tortoyse?”

Gods’soo (3251) See n. 1535.

SD (3253) GIFFORD (1816 [3:308]) inserts the SD “[discovering himself:]” between Peregrine’s sp and his “Now, Sir Poll. Wee are euen”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [85]), HARP (2001 [96]). DONALDSON (1985 [95]):
MER. I. 'Twere a rare motion, to be seen in Fleet-street!

MER. 2. I, i' the Term, MER. I. Or Smithfield, in the Faire.

MER. 3. Me thinkes, tis but a melancholique sight!

PER. Farewell, most politique Tortoyse. POL. Where's my Lady?

Knowes she of this? WOM. I know not, Sir. POL. Enquire.

O, I shall see the fable of all feasts;
The freight of the Gazetti; ship-boies tale;
And, which is worst, euen talke for Ordinaries.

"[Removing his disguise]." KERNAN (1962 [181]) applies the three-line marginal SD "[Throwing off his disguise.]" to Peregrine’s full speech.

funerall (3255) KERNAN (1962 [181n]): “burning. The ironic comparison is to a funeral pyre.”
a rare motion, to be seen in Fleet-street (3256) GIFFORD (1816 [3:308n]): “Where exhibitions of this nature were usually made, and where, not improbably, some such ‘fearful tortoise,’ half natural and half artificial, was at this very instant abusing the credulous curiosity of the worthy citizens and their wives. There is a pleasant incident of this kind in Jasper Mayne, The City Match (1639).” GIFFORD (1816 [2:66-67n]) applied the following note to EMO 2.3.146-48, “there’s a new Motion of the city of Niniveh … to be seen at Fleet-bridge”: “Fleet-street appears to have been the principal place where sights of every kind were exhibited, and probably from its being the great thoroughfare of the city. This would scarcely deserve notice were it not for a passage in Samuel Butler, Ballad on Cromwell [i.e., A Ballad (“Draw neare, good People, al draw neare”)], 116–20, which it serves to explain, and of which the sense has been hitherto mistaken: ‘And now at length he’s brought / Unto fair London city, / Where in Fleet-street / All those may see’t, / That will not believe my ditty.’ ‘Alluding,’ says the Editor, ‘to Cromwell’s having lodged there at some period of his life.’ But the allusion is to the notoriety of this street for its exhibitions of puppet-shows, ‘naked Indians,’ ‘strange fishes,’ and ‘monsters’ of every description. The ludicrous custom of hanging out a picture of what was to be seen, is still preserved in full force”; repr. REA (1919 [223]).

motion (3256) Generally glossed as “puppet show,” a form of entertainment popular in Fleet Street; rf. SCHELING (1910 [1:635]), H&S (1950 [9:730]), KERNAN (1962 [182n]), ADAMS (1979 [85n]), HUTSON (1998 [494]), HARP (2001 [97n]). UPTON (1749 [53–54]): “Motion, i.e., a puppet-show: Icunculorum motio, the etymology is apparent. Cf. SifWom 3.4.38.” WHALLEY (1756a), “one of the small figures on the face of a large clock which was moved by the vibration of the pendulum.”

Fleet-street (3256) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:510]): “Fleet Street was the favourite locality for ‘motions’ or puppet shows”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [627]). ADAMS (1979 [85n]): “then as now a busy street in central London”; rpt. HARP (2001 [97n]).
i’ the Term (3257) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:510]): “the time in which the country gentlemen and their families flocked to London—the ‘season,’ in fact.” KERNAN (1962 [182n]): “the period when the courts were in session and London filled with people”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [497]). ADAMS (1979 [85n]): “all fairs were busy in Term, when lawyers, and their clients, were in residence. These Venetian mercatori are remarkably conversant with London manners”; rpt. HARP (2001 [97n]).


SD (3259) GIFFORD (1816 [3:309]) applies the marginal SD “[Exeunt Per. and Merchants.” to Peregrine’s “Farewell, most politique Tortoyse”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [182n]), ADAMS (1979 [85n]), DONALDSON (1985 [95]), HUTSON (1998 [318]), HARP (2001 [97]).


271
W.O.M. My Lady’s come most melancholique, home,
And say’s, Sir, she will straight to sea, for Physick.

P.O.L. And I, to shunne, this place, and clime for ever;
Creeping, with house, on back: and thinke it well,
To shrinke my poore head, in my politique shell.

ACT. 4. SCENE. 5.

VOLPONE. MOSCA.

Am I then like him? MOS. O, Sir, you are hee:
No man can feuer you. VOLP. Good. MOS. But, what am I?

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ACT 4. (3269) “ACT 5” has been misprinted as “ACT 4” here.

SD (3269-70) “ACT 5” has been misprinted as “ACT 4” here.

SD (3269-70) F (1616 [514]) adds the marginal SD “The first, in the habit of a Com- mandatore; the other, of a | Clarissimo.,” which corresponds approximately to 3270-73; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [318]), who adds “[Enter VOLPONE and MOSCA].” WHALLEY (1756 [2:393]) replaces the original act/scene and mass entry notation with the SD “SCENE V. | Volpone, Mosca. | [The first in the habit of a Commandatore; the other of a Clarissimo.]”; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:310]): “SCENE III. A Room in Volpone’s House. | Enter MOSCA in the habit of a clarissimo, and | VOLPONE in that of a commandatore”; rpt. at 5.5 by ADAMS (1979 [86]), HARP (2001 [97]). KERNAN (1962 [183]): “[Volpone’s house.] | [Enter Volpone in the habit of a commandatore, | Mosca of a clarissimo.]”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [96]).

him (3271) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): “i.e., the commendatore.” ADAMS (1979 [82n]): “Volpone now assumes a common sargeant’s uniform, and over it a loose black robe, with a red cap and two brass buttons”; rpt. HARP (2001 [93n]).
V O L P. 'Fore heau'n, abraue thoubecom'stit!

3275 Pitty, thou wert not borne one. M O S. If I hold

My made one, 'twill be well. V O L P. Ile goe, and see

What newes, first, at the Court. M O S. Do so. My F O X E

Is out on his hole, and, ere he shall re-enter,

Ile make him languish, in his borrow'd case,

3280 Except he come to composition, with mee:

Androgyno, Castrone, Nano. A L L. Here.

feuer (3272) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): "separate, distinguish"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [86n]), HARP (2001 [97n]).

But, what am I? (3272–73) DONALDSON (1985 [xvi]): "Mosca's question has a deeper significance than Volpone recognizes; for Mosca, who at this moment is beginning to assume the authority of his master, is less trustworthy and less knowable than he seems."


If I hold / My made one (3275–76) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): "maintain my assumed role: a loaded utterance."

hold (3275) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): "retain."

My made one (3275–76) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): "assumed status (of clarissimo)." LEWIS (1989 [50]): "that is, his social position as Volpone's heir."

SD (3275–76) GIFFORD (1816 [3:310]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside."

SD (3277) GIFFORD (1816 [3:310]) applies the marginal SD "[Exit,"

My FOXE / Is out on his hole (3277–78) REA (1919 [224]): "This is a reference to a common game. Cf. Robert Herrick: 'Of Christmas sports, the Wassell-houle, / That tost up, after Fox-i'th'hole.' On this [the n. in Grosart's ed.] reads: 'An old Eng. game: boys hopped on one leg and beat one another with gloves or pieces of leather tied at the end of strings.' References are not uncommon in the Eliz. writers; cf. George Chapman, The Gentleman Usher (1606), 5.4.278: 'Pog. Come on my Lord Stincherd, Ile play Fox, Fox, come out of thy hole with you ifaith. Med. Ile runne and hide me from the sight of heauen. Pog. Fox, Fox, goe out of thy hole; a two leg'd Foxe, A two leg'd Fox. Exit with Pogle beateing Medice'; rpt. H&S (1950 [9:730]): ‘an allusion to the children’s game of Fox-in-the-Hole. According to Halliwell, the players “hopped on one leg, and beat one another with gloves or pieces of leather tied at the ends of strings” These identifications have been generally recognized by successive eds.; cf. KERNAN (1962 [225]), ADAMS (1979 [86n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]).

out on his hole (3278) H&S (1950 [9:730]): ‘for this use of ‘on’, cf. Sh. Cor 2.1.185: ‘at very root on’s heart’ (‘on’s’ = of his); KingLear 3.4.112–13: ‘all the rest on’s body cold.”

on (3278) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): ‘of.”

borrow'd case (3279) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): “disguise." ADAMS (1979 [86n]): “his false costume”; rpt.

HARP (2001 [98n]). DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “dress.”

Except (3280) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): “unless.”

composition (3280) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): “agreement.”


273
Go, recreate your selues, abroad; go sport:
So, now I haue the keies, and am possest.
Since hee will, needes, be dead, afore his time,
Ile burie him, or gaine by him; I am his heyre:
And so will keepe me, till he share at least.
To cosen him of all, were but a cheat
Well plac'd; no man would construe it a sinne:
Let his sport pay for't, this is call'd the FOXE-trap.

ACT. 5. SCENE. 6.

CORBACCIO. CORVINO.
VOLPONE.

They say, the Court is set. CORV. We must mainteine
Our first tale good, for both our reputations.

CORB. Why? mine's no tale: my sonne would, there, haue
kild me.

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recreate (3282) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): “enjoy.”
SD (3282) GIFFORD (1816 [3:310]) indicates the characters' departure with the marginal SD “[Exit.,” which follows Mosca’s “go sport”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [183]), ADAMS (1979 [86]), DONALDSON (1985 [96]), HUTSON (1998 [319]), HARF (2001 [98]).
possest (3283) KERNAN (1962 [183n]): “in possession.”
will, needes, be (3284) KERNAN (1962 [184n]): “insists on being.”
keepe me (3286) KERNAN (1962 [184n]): “remain.”

Let his sport pay for't (3289) KERNAN (1962 [184n]): “[i.e.] let the pleasure he is getting from all this pay him for what it is going to cost.”

FOXE-trap (3289) PROCTER (1989 [1:441]): “Mosca’s knowledge of Erasmus seems not to include his adages: ‘Annosa vulpes haud captur laqueo. An olde foxe is not taken in a snare. Longe experience and practise of wylye and subtyle felowes maketh that though he be great jugglers, dissemblers, & priue workers of falshed yet they can not easely be taken in a trap.’” As printed and trans. in TAVERNER (1539 [fol. 28]).

SD (3289) GIFFORD (1816 [3:310]) indicates Mosca’s departure with the marginal SD “[Exit.,” which follows his “this is call’d the FOXE-trap”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [184]), ADAMS (1979 [86]), DONALDSON (1985 [97]), HUTSON (1998 [319]), HARF (2001 [98]).
SD (3290–92) GIFFORD (1816 [3:311]) replaces the original act/scene and mass entry notation with the SD “SCENE IV. | A Street. | Enter CORBACCIO and CORVINO”; rpt. at 5.6 by ADAMS (1979 [86]), HARF (2001 [98]). KERNAN (1962 [184]); “[A Venetian Street.]” | “[Enter CORBACCIO and CORVINO.]”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [97]), HUTSON (1998 [319]); “[Enter CORBACCIO and CORVINO].”

mainteme / Our first tale good (3293–94) KERNAN (1962 [184n]): “[i.e.] continue to insist on the truth of the tales told first in court.”
CORV. That’s true, I had forgot; Mine is, I am sure
But, for your Will, Sir. CORB. I, Ile come vpon him,
For that, hereafter; now his Patron’s dead.

VOLP. Signior Coruino! and Corbaccio! Sir,
Much joy vnto you. CORV. Of what? VOLP. The sodaine

good,
Dropt downe vpon you— CORB. Where? VOLP. (And, none

knowes how)

From old Volpone, Sir. CORB. Out, errant Knaue.
VOLP. Let not your too much wealth, Sir, make you furious.
CORB. Away, thou varlet. VOLP. Why Sir? CORB. Do’st

thou mock me?
VOLP. You mock the world, Sir, did you not change Wills?

CORB. Out, harlot. VOLP. O! belike you are the man,
Signior Coruino? ’faith, you carry it well;
You grow not mad withal: I love your spirit.

SD (3297) GIFFORD (1816 [3:311]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.” to Corvino’s “Mine is, I am sure”; rpt. rpt. ADAMS (1979 [86]), HARP (2001 [98]), who each insert the SD between Corvino’s “That’s true, I had forgot” and his “Mine is, I am sure.”

come (3298) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “make a claim.”

him (3298) KERNAN (1962 [184n]): “i.e. Mosca.”

SD (3299) GIFFORD (1816 [3:311]) inserts the SD “Enter VOLPONE” after Corbaccio’s “now his Patron’s dead”; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [319]). ADAMS (1979 [86]): [Enter VOLPONE in disguise]; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [97]), HARP (2001 [98n]); rpt. KERNAN (1962 [184]) as a two-line marginal SD.

varlet (3307) GIFFORD (1816 [3:311n]): “This term, in J’s time, was commonly applied to serjeants at mace. (It should be recollected that Volpone is disguised like an officer of the court.) Originally it signified a knight’s follower, or personal attendant.” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:510]) refers to his previous note for harlot [n. 3106] and further observes that “[t]he derivation, which Gifford truly describes as ridiculous, was fully believed in by J [see n. 3310, “harlot”]. The received etymology draws the word from to hire, making harlot a diminutive of a very familiar noun substantive.” varlet (3118) SCHELLING (1910 [1:641]): “bailiff, or serjeant-at-mace.” REA (1919 [224]) repr. Gifford; but adds: “Cf. EMI 4.7: ‘Why, you were best get one o’ the varlets of the city, a serjeant.’” KERNAN (1962 [185n]): “low fellow; also the title for a sergeant of the court.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “(i) sergeant of the court; (ii) rogue.” Cf. n. 3118.

change (3309) KERNAN (1962 [185n]): “exchange”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [87n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HARP (2001 [99n]).

harlot (3310) GIFFORD (1816 [3:311-12n]): “Harlot ... had probably, once, the same meaning [as varlet (3307) above]. When the word first became (like knave) a term of reproach, it was appropriated solely to males; in J’s days it was applied indiscriminately to both sexes; though without any determinate import; and it was not till long afterwards that it was restricted to females, and to the sense which it now bears. To derive harlot from Arlotta, the mistress of the duke of Normandy, is ridiculous. If it be not the same word as varlet, its most likely derivation is from carl, or churl, of which it appears to be a diminutive.”

275
You are not over-leauend, with your fortune.

You should ha' some would swell, now, like a wine-fat,

With such an Autumnne--Did he gi'you all, Sir?

CORV. Auoid, you Rafcall. VOLP. 'Troth, your wife has shew'ne

Her selfe a very woman; but, you are well,

You need not care, you haue a good estate.

To beare it out Sir: better, by this chance.

Except Corbaccio haue a share? CORV. Hence varlet.

VOLP. You will not be a' knowne, Sir: why, 'tis wife,

Thus doe all Gam'fliers, at all games, diffeemble;

No man will seeme to winne: here, comes my Vulture,

Heauing his beake vp i' the ayre, and snuffing.

ACT. 5. SCENE. 7.
Ov't-cript thus, by a Parafite? a flaue?
Would run on errands? and make legs, for crums?

Well, what Ile do-- V O L P . The Court stayes for your wor-
ship.
I eêne reioyce, Sir, at your worships happineffe,
And, that it fell into so learned hands,
That vnderstand the fingering. V O L T . What do you meane:

V O L P . I meane to be a sutor to your worship,
For the small tenement, out of reparations;
That, at the end of your long row of houses,
By the Pifcaria: It was, in Uolpone's time,
Your predecessor, ère he grew diseas'd,

A handsome, pretty, custom'd baudi-house,
As any was in Venice (none dispens'd)
But fell with him; His body, and that house

V O L P . Why, if your worship giue me but your hand,
That I may ha' the refusal; I haue done.

SD (3326–27) GIFFORD (1816 [3:312]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD "Enter VoltoRE"; rpt. at 5.7 by ADAMS (1979 [87]), DONALDSON (1985 [98]), HUTSON (1998 [320]), HARP (2001 [99]). KERNAN (1962 [186]); "[Enter VoltoRE to Volpone]."
Ov't-cript (3328) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "outrun, beaten."
Would (3329) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "[i.e.] who used to."
make legs (3329) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "bows"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [627]), ADAMS (1979 [87n]): "bow and scrape"; rpt. HARP (2001 [99n]). Cf. n. 1622.
out of reparations (3336) CORRIGAN (1961 [99n]): "out of repair."
reparations (3336) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "repairs"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [87n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HARP (2001 [99n]).
none dispens'd (3341) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "[i.e.] not to say anything bad of the others." ADAMS (1979 [ ...]); "without prejudice to any of the other splendid bawdy houses in Venice"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HARP (2001 [99]).
refusal (3345) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "option."
haue done (3345) KERNAN (1962 [186n]): "am finished (asking favors)."
'Tis a meere toy, to you, Sir; candle rents:
As your learn'd worship knowes-- VOLP. What do I
know?

VOLP. Mary, no end of your wealth, Sir, God decrease it.

VOLP. Mistaking knaue! what, mockst thou my mis-fortune?

VOLP. His blessing on your heart, Sir, would 'twere more.

Now, to my first, againe; at the next corner.

ACT. 5. SCENE. 8.

CORBACCIO. CORVINO. (Mosca passant) VOLPONE.

SEE, in our habite! see the impudent varlet!

CORV. That I could shoothe mine eyes at him, like gun-

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'toy (3346) KERNAN (1962 [187n]); "trifle."
candle rents (3346) H&S (1950 [9:730]): "rents from property which is continually deteriorating. George Chapman, The Georgics of Hesiod (1618 [17-18]): 'Let newe neate-girt Dame ... be heard to faine / With her forkt tongue; so far forth as to gaine / Thy candle rent (she calls it).'" rpt. KERNAN (1962 [187n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HUTSON (1998 [490]). ADAMS (1979 [88n]): "i.e., mere dripings and leftovers, enough to buy candles with"; rpt. HARp (2001 [100n]).

decrease (3349) KERNAN (1962 [187n]): "an intentional malapropism—he pretends to mean 'increase.'" Misstaking knaue (3350) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): "I (or Volpone parodies the comic malapropisms of a Dogberry; cf. BartFair Ind. 42-44, PROCTOR (1989 [I:441]) notes the convention that minor law officials use the wrong word," adding that "Here Volpone uses the convention to express his true wishes."

SD (3350-51) GIFFORD (1816 [3:313]) applies the marginal SD "[Exit,] after Voltores "what, mockst thou my mis-fortune?" KERNAN (1962 [187]) adds the marginal SD "[Exit Voltoire,]" after Volpone's "His blessing on your heart, Sir, would 'twere more"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [88]), DONALDSON (1985 [99]), HUTSON (1998 [321]), HARp (2001 [100]).

SD (3352) GIFFORD (1816 [3:313]) indicates Volpone's departure with the marginal SD "[Exit,]" which follows his "Now, to my first, againe; at the next corner"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [88]), DONALDSON (1985 [99]), with the marginal SD "[Stands aside,]" HARp (2001 [100]).

SD (3353-55) WHALLEY (1756 [2:596]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD "SCENE VIII. | Corbaccio, Corvino, (Mosca passant) Volpone;" rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:313]): "SCENE V. | Another part of the Street. | Enter Corbaccio and Corvino;—Mosca passes over the Stage, before them"; rpt. at 5.8 by ADAMS (1979 [88]), HARp (2001 [100]). KERNAN (1962 [187]) adds to 5.8 the SD "[Volpone remains on stage to one side. Corbaccio and Corvino enter.]" "[Mosca passes slowly across stage.]" DONALDSON (1985 [99]): "[Enter Corbaccio, Corvino, (Mosca, passant)]." HUTSON (1998 [321]): "[Enter Corbaccio and Corvino; Mosca passes over the stage]."

our habite (3356) KERNAN (1962 [187n]): "i.e. the dress of a clarissimo." ADAMS (1979 [88n]): "i.e., in the clothes we aristocrats are accustomed to wear"; rpt. HARp (2001 [100n]).

shoothe mine eyes at him (3357) REA (1919 [224-25]): "Cf. DevAss 2.2.17: 'O! I could shoothe mine eyes at him, for that, now.' The phrase was perhaps proverbial; it occurs again in 1Hens4 4.7: 'O, were mine eye-

278
bones.

V O L P. But, is this true, Sir, of the Parasite?

3360 C O R B. Againe, t’afflict vs? Monster! V O L P. In good faith, Sir,
I’arn hartily greeu’d, a beard of your graue length
Should be so ouer-reach’d. I neuer brook’d
That Parasites hayre, mee thought his nose should cofen,

3365 There still was somewhat, in his looke, did promile
The bane of a Clarissimo. C O R B. Knaue -- V O L P. Mee thinkes,
Yet you, that are so traded i’the world,
A witty merchant, the fine bird, Coruino,

3370 That haue such morall Emblemes on your name,
Should not haue sung your shame; and dropt your cheefe:
To let the Foxe laugh at your emptinesse.
C O R V. Sirrah, you thinke, the pruïlledge of the place,
And your red saucy cap, that seemes (to mee)
Nayl’d to your iolt-head, with those two Cescines,
Can warrant your abuses; come you, hither:
V O L P. No hast, Sir, I do know your valure, well:
Since you durst publish what you are, Sir. C O R V. Tar-

upon." KERNAN (1962 [225]): "in the emblem books popular at this time drawings of various animals were
used to symbolize human vices, which were then explained in verses. Volpone has in mind here a picture of
a crow dropping a piece of cheese while the fox below laughs at him. The moral would point out that the
bird, or man, who opens his mouth too freely looses his prize." ADAMS (1979 [88n]): "the recurrent refrain
from Aesop’s fable"; rpt. HARP (2001 [100n]). DONALDSON (1985 [627]): "as in the contemporary emblem
books, where symbolic illustrations were morally explained." Ref. Sources, s.v. "Animal Lore."

**morall** (3370) F (1616 [516]) *morall*; F₂ (1692 [177]) *mortal*; TONSON (1709 [62]) *mortal*; JOHNSON (1714 [114]) *moral*; BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:218]) *mortal*; UPTON (1749 [18]), working from his copy
of F₂ (1640) notes that "[t]his passage wants a little correction, for instead of *mortal* emblems, we must
read, *moral* emblems. Every Fable has it Moral." WHALLEY (1756 [2:396]) reads "moral"; GIFFORD (1816
[3:314]) reads "moral."

Should not haue sung your duunc; aud dropt your cheek: / To let the FOKE laugh at your
enquired (3371) REA (1919 [225]): "Another reference to the fable of the fox and the crow." See nn.
Aesop’s fable of the crow that sings to the fox, and drops its cheese."

**sung your shame** (3371) F (517) reads "fung your shame." WHALLEY (1756 [2:396]) reads "fung your
shame." GIFFORD (1816 [3:314]) reads "sung your shame." CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:511]): "Gifford for
some reason altered this from the ‘sung you shame’ of the folio."

**pruïlledge of the place** (3373) KERNAN (1962 [188n]): "i.e. the immunity conferred by your rank."

**red saucy cap** (3374) H&S (1950 [9:730]) repr. Gifford’s note [see n. 3374–75].

**iolt-head** (3375) SCHELLING (1910 [1:633]): "bold, impudent. wanton."

**ceschines** (3375) CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:511]): "‘Zecchino,’ says Florio ‘is a ‘coine of gold currant in
Venice, worth about seaven shillings and sixpence stirlin.’ It is more familiar to us under the name of
*sequin* and *zecchin* than of *chequeine*, but this last is the name by which it is still known in northern India
and Central Asia. Among the Indian officers it is generally abbreviated to *chick*, and calculated to represent
four rupees or eight shillings." SCHELLING (1910 [1:627]), chequin: "gold it. coin." DONALDSON (1985
[627]): "coin-like buttons."

**warrant** (3376) KERNAN (1962 [188n]): "sanction."

**No hast, Sir, I do know your valure, well:** (3378) BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:218]) omits this
line. WHALLEY (1756 [2:397n]): "A line is lost, and two different speeches joined together. I have
corrected it from the old books, where it stands in this manner: ‘You shall perceive, sir, I dare beat you;
approach. / VOLP. No haste, sir; I do know your valure well, &c.’"
I'd speake, with you. Volp. Sir, Sir, another time—
Corv. Nay, now. Volp. O, God, Sir! I were a wise
man,
Would stand the fury of a distracted cuckold.

Corb. What! come againe? Volp. Upon 'hem, Mosca;
saue mee.
Corb. The ayre's is infected, where he breathes. Corv. Lets
flye him.
Volp. Excellent Bafilifke! Turne upon the Vulture.

what you are (3379) Kernan (1962 [188n]): "i.e. a cuckold"; rpt. Adams (1979 [89n]), who adds "liable
to run 'horn-mad,"
Har (2001 [101n]).
SD (3381) Kernan (1962 [188]) applies the marginal SD "[Backing away.]" to Volpone’s "Sir, Sir, another
time—"; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [100]), with the SD "[Retreating]" inserted between Volpone’s SP and his
line.
Would (3384) Kernan (1962 [188n]): "[i.e.] if I would."
stand (3384) Kernan (1962 [188n]): "oppose."
SD (3385–88) F (1616 [517]) adds the marginal SD "Mosca walks by 'hem," which corresponds
approximately to 3385–88; rpt. Hutson (1998 [322]). Whalley (1756 [2:397]) correlates the SD "Mosca
walks by them," with Corbaccio’s "What! come againe?" [3385]; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [100]). Gifford
(1816 [3:315]) applies the marginal SD "As he is running off, re-enter Mosca." to Volpone’s "... Would
stand the fury of a distracted cuckold" [3384]; rpt. Adams (1979 [89n]), Har (2001 [101n]). Kernan
(1962 [188]), with the F SD.
SD (3385–86) Kernan (1962 [188]) inserts the SD "[Aside.]" between Volpone’s SP and his "Vpon 'hem,
Mosca; sue mee."
SD (3388) Gifford (1816 [3:315]) applies the marginal SD "Exeunt Corv. and Corb.," to Corvino’s "Lets
[322]), Har (2001 [101]).
Bafilifke (3389) Rea (1919 [225–26]); "cf. Topsell (1608 [677–81]): 'This beast is called by the
Grecians, Bafilicos, and the Latines Regulas, because he seemeth to be the King of Serpents, not for his
magnitude or greatness. For there are many Serpents bigger then he, as there be many four-footed Beasts
bigger then the Lyon, but because of his flately pace, and magnanimous minde; for he creepeth not on the
earth like other Serpents, but goeth half tonight, for which occasion all other Serpents avoid his fight.'
Topsell, op. cit., adds that many say the basilisk is 'brought forth of a Cocks Egg. For they say that when a
Cock groweth old, he layeth a certain Egg without any shell, instead whereof it is covered with a very thick
skin, which is able to withstand the greatest force of an eagle blow or fall. They say moreover, that this Egg
is laid only in the Summer time, about the beginning of Dog-days.' [681]: 'Among all living creatures, there
is none that poiseth a man by the poisson of a Cockatrice, for with his light he killeth him, because the beams of the Cockatrices eyes, do corrupt the visible spirit of a man, which visible spirit corrupted, all the other spirits coming from the brain and life of the heart, are thereby corrupted, and so, the man dyeth... ' See also Sir Thomas Browne, "Of the Basilisk." in Pseudodoxia Epidemica (1646
[3.7]). Schelling (1910 [1:626]): fabulous reptile, believed to slay with its eye;" rpt. Kernan (1962
[188n]), Har (2001 [101n]). H&S (1950 [9:428]) supply references to Pliny, NatHist (Holland, trans.,
1601 [356]), 29.4, Poet Prol. 36–37, NewInn 1.5.48 in their n. to EMO 1.2.220, and via Wycliffe's 1382
trans. of Ps. 91:13, 'Vpon the eddere and kockatrice [Vulgate, basiliscum] shalt thou go,' observe that the
term has been "applied to persons in the sense of monster; and esp. to a prostitute. Cf. Poet 4.7.6, Alch
Well, flesh-fly, it is \textit{Sommer} with you now; 

Your \textit{Winter} will come on. \textit{Mosca}. Good Adov-

'Pray thee, not rayle, nor threaten out of place, thus; 

Thou shalt make a \textit{solecisme} (as Madam sayes) 

Get you a bigger, more: your brayne breakes loose.

\textbf{ACT. 5. SCENE 9.}

\textbf{VOLTORE. MOSCA. VOLPONE.}

\textit{W}ell, flesh-fly, it is \textit{Sommer} with you now; 

Your \textit{Winter} will come on. \textit{Mosca}. Good Adov-

\textit{VOLTORE. MOSCA. VOLPONE.}

\textit{W}ell, flesh-fly, it is \textit{Sommer} with you now; 

Your \textit{Winter} will come on. \textit{Mosca}. Good Adov-

'Pray thee, not rayle, nor threaten out of place, thus; 

Thou shalt make a \textit{solecisme} (as Madam sayes) 

Get you a bigger, more: your brayne breakes loose.
V O L T. Well, Sir. V O L P. Would you have me beate the insolent slave?

Throwed hurt, vpon his first good clothes? V O L T. This same

Is, doubtlesse, some Familiar! V O L P. Sir, the Court,

In troth, stays for you. I am madd, a Mule,

That never read Justinian, should get vp,

And ride an Advocate. Had you no quirk,

To auoide guillage, Sir, by such a creature?

I hope, you do but jest; he has not done't:

This's but confederacy, to blinde the rest.

You are the heyre? V O L T. A strange, officious,

Trouble-some knaue! thou dost torment mee. V O L P. I know —

“an infant’s cap worn until the sutures of the skull had closed; it seems also to have designated the cap worn by lawyers”: rpt. KERNAN (1962 [189n]), ADAMS (1979 [89n]), DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “lawyer’s skull-cap.” HUTSON (1998 [489]), HARP (2001 [101n]).

more (3398) KERNAN (1962 [189n]): “i.e. to add to the one you have.”

SD (3398) GIFFORD (1816 [3:315]) indicates Mosca’s departure with the marginal SD “[Exit,” which follows his “... your brayne breaks loose”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [189]), ADAMS (1979 [89]), HUTSON (1998 [323]), HARP (2001 [101]).

This’s same (3401-2) KERNAN (1962 [189n]): “i.e. Volpone.”

Familiar (3403) Cornwall (1838 [809]): “a spirit, or devil, who constantly accompanied the necromancer, and was his servant, slave, and adviser, during his life”; also, flies: “familiar spirits.” KERNAN (1962 [189n]): “evil spirit.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “(i) member of household; (ii) attendant devil.”

I am madd, a Mule, / That never read Justinian, should get vp, / And ride an Advocate (3404-6)

ADAMS (1979 [89n]): “i.e., Mosca, wholly ignorant of the legal codes compiled by the Emperor Justinian.”

DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “mules were often ridden by advocates”; rpt. HARPA (2001 [101n]), who adds: “here Volpone tells Voltore that he is allowing the mule (i.e., Mosca), who never read Justinian, to ride him.” Cf. nn. 523-24 and 593, “moyle.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]) adds: “Volpone’s inversion recalls popular depictions of the world upside-down.”

I am madd (3404) KERNAN (1962 [189n]): “[i.e.] it is madness (to believe that this has happened).”


quirk (3406) KERNAN (1962 [189n]): “device.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “trick.”


This’s (3409) F (1616 [517]) This’s. H&S (1950 [9:731]): “cf. See 2.484.”

confederacy (3409) KERNAN (1962 [189n]): “an agreement (between Voltore and Mosca).” ADAMS (1979 [89n]): “conspiracy, trickery.” HARPA (2001 [101n]): “i.e., a conspiracy between you and Mosca.”

officious (3410) See n. 1501.

SD (3411-12) KERNAN (1962 [190]) inserts the SD “[Aside.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “I | know—.”

283
It cannot bee, Sir, that you should be cosen'd;
'Tis not within the wit of man, to do it:

You are so wise, so prudent — And, 'tis fit
That wealth, and wisdome, fill, should go together——

ACT. 5. SCENE. I0.

AVOCATORI. 4. NOTARIO. COMMANADORI.
BONARIO. CELIA. CORBACCIO. CORVINO. VOLTORE. VOLPONE.

Are all the parties, here? NOT. All, but the Advocate.

AVOC. 2. And, here he comes. AVOC. Then bring 'hem forth, to sentence.

VOLT. O, my most honour'd Fathers, let your mercy

Once winne vpon your iustice, to forgie --

I am distracted — VOLP. What will he do, now? VOLP. O,

I know not which to addressse my selfe to, first,

Whether your Father-hoods, or these innocents —

SD (3416) GIFFORD (1816 [3:316]) indicates the characters' departure and the scene's close with the marginal SD "[Exeunt," which follows Volpone's "...wealth, and wisdome, fill, should go together"; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [190]), ADAMS (1979 [89]), DONALDSON (1985 [100]), HUTSON (1998 [323]), HARP (2001 [102]).

SD (3417-20) GIFFORD (1816 [3:16]) replaces the original act/scene division and mass entry notation with the SD "SCENE VI. | The Scrutinea or Senate House. | Enter Avocatori, Notario, Bonario, Celia, | Corbaccio, Corvino, Commandadori, Staff, &c."; rpt. at 5.10 by ADAMS (1979 [90]), HARP (2001 [102]). KERNAN (1962 [190]); "[The Scrutinea.] | [Enter four Avocatori, Notario, Commandatori, Bonario, Celia, | Corbaccio, Corvino.]"; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [101]), HUTSON (1998 [323]).

SD (3422) GIFFORD (1816 [3:316]) inserts the SD "Enter Voltores and Volpone after 2 Avocatori's "And, here he comes"; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [90]), DONALDSON (1985 [101]), HUTSON (1998 [323]), HARP (2001 [102]). KERNAN (1962 [190]): "[Enter Voltore, Volpone following him]."

AVOC. (3422) The SP lacks a numeral that would designate which of the Avocatori speaks the line "Then bring 'hem forth, to sentence!" F (1616 [518]) also lacks the numeral; but WHALLEY (1756 [2:398] and GIFFORD (1816 [3:316]) assign it to 1 Avocatore. KERNAN (1962 [225]): "the SP here and in line 20 [3445] below reads in Q and F "AVO." [sic]. The usual practice of editors has been to assign this line to a particular Avocatore. Here and at line 20 [3445] it seems equally reasonable to have all the judges speak."

'them (3422) KERNAN (1962 [190n]): "i.e. Celia and Bonario."

winne vpon (3425) KERNAN (1962 [190n]): "overcome." DONALDSON (1985 [627]): "prevail over."

SD (3426) GIFFORD (1816 [3:317]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside," to Volpone's "What will he do, now?" KERNAN (1962 [190]) inserts the SD "[Aside," between Volpone's SP and his line; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [90]), DONALDSON (1985 [101]), HARP (2001 [102]).

284

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CORV. Will hee betray himselfe, VOLT. Whome, equal-ly,
I haue abus’d, out of most couetous endes--
CORV. The man is mad! CORB. What’s that? CORV. Hee
is possest.
VOLT. For which; now strooke in conscience, here I prostate
My selfe, at you offended feete, for pardon.
AVOC.I. 2. Arise. CEL. O heau’n, how iust thou art!
VOLP. I am caught
I’ myne owne noose-- CORV. Be constant, Sir, nought now
Can helpe, but impudence. AVOC.I. Speake forward. COM.

VOLP. (3426]) Voltore’s SP has accidentally been set as “VOLP.” here; rpt. F (518). WHALLEY (1756 [2:398]) and GIFFORD (1816 [3:317]) silently amend this error. REA (1919 [226]): “Obviously the second VOLT. in this line of the folio is a misprint for VOLT.”
SD (3429]) GIFFORD (1816 [3:317]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.]” to Corvino’s “Will hee betray himselfe.” KERNAN (1962 [190]) inserts the SD “[Aside.]” between Corvino’s SP and his line; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [90]), DONALDSON (1985 [101]), HARP (2001 [102]).

out of most couetous endes (3431]) KERNAN (1962 [190n]): “because of covetous desires.”
SD (3432]) DONALDSON (1985 [101]) inserts the SD “[To Corbaccio]” between Corvino’s SP and his “The man is mad!”

Whome, equal-ly, / I haue abus’d, out of most couetous endes-- / CORV. The man is mad! CORB. What’s that? CORV. Hee | is possest. (3429–33)] BOOKSELLERS (1716–17 [2:220]) reads: “Volt. Whom equally / I have abus’d, by my falle Accusation: / For which, now fruck in Conscience, here I prostate / My self at your offended Feet, for Pardon.” WHALLEY (1756 [2:399 + n7]) notes that “[t]his indeed is sense; but a different reading, and a verse more, exhibited by the first copy, gives the poet’s true sentiments in a much more spirited manner; there the whole stands thus: [Volt.] Whom equally / I have abus’d, out of most covetous ends— / (Corv. The man is mad! Corb. What’s that? Corv. He is possefs’t.) / VOLT. For which now fruck in conscience, &c.” Whalley’s text reads “Volt. Whom equally / I have abus’d, out of most covetous ends— / (Corv. The man is mad!/ Corb. What’s that? / Corv. He is possefs’t.) / Volt. For which, now fruck in conscience, here I prostate / My self at your offended feet, for pardon.”; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [317]), minus parentheses.

possest (3433]) KERNAN (1962 [191n]): “in the possession of the devil.” DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “by a devil.”
SD (3434–35]) KERNAN (1962 [191]) applies the marginal SD “[He kneels.]” to Volpone’s “... here I prostate / My selfe, at you offended feete, for pardon”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [101]).
SD (3438]) GIFFORD (1816 [3:317]) applies the marginal SD “[Aside.” to Volpone’s “I am caught / I’ myne owne noose—”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [191]), ADAMS (1979 [90]), DONALDSON (1985 [101]), HARP (2001 [102]), each with the SD between Volpone’s SP and his line.
SD (3438]) GIFFORD (1816 [3:317]) inserts the SD “[To Corbaccio.]” between Corvino’s SP and his “Be constant, Sir...”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [191]), ADAMS (1979 [90]), HARP (2001 [102]), each with the SD “[Aside to Corbaccio.]”
constant (3438]) KERNAN (1962 [191n]): “[i.e.] continue firm (in your story).”
impudence (3439]) KERNAN (1962 [191n]): “Lat. impudens, shameless.”
forward (3439]) KERNAN (1962 [191n]): “on.”
SD (3439–40]) KERNAN (1962 [191]) inserts the SD “[To the Courtroom.]” between the Commendatore’s SP and his “Silence.”
Silence.

V O L T. It is not passion in mee, reuerend Fathers,
But onely conscience, conscience, my good Sires,
That makes me, now, tell trueth. That Parasite,
That Knaue hath beene the instrument of all--

AVOC. Where is that Knaue? fetch him. V O L P. I go. C O R V.

Graue Fathers,
This man's distracted, he confess it, now;
For, hoping to bee old Volpone's heyre,
Who now is dead-- AVOC. 3. How? AVOC. 2. Is Volpone dead?

C O R V. Dead since, graue Fathers-- B O N. O, sure vengeance!

A V O C. I. Stay,--

Then, he was no deceiver? V O L T. O, no, none:
The Parasite, graue Fathers-- C O R V. He do's speake,
Out of mere enuie, 'cause the servuant's made

The thing, he gap't for; please your Father-hoods,
This is the truth: though, Ile not justifie
The other, but he may bee somewhere faulty.

V O L T. I, to your hopes, as well as mine, Coruino:
But Ile vse modesty. 'Pleaeth your widomes

instrument of all (3444) KERNAN (1962 [191n]): “arranger of everything.”

AVOC. (3445) The sp lacks a numeral that would designate which of the Avocatori speaks the line “Where is that Knaue? fetch him.” F (1616 [518]) and WHALLEY (1756 [2:390]) also lack the numeral; GIFFORD (1816 [3:317]) assigns the line to 1 Avocatore. KERNAN (1962 [191]) offers the non-specific plural “Avocatori.” See also n. 3422 above.


distracted (3447) KERNAN (1962 [191n]): “out of his wits—see [3426] above.
gap’t (3455) DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “longed.”
The other (3457) ADAMS (1979 [91n]): “i.e., Mosca”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [627]), HARP (2001 [103n]).

somewhere (3457) F (1616 [518]) reads “some-deale,” which KERNAN (1962 [192n]) and DONALDSON (1985 [627]) gloss as “somewhat.”

mine (3458) Both the “I” and the “n” of “mine” have been dotted here, which suggests a lopsided umlaut over the “i.”

modesty (3459) KERNAN (1962 [192n]): “restraint.”
To viewe these certaine notes, and but conferre them;
As I hope fauour, they shal speake cleare truth.
Corv. The Deuill ha’s entred him. Bon. Or bides in you.
Avoc.4. Wee haue done ill, by a publike Officer,
To send for him, if he be heire; Avoc.2. For whome?
Avoc.4. Him, that they call the Parasite. Avoc.3. ’Tis true;
He is a man, of great estate, now left.
Avoc.4. Goe you, and leame his name; and say, the

Court
Intreats his presence, here: but, to the clearing
Of some few doubts. Avoc.2. This same’s a labyrinth!
Avoc.1. Stand you vnto your first report? Corv. My flatte,

My life, my fame— Bon. Where is’t? Corv. Are at the stake,
Avoc.1. Is yours so too? Corb. The Advocate’s a knaue:

**certaine** (3460) | Kernan (1962 [192n]): “particular.”
**notes** (3460) | Hutson (1998 [494]): “marks of infamy.”
**SD** (3460) | Kernan (1962 [192]) applies the marginal SD “[Gives them notes.]” to Voltore’s “… viewe these certaine notes, and but conferre them.”
The Deuill ha’s entred him (3462) | Kernan (1962 [226]): “the ‘possession’ referred to by Corvino in 5.10.10 [3433] above.”
**bides** (3462) | Kernan (1962 [192n]): “abides, dwells.”
Wee haue done ill, by a publike Officer, / To send for him, if he be heire (3464–65) | Kernan (1962 [192n]): “Mosca’s new dignity entitles him to a ceremonious invitation, not a rude summons.”
He is a man, of great estate, now left (3486) | Adams (1979 [91n]): “as an aristocrat (which he automatically is if he has a lot of money), Mosca is not to be summoned by a common official”; rpt. Harp (2001 [103n]).
**but, to** (3471) | Kernan (1962 [192n]): “only for.”
**doubts** (3472) | Kernan (1962 [192n]): “questions.”
SD (3475) | Donaldson (1985 [102]) inserts the SD “[Aside]” between Bonario’s SP and his “Where is’t?”

287

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And has a forked tongue—  

**AVOC. 2.** Speake to the point.

3480    **CORB.** So is the *Parasite*, too.  **AVOC. I.** This is confusion.

**VOLT.** I do beseech your *Father-hoods*, read but those;

**CORV.** And credit nothing, the false spirit hath writ:

It cannot be (my *Sires*) but he is poiseft.

---

**ACT. 5. SCENE II.**

**VOLPONE. NANO. ANDROGYNO. CASTRONE.**

To make a snare, for mine owne neck! and run

My head into it, wilfully! with laughter!

3490   When I had newly scap’t, was free, and cleare!

Out of mere wantonnesse! ð, the dull Deuill

Was in this braine of mine, when I deuis’d it;

And *Mosca* gaue it second: Hé must now

Helpe to seare vp this veyne, or we bleed dead.

---

*forked (3479)*] DONALDSON (1985 [627]): “cf. [676].”

*those (3482)*] KERNAN (1962 [193n]): “i.e. the notes he has given them.”

**SD (3482)**] GIFFORD (1816 [3:319]) applies the marginal SD “[Giving them papers.” to Voltore’s “read but those”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [91]), DONALDSON (1985 [103]), HARP (2001 [104]).

*credit (3483)*] KERNAN (1962 [193n]): “believe.”

*It cannot be (my *Sires*) but he is poiseft (3484)*] F (1616 [519]) *It cannot be, but he is poiseft, graue fathers*”; rpt. WHALLEY (1756 [2:401]), GIFFORD (1816 [3:319]), ADAMS (1979 [91]), with he’s; rpt. HARP (2001 [104]).

*poiseft (3484)*] ADAMS (1979 [91n]): “i.e., demonically possessed by a devil inside him”; rpt. HARP (2001 [104]). ADAMS (1979 [91n]) adds: “(not wholly incredible in those days, when witchcraft was an accepted fact).”

**SD (3484)**] GIFFORD (1816 [3:319]) adds the marginal SD “[The scene closes.” after Corvino’s “... but he is poiseft, graue fathers”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [103]). HUTSON (1998 [325]) adds “[Exeunt.”


*wantonness (3491)*] KERNAN (1962 [193n]): “playfulness.”

*gaue it second (3493)*] KERNAN (1962 [193n]): “seconded the idea.”


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3495 How now! who let you loose? whether go you now?
What? to buy Ginger bread? or to drowne Kitlings?
N A N. Sir, Maister Mosca call’d vs out of dores,
And bid vs all go play, and tooke the keyes. A N D. Yes-
V O L P. Did Maister Mosca take the keyes? why, so!
3500 I am farder, in. These are my fine conceipts!
I must be merry, with a mischiefe to me!
What a vile wretch was I that could not beare
My fortune, soberly? I must ha’ my Crotchets!
And my Conundrums! well, go you, and seeke him:
3505 His meaning may be truer, then my feare.
Bid him he, streight, come to me, to the Court;
Thether will I; and, if’t be possible,
Vn-screw my Advocate, vpon new hopes:
When I prouok’d him, then I lost my selfe.

A C T . 5. S C E N E . 1 0 .

A V O C A T O R I, & C .
These things can nêre be reconcil’d. He, here,

Profeßeth, that the Gentleman was wrong’d;

And that the Gentlewoman was brought thereth,

For’d by her husband: and there left. V O L T. Most true.

C E L. How ready is heau’n to those, that pray. A V O C . I. But, that

Volpone would have raush’d her, he holds

Vtterly false; knowing his impotence.

C O R V. Graue Fathers, he is possesst; againe, I say

Possest: nay, if there be poßeffion,

And obßeffion, he has both. A V O C . 3. Here comes our Officer.

V O L P . The Parasite will straighe be, here, graue Fathers.

A V O C . 4. You might inuent some other name, Sir varlet.

A V O C . 3. Did not the Notarie meet him? V O L P . Not, that I

know.


sd (3512) GIFFORD (1816 [3:320]) applies the marginal sd “[Shewing the papers.” to 1 Avocatore’s “These things can nêre be reconcil’d”; rpt. with SD between 1 Avocatore’s SP and his line by ADAMS (1979 [92]), HARP (2001 [105]). KERNAN (1962 [194]): “[Looking over Voltores notes].” DONALDSON (1985 [104]): “[With Voltores papers],”

ready (3516) KERNAN (1962 [195n]): “available (to help).”

he is possesst; agaïne, I say / Possest: nay, if there be poßeffion, / And obßeffion, he has both (3520–22) GIFFORD (1816 [3:320n]): “In possession, the evil spirit was supposed to enter the body of the demoniac; in obsession he was thought to besiege, and torment him from without.” KERNAN (1962 [226]): “Technically, possession was the entry into the body by the evil spirit, while ‘ obsession’ was an attack by the devil from without.” ADAMS (1979 [92n]): “Possession is a devil attacking the mind from within, obsession is the same temptation from without”; rpt. HARP (2001 [105n]).

poßeffion (3521) H&S (1950 [9:731]): “the entrance of the evil spirit into the body”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [628]).

obßeffion (3522) H&S (1950 [9:731]): “the attack from without [by an evil spirit]”; DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “the working of an evil spirit from without.”


inuent (3524) KERNAN (1962 [195n]): “find—because Mosca is now wealthy the term parasite is no longer suitable.” DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “find.”

varlet (3524) See n. 3307.
AVOC. 4. His coming will cleare all. AVOC. 2. Yet it is mighty.

VOLT. May’t please your Father-hoods— VOLP. Sir, the

Parasite

Will’d me to tell you, that his Maister liues;
That you are still the man; your hopes the same;
And this was, onely a jest— VOLT. How? VOLP. Sir, to trie

If you were firme, and how you stood affected.

VOLT. Art’sure he liues? VOLP. Do I liue, Sir? VOLT. O me!

I was too violent. VOLP. Sir, you may redeeme it,

They said, you were possest; fall downe, and seeme so:

Ille helpe to make it good. God blesse the man/

Stop your wind hard, and swell: See, see, see, see!

He vomits crooked pinnes! his eyes are set,

Like a dead hares, hung in a poulters shop!

His mouth’s running away! Do you see, Signior?

Now, ’tis in his belly! CORV. I, the Deuill!

VOLP. Now, in his throate. CORV. I, I perceieue it plaine.
... Now, in his throat (3541–46)] Gifford (1816 [3:321–22n]): “This, with what follows, as every one knows, always took place when a person chose to appear bewitched. It is to the praise of J that he lets slip no opportunity of shewing his contempt for the popular opinions on this head; opinions which, in his days, indeed, were manifested to the destruction of many innocent persons; but which operated, as Puritanism increased in influence and power, with a virulence that took away all security from age and infirmity; and crowded the prisons with bed-ridden old women, and the courts of justice with victims of ignorance, imposture, and blind and bloody superstition”; repr. REA (1919 [226–27]). Donaldson (1985 [628]): “the details of Voltore’s pretended diabolical possession (the stopped breath, the crooked pins, the twisted and mobile mouth, the emergence of the devil as a small creature) can be paralleled in accounts of similar contemporary frauds: see H&S (1950 [9:731–32]).” Kernan (1962 [226]): “All of these details: swelling, vomiting crooked pins, eyes strangely set, the appearance of something running in the body from place to place, and the expulsion of some strange animal from the mouth were all taken as signs of possession by the devil. H&S (1950 [9:731–32]) point out [see nn. 3542, 3544, 3545–46, and 3549] that a number of these symptoms had appeared in a recent sensational case of witchcraft and exorcism. John Darrell, a minister, in the late 1590s had remarkable effectiveness as an exorciser; he was thought to have freed from demonic possession some of the most stubborn cases in England. But in 1599 his activities were shown to have been faked—though he never admitted it—and some of his patients swore that he had coached them. The details of the fraud were published by Samuel Harsnett, future archbishop of York, in a book titled Discovery of the Fraudulent Practices of John Darrell (1599).” Adams (1979 [93n]): “the symptoms that Volpone ‘sees,’ and persuades others to see, were standard”; rpt. Harp (2001 [106n]).

Stop your wind (3541)] Kernan (1962 [196n]): “[i.e.] hold your breath.”

vomits crooked pinnes (3542)] H&S (1950 [9:731]): “in A Tryal of Witches at the Assizes Held At Bury St. Edmonds ... on the Tenth day of March, 1664. Before Sir Matthew Hale K’ (1682 [21]), Samuel Pacy, a merchant of Lowestoft, deposed about his two children, supposed to be bewitched: ‘At other times They would fall into Swounings, & upon the recovery to theG speech they would Cough extreamly, & bring up much Regme, and with the same crooked Pins, and one time a Two-penny Nail with a very broad head, which Pins (amounting to Forty or more) together with the Two-penny Nail were produced in Court, with the afGrmation of the said Deponent, that he was present when the Said Nail was Vomited up, and also most of the Pins.’”

poulterers (3543)] Kernan (1962 [196n]): “poultry seller’s.”

His mouth’s running away! (3544)] Whalley (1756 [2:403n]): “Mr. Simpson imagines it should be, ‘His mouth’s running awry.’ We are to suppose, that Volto re feigned a violent convulsion, and distorted his mouth as much as possibly he could: I think therefore the present expression more humorous and pertinent, and have retained it in the text, on the authority of all the editions.” Rea (1919 [227]): “Whalley quotes Simpson as proposing away for away—an emendation of which Whalley rightly disapproves.” H&S (1950 [9:731]): “cf. John Darrell, A True Narration of the Strange and Grievous Vexation by the Devil, of ... William Somers of Nottingham (1600 [19]): ‘He was also continually torne in very fearful manner and disfigured in his face: wherein somtimes [sic] his lips were drawne awry, now to the one side now to the other: somtimes [sic] his face and neck distorted, to the right and to the left hand, yea somtimes [sic] written to his back.’” Kernan (1962 [196n]): “awry and moving wildly.”

in his belly ... in his throat (3545–46)] H&S (1950 [9:731–32]): “Samuel Harsnet, A Discovery of the Fraudulent Practises of John Darrel (1599 [213]), quotes Somers’s confession of his imposture: ‘I did moue first the calfe of my legge, then my knee-bone, which motion of the knee will likewise make a motion or rising of the thigh. Also by drawing and stopping of my wind, my bellie would stire and shewe a kind of swelling. The bunch (as p. 214 they thurmed it) about my chest, was by the thrusting out of my breast. Likewise my secret swallowing did make the ende of my windpipe to moue, and to shew greater then usuall it is: Againe, by mouing of my iawes, one bunch was easily made in the side, my cheeke neere mine ear: and about the middle of my cheeke with the end of my tongue thrust against it. These motions by pratyse I woulde make very fast, one after another: so that there might easily seeme to bee running in my bodie of some thing, from place to place.’”

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flyes!
In shape of a blew toad, with a battes wings!

3550 Do not you see it, Sir? CORB. What? I thinke I doe.
CORV. 'Tis too manifest. VOLP. Looke! he comes t' him-
felse!
VOLT. Where am I? VOLP. Take good heart, the worst is
paft, Sir.

3555 You are dis-possest. AVOC. I. What accident is this?
AVOC. 2. Sodaine, and full of wonder! AVOC. 3. Ifhee
were
Poslefl, as it appeares, all this is nothing.
CORV. He has beene, often, subject to these fitts.

3560 AVOC. I. Shew him that writing, do you know it, Sir?
VOLP. Deny it, Sir, forsweare it, know it not.
VOLT. Yes, I do know it well, it is my hand:
But all, that it containes, is false. BON. 3. O practise!

In shape of a blew toad (3549) H&S (1950 [9:732]): “Samuel Harsnet, A Discouery of the Fraudulent
Practises of John Darrel (1599 [53]): ‘The booke of the boye of Burton’ (Thomas Darling, another of
Darrell’s tools) ‘sayeth, that towards the end of the fast for his pretended dispossession, he began to heave
& lift vehementlie at his stomacke, and getting up some flegme and choler said (pointing with his finger,
and following with his eyes) looke, looke, see you not the mouse that is gone out of my mouth? and so
pointed after it, unto the farthest part of the parlor.” ADAMS (1979 [93n]): “the demon himself”; rpt. HARP
(2001 [106n]).

shape (3549) See n. 1013.
SD (3547-49)] KERNAN (1962 [196]) applies the marginal SD “[Pointing.]” to Volpone’s “See, where it |
flies! / In shape of a blew toad, with a battes wings!”
Do not you see it, Sir? CORB. What? I thinke I doe. (3550) GIFFORD (1816 [3:322]) reads “Do you not
see it, sir?” CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:511]): “I wrote ‘Do not you see it?’ and ... ought to have been allowed
to remain. I might have adduced other instances.” REA (1919 [227]): “This short speech of Corbaccio is in
itself an excellent illustration of the psychology of such witch-trials as are here satirized.”
comes t’ him- [ruffle (3551-52)] KERNAN (1962 [196n]): “revives.”
SD (3553) DONALDSON (1985 [105]) inserts the SD “[Helping him up]” between Volpone’s SP and his
“Take good heart....”
dis-possest (3555) DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “a pun.”
SD (3558)] KERNAN (1962 [197]) applies the marginal SD “[Waving notes.]” to 3 Avocatore’s “... all this is
nothing”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [93]), HARP (2001 [106]), each with “[He waves the notes],”
SD (3561)] GIFFORD (1816 [3:322]) inserts the SD “[whispers Volt.]” between Volpone’s SP and his “Deny
it, Sir, forsweare it, know it not”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [93]), HARP (2001 [106]), each with [Whispers to
Volpone],” KERNAN (1962 [197]): “[Aside].” DONALDSON (1985 [105]): “[Aside to Voltore].”
BON.3 (3563)] F (1616 [521]) BON.3. An errant “3,” appears after Bonario’s SP.
AVOC. 2. What maze is this! AVOC. 1. Is hee not guilty, then,

Whome you, there, name the Parasite? VOLT. Graue Fathers,

No more then, his good Patron, old Volpone.

AVOC. 4. Why, hee is dead? VOLT. O no, my honor’d Fathers,

Hee liues— AVOC. 1. How! liues? VOLT. Liues. AVOC. 2. This is subtler, yet!

AVOC. 3. You sayd, hee was dead? VOLT. Neuer. AVOC. 3.

You sayd so? CORV. I heard so.

AVOC. 4. Here comes the Gentleman, make him way. AVOC. 3.

A floole.

AVOC. 4. A proper man! and, were Volpone dead,


VOLT. Mosca, I was almost lost, the Advocate

Had betrayd all; but, now, it is recouer’d:

Al’s on the henge againe—say, I am liuing.

O practise! (3563) GIFFORD (1816 [3:322n]); “i.e., confederacy, concerted fraud. The word is very common in this sense.” KERNAN (1962 [197n]); “intrigue.” ADAMS (1979 [93n]); “deceit”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [628]), HARP (2001 [106n]). Cf. n. 54.

fubler (3571) KERNAN (1962 [197n]); “more intricate.”

sd (3573) ADAMS (1979 [94]) inserts the sd [to CORVINO] between an unspecified Avocatore’s SP and 3 Avocatore’s “You say’d so?”; rpt. HARP (2001 [107]), with the SP and line assigned to 4 Avocatore.

Here comes the Gentleman, make him way (3574) KERNAN (1962 [197n]); “[i.e.] open a path for him.” ADAMS (1979 [94]); “J’s audience would be scandalized at the instant transformation of a parasite into a gentleman, partly because they had seen it happen frequently in their own land”; rpt. HARP (2001 [107]).


A proper man! and, were Volpone dead, / A fit match for my daughter (3576–77) For commentary directly related to the Avocatore, cf. app. Characters.


sd (3577) GIFFORD (1816 [3:323]) applies the marginal sd “[Aside,” to 4 Avocatore’s “... A fit match for my daughter”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [94]), DONALDSON (1985 [106]), HARP (2001 [107]), each with the sd between 4 Avocatore’s SP and his lines.

recoyer’d (3579) KERNAN (1962 [226]); “Volpone uses this word several times to mean ‘the problem is solved’; but in a play where disguise and obliterating the truth with falsehood appear so consistently, we must take the word in its literal sense as well: covering reality over once more with pretense.”

on the henge (3580) F (1616 [521]) reads: “o’ the hinge.” DONALDSON (1985 [628]); “i.e., running nicely.”
Whatbufeknaueisthis!Moist reverend Fathers,
I sooner had attended your grave pleasures,
But that my order, for the funereal
Of my deare Patron did require mee—Volp. (Mosca!)

Whome I intend to bury, like a Gentleman—
Volp. I, quick, and cosen me of all. Avoc.2. Still stranger!

More intricate! Avoc.1. And come about, againe!

Avoc.4. It is a match, my daughter is bestow'd.

(Mosca!) Firstr, lie be bang'd.

I know. Your voice is good, cry not so low'd.) Avoc.1. Demand

SD (3578-80) Gifford (1816 [3:323]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside to Mos.]

BuG (3581) Symonds (1886 [85]) imagines that Mosca greets Volpone here "with boxes on the ears."


come about, againe (3587) Schelling (1910 [1:628]): "charge, turn around." Kernan (1962 [198n]): "reversed once more—i.e. having been declared dead, then living, Volpone is once more dead."

come about (3587) Donaldson (1985 [628]): "turned around."

bestow'd (3588) Kernan (1962 [198n]): "i.e. in marriage."

SD (3588) Gifford (1816 [3:324]) applies the marginal SD "[Aside to 4 Avocatore's] It is a match, my daughter is bestow'd:" rpt. Kernan (1962 [198]), Adams (1979 [94]), Donaldson (1985 [106]), Harp (2001 [107]), each with the SD between the SP and the line.

SD (3589) Gifford (1816 [3:324]) removes the parentheses and applies the marginal SD "[Aside to Volp.] to Mosca's "(Will you gi' mee halfe?"; rpt. Kernan (1962 [198]), Adams (1979 [94]), Donaldson (1985 [106]), Harp (2001 [107]), each with the SD between Mosca's SP and his aside.

SD (3589) Kernan (1962 [198]) inserts the SD "[Half aloud.]

Your voice is good, cry not so low'd"; rpt. Donaldson (1985 [106]): "[To Volpone]."

Your voice is good, cry not so low'd (3424) Upton (1749 [55]): "From Plautus, Mostellaria 576: "Tranio. Scio te bona esse voce, ne clama nimis" ["I know you have a good voice. Don't strain it, yelling" (Nixon, trans., 3:351)]; repr. Whalley (1756 [2:405n]), Gifford (1816 [324n]), H&S (1950 [9:732]), Rea (1919 [227]), Donaldson (1985 [628]).
The Advocate. Sir, did not you affirm,  
Volpone was alive? Volp. Yes, and he is;  
This Gent’man told me, so. (Thou shalt haue halfe.)  

M O S. Whose drunkard is this same? speake some, that knowe him:  
I never saw his face. (I cannot now  
Afford it you so cheape. Volp. No?) Avoc. I. What say you?  

Volp. The Officer told mee. Volp. I did, graue Fathers,  
And will maintayne, he lieues, with mine owne life.  
And, that this creature told me. (I was borne,  
With all good starres my enemies.) M O S. Most graue
Fathers,

If such an insolence, as this, must passe
Upon me, I am silent: 'Twas not this,
For which you sent, I hope. AVOC. 2. Take him, away.

(VOLP. Mosca.) AVOC. 3. Let him be whipt. (VOLP. Wilt thou betray mee?

Cosen me?) AVOC. 3. And taught, to beare himselfe
Toward a person of his ranke. AVOC. 4. Away.

MOS. I humbly thanke your Father-hoods. VOLP. Soft, soft:
whipt?

And loose all that I haue? If I confesse,

It cannot bee much more. AVOC. 4. Sir, are you mar-
ried?

VOLP. They'll bee ally'd, anone; I must be resolute:
The FOXE shall, here, vncase. (MOS. Patron.) VOLP. Nay, now,
My ruins shall not come alone; your match
Ile hinder sure: my substance shall not gleu you,
Nor screw you, into a Family. (M O S. Why, Patron!) [N4*]

V O L P. I am Volpone, and this is my Knaue;
This, his owne Knaue; This, auarices Foole;
This, a Chimera of Wittall, Foole, and Knaue;
And, reuerend Fathers, since we all can hope
Nought, but a sentence, let’s not now dispaire it.

You heare mee briefe. C O R V. May it please your Father-hoods-
C O M. Silence.

A V O C. I. The knot is now vn-done, by miracle!

SD (3618) DONALDSON (1985 [107]) removes the parentheses from “(M O S. Why, Patron!)” and inserts the SD “[Aside to Volpone]” between Mosca’s SP and his line.


substance (3621) KERNAN (1962 [200n]): “fortune.”
SD (3622) DONALDSON (1985 [107]) removes the parentheses from “(M O S. Why, Patron!)” and inserts the SD “[To Volpone]” between Mosca’s SP and his line.

I am Volpone, and this is my Knaue; / This, his owne Knaue; This, auarices Foole; / This, a Chimera of Wittall, Foole, and Knaue (3623–25 + SD) REA (1919 [227]): “With a gesture pointing out first Mosca, then Voltore, then Corbaccio, and then Corvino.” KERNAN (1962 [200n]): “[Volpone] points in turn to Mosca, Voltoare, Cobaccio, and Corvino.” GIFFORD (1816 [3:325]) applies the marginal SD “Pointing to Mosca.” to Volpone’s “this is my Knaue”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [95]), with the SD between Volpone’s “This” and “his owne Knaue.” DONALDSON (1985 [107]), HARP (2001 [108]).

SD (3624) GIFFORD (1816 [3:325]) inserts the SD “[to Volc.” between Volpone’s “This” and “his owne Knaue”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [95]), DONALDSON (1985 [107]), HARP (2001 [108]).

SD (3624) GIFFORD (1816 [3:325]) inserts the SD “[to Corb.” between Volpone’s “This” and “auarices Foole”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [95]), DONALDSON (1985 [107]), HARP (2001 [108]).

SD (3625) GIFFORD (1816 [3:325]) inserts the SD “[to Corv.” between Volpone’s “This” and “a Chimera of Wittall, Foole, and Knaue”; rpt. ADAMS (1979 [95]), DONALDSON (1985 [107]), HARP (2001 [108]).

Knaue (3623) KERNAN (1962 [200n]): “servant.”
Chimera (3625) REA (1919 [227]): “[Corvino], he remarks, is as great a monstrosity as Homer’s chimera, which was likewise composed of three different creatures—lion, goat, and serpent”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [200n]), ADAMS (1979 [95]), DONALDSON (1985 [628]), HARP (2001 [108n]).

Wittall (3625) HARP (2001 [108n]), wittol: “one who willingly gives in to his wife’s adultery.” See n. 3091.

let’s not now dispaire it (3627) KERNAN (1962 [200n]): “[i.e.] don’t disappoint us by delay.”
briehe (3628) KERNAN (1962 [200n]): “(speake) briefly.”
knot (3630) DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “cf. [675]; but referring also to the play’s denouement.”
AVOC. 2. Nothing can be more cleare. AVOC. 3. Or, can more proue
These innocent. AVOC. I. Giue 'hem their liberty.
BON. Heauen could not, long, let such grosse crimes be hid.
AVOC. 2. If this be held the high way, to get riches,
May I be poore. AVOC. 3. This's not the gaine, but torment.
AVOC. I. These possesse wealth, as sick men possesse Feuers,
Which, trulyer, may be sayd to possesse them.
AVOC. 2. Disroabe that Parasite. CORV. MOS. Most ho-
nor'd Fathers—
AVOC. I. Can you plead ought to stay the course of Justice?
If you can, speake. CORV. VOLT. We beg fauor, CEL. And mercy.
AVOC. I. You hurt your innocence, suing for the guilty.
Stand forth; and, first, the Parasite. You appeare
T' haue beene the chiefest minister, if not plotter,
In all these leud impostures; and now, lastly,
Haue, with your impudence, abus'd the Court,
And habite of a Gentleman of Venice,
Being a fellow of no birth or bloud:
For which, our sentence is, first thou be whipt;
Then liue perpetuall prisoner in our Gallies.
VoLT. I thanke you, for him. Mos. Bane to thy woluish na-
ture.

3655 AVOC. I. Deliuer him to the Saffi. Thou, Volpone,
By bloud, and ranke a Gentleman, canst not fall
Vnder like censure; But our judgemen on thee
Is, that thy substance all be, straight, confiscate

To the Hospitall of the Incurabili:

3660 And, since the most was gotten by imposture,
By fayning lame, gout, palsy and such diseases,
Thou art to lie in prison, crampt with irons,
Till thou bee'st sick, and lame indeed. Remove him.

Volp. This is call'd mortifying of a FOXE.

I thanke you (3653) DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “Gifford (?) compares Mosca’s response at [3612],” which reads “I humbly thanke your Father-hoods.”

Bane to thy woluish na- ture (3655) KERNAN (1962 [201n]): “a curse on.” ADAMS (1979 [96n]): “poison. It was legitimate to poison wolves, not foxes.” HARP (2001 [108n]): “poison. Wolfsbane is a poisonous plant.”


SD (3655) GIFFORD (1816 [3:326]) applies the marginal SD “[Mosca is carried out.” to 1 Avocatore’s “Deliuer him to the Saffi”; rpt. KERNAN (1962 [201]). ADAMS (1979 [96]): “[Mosca is led out];” rpt. HARP (2001 [109]). DONALDSON (1985 [108]): “[Mosca is taken out.” HUTSON (1998 [331]): “[Exit MOSCA, guarded].”

be, straight, confiscate (3658) Faint comma marks seem to set off “straight” here.

straight, confiscate (3658) KERNAN (1962 [201n]): “instantly confiscated.”

Hospital of the Incurabili (3659) H&S (1950 [9:732]): “Depicted in Graevius, Thesaurus Antiquitatum Italice 5.1.200.” ADAMS (1979 [96n]): “there was a Hospital of the Incurables in Venice”; rpt. HARP (2001 [109n]). DUTTON (1983 [71]): “It is, of course, something equally horrible and fitting that a man who has feigned death for so long should be sent to a hospital for incurables.” DONALDSON (1985 [628]) adds: “founded in Venice in 1522 for the treatment of veneral disease (Brockbank).”

Incurabili (3659) KERNAN (1962 [201n]): “incurables.”

Thou art to lie in prison, crampt with irons, / Till thou bee'st sick, and lame indeed (3662-63) ADAMS (1979 [96n]): “the sentence carries an irony: these are the only people in Venice who can be trusted with money. The diseases to be picked up in Venetian jails were no joke; the Stinche, so called, were the most horrible dungeons in all Europe.”

SD (3663-64) GIFFORD (1816 [3:326]) applies the marginal SD “[He is taken from the Bar” to 1 Avocatore’s “Remoae him” [3663]; rpt. ADAMS (1979 […]], with “[He is taken away];” rpt. HARP (2001 [109]). DONALDSON (1985 [108]) inserts “[He is taken out” after Volpone’s This is call’d mortifying of a FOXE” [3664]; rpt. HUTSON (1998 [332]), with “[Exit VOLPONE, guarded].”

This is call'd mortifying of a FOXE (3664) H&S (1950 [9:732]): “a quibble on the cookery term. COTGRAVE (1611), s.v. Faisander: ‘To mortiffe fowl, &c.; to make it tender, by hanging it vp, or (otherwise) keeping it some while after it is killed.’” DUTTON (1983 [70-71]) notes the Volpone’s “reaction to [his punishment] should give us pause,” for “[i]t is a sardonic line; ostensibly, Volpone acknowledges the humiliation and chastening that he is to receive. But to ‘mortify’ is also to hang game until it is tender and the flesh is suitably ‘high’; one suspects that it will be a long time before the old fox will be fit to eat.” KERNAN (1962 [226]): “The literal meaning here is ‘humiliation,’ but two other sense apply. A cooking
AVOC. I. Thou Voltoire, to take away the scandal
Thou hast giu’n all worthy men, of thy profession,
Art banish’d from their Fellowship, and our State.
Corbaccio, bring him neare. VVe here possesse
Thy sonne, of all thy eststate; and confine thee

To the Monastery of San’ Spirito:
Where since thou knew’st not how to liue well here,
Thou shalt be learn’d to die well. CORB. Ha! what said he?
COM. You shall know anonc, Sir. AVOC. Thou Corwmo, shalt
Be straight imbarqu’d from thine owne house, and row’d

Round about Venice, through the grand Canale,
Wearing a cap, with fayre, long Asses eares,

term: to mortify an animal was to allow it to hang after it had been killed until the meat became tender. But, as in our term ‘morrification of the flesh,’ the word also means subjecting the body and the passions to ascetic discipline and rigorous austerities.” DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “(i) killing; (ii) hanging (game) until tender; (iii) spiritual disciplining.”

possesse / Thy sonne, of all thy eststate (3668–69) ADAMS (1979 [96n]); “i.e., convey to your son your entire estate”; rpt. HARP (2001 [110n]).

thy eststate (3669) F (1616 [522]) reads: “thy estate,” which KERNAN (1962 [202n]) glosses as “property.”

Monastery of San’ Spirito (3670) H&S (1950 [9:732]); “on the Giudecca Canal, opposite the island”; rpt. DONALDSON (1985 [628]). KERNAN (1962 [226]): “The Monastery of the Holy Spirit, where Corbaccio, who has heretofore been completely without soul or spirit, will be painfully instructed to forget the things of this world and prepare his soul for the next.”

learn’d (3672) KERNAN (1962 [202n]); “taught”; ADAMS (1979 [96]), HARP (2001 [110]).

SP (3672) KERNAN (1962 [202]) inserts the SD “[Cupping his ear]” between Corbaccio’s SP and his “Ha! what said he?”

SD (3673) DONALDSON (1985 [109]) applies the marginal SD “[Taking him aside]” to the Commendatore’s reply to Corbaccio, “You shall know anone, Sir.”

AVOC. Thou (3673) The SP lacks a numeral that would designate which of the Avocatori speaks the line “Thou Coruino...” F (1616 [523]) also lacks the numeral; WHALLEY (1756 [2:408] assigns it to 1 Avocatore; rpt. GIFFORD (1816 [3:327]), ADAMS (1979 [97]), HARP (2001 [110]).

imbarqu’d (3674) KERNAN (1962 [202n]): “put on a boat.”

the grand Canale (3675) REA (1919 [227]); “Cf. CORYAT (1611 [163.12–24]): ‘The City is divided in the middeft by a goody fare channell, which they call Canal il grande. The fame is crooked, and made in the forme of a Roman S. It is in length a thousand and three hundred paces, and in breadth at the leaffy fourty, in some places more. The fixe parts of the City whereof Venice confinth, are situate on both fides of this Canal il Grande. [...] both the fides of this channel are adorned with many fumptuous and magnificient Palaces that fland very neare to the water, and make a very glorious and beautifull shew.”” H&S (1950 [9:732]); “nearly two miles long, the ‘main street’ of Venice,” with ref. to Coryat.


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In stead of hornes: and so, to mount (a paper
Pin’d on thy brest) to the Berlino—Corv. Yes,
And, haue mine eyes beat out with stinking fish,
Brus’d fruit, and rotten egges—'Tis well. I ’am glad,
I shall not see my shame, yet. Avoc.I. And to expiate
Thy wrongs done to thy wife, thou art to send her
Home, to her father, with her dowrie trebled:
And these are all your judgements—(Avoc.I. Honour’d Fathers.)

Avo.I. Which may not be reuok’d. Now, you begin
When crimes are done, and past, and to be punish’d,
To thinke what your crimes are; away with them.
Let all, that see these vices thus rewarded,
Take heart, and loue to study ’hem. Mischiefes feed
Like beasts, till they bee fat, and then they bleed.

horne (3677)] See n. 1388.
to the Berlino (3678)] Whalley (1756 [2:408n]): “i.e., to the pillory.” Gifford (1816 [3:327n]): “a pillory, or cucking-stool, as Florio says. I doubt whether John understood what the latter really was. Berlino is always used for a raised stage on which malefactors are exposed to public view, and answers with sufficient accuracy to our pillory.” Kernan (1962 [202n]) adds: “the stage on which the malefactors were exposed.”
haue mine eyes beat out (3679)] Kernan (1962 [202n]): “the crowd threw refuse at those in the pillory.” Donaldson (1985 [628]): “for Corvino, a constant concern: cf. [1434–35], [3357], etc.”
And to expiate / Thy wrongs done to thy wife, thou art to send her / Home, to her father, with her dowrie trebled (3861–63)] Kernan (1962 [226–27]): “The return of Celia to her father’s house is worth comment. It is usual in comedy for the young lovers to be united in some fashion, often quite an unrealistic one, by the end of the play; and thus marriage or feast—or even seduction—with which comedy usually ends signals the triumph of vitality, beauty, and cleverness over foolishness and those idiocies which obstruct life rather than furthering it. So general is this pattern in comedy that we anticipate, I believe, in Volp that a way will be found to void the marriage of Corvino and Celia and bring about her union with Bonario. Her return to her single state—celibacy is never a matter for celebration in comedy—is therefore a disruption of the normal comic pattern and a grim reminder that in the world J has here constructed greed and foolishness are not always completely overcome. Even though they may destroy themselves in the end, they nevertheless leave permanent scars on the world.”
Now, you begin / When crimes are done, and past, and to be punish’d, / To thinke what your crimes are (3685–87)] Holt (1905b [169]): cf. Juvenal, Sat 13.237–39: “(bad men) only begin to feel what is right and what wrong when (the crime) has been committed” (Ramsay, trans., 263).
SD (3690)] Gifford (1816 [3:328]), et al., applies the marginal SD “[Exeunt.” to 1 Avocatore’s “… till they bee fat, and then they bleed.”

302
VOLPONE.

The seasoning of a Play is the applause,

Now, though the Foxe be punish’d by the lawes,

He, yet, doth hope there is no suffring due,

For any fact, which he hath done ’gainst you;

If there be, censure him: here he, doubtfull, stands.

If not, fare Iouially, and clap your hands.

THE END.

SD (3691) GIFFORD (1816 [3:328]), et al., replaces the original entry notation with the SD “VOLPONE comes forward.” DONALDSON (1985 [109]): “[Enter Volpone].”

The seasoning of a Play is the applause (3692) HOLT (1905b [169]): cf. Plautus, Poenulus 1370–71: [‘Now for what is the final seasoning of a play—if our comedy has pleased you, it asks for your applause’ (Nixon, trans., 4:137)].”

fact (3695) KERNAN (1962 [203n]): “crime.”

doubtfull (3696) HUTSON (1998 [491]): “(a) indecisive, apprehensive; (b) dreaded, giving cause for apprehension.”

fare Iouially, and clap your hands (3697) REA (1919 [228]), per HOLT (1905): “A typical Lat. ending for a comedy! Terence’s Eunuchus, Heautontimoroumenos, and Phormio all end with the words: ‘Vos valete, et plaudite’ [Eunuchus 1095: “Farewell, and clap your hands” (Sargeaunt, trans., 1:351). This stereotyped phrase is not so common in the plays of Plautus, but we find [in Epidicus, 733]: ‘plaudite et valete. Lumbos porgite atque exsurgite’ [“Give us your applause and fare you well. Stretch your limbs and rise” (Nixon, trans., 2:361)]. Cf. the closing lines of John Day, Humour Out of Breath: ‘And so shut up our simple comedy, / With Plautus phrase: Si placet, plaudite.’” Rea adds: “I found the suggestion for the lines not directly in Plautus or Terence, but in the conclusion of Erasmus, MorEnc 68: ‘Quare valete, plaudite, vivite, bibite, MORIAE celeberrimi Mystae’ [“And so I’ll say Goodbye. Clap your hands, live well and drink; distinguished initiates of FOLLY” (Radice, trans., 206)]. There is the following note [from Gerard Lijster] on valete, plaudite: ‘His verbis utebatur recitator fabulae, discensus e proscenio. De suo addidit, vivite, bibite. Et vivere proprius est genitaliter vivere.’ These last words are evidently J’s ‘fare Iouially.’” DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “the invitation to applaud is common at the end of a Rom. comedy.”

Iouially (3679) DONALDSON (1985 [628]): “lightly bestows upon the audience a Jove-like power.” Cf. n. 2083.

SD (3697) GIFFORD (1816 [3:328]), et al., inserts the marginal SD “[Exit.” after Volpone’s “… and clap your hands.” For commentary related to the final six lines of the play, see app. Extra-Dramatic Texts, s.v. “The Epilogue.”
APPENDIX

I. THE TEXT: DATES AND CONTEXTS

A. Dates of Original Composition, Performance, and Publication

1. Printed Evidence

To fix the exact dates or general time-frame in which *Volp* was first composed, performed, and published, it is necessary to work backward from the printed dates and internal evidence supplied by the Q and F texts. The Q t.p. supplies the publication date of 1607 [8], and J signs the Q Epistle “*From my house in the Black-Friars* | *this I I. of February. 1607* [132–33]. However, the F t.p. (1616 [440]) records that *Volp* had first been “Acted in the yeere 1605. By | the K. MAJESTIES | SERVANTS.” More evidence comes in the form of the production note that concludes the F (1616 [524]) text of *Volp*: “This Comedie was firft | acted, in the yeere | 1605. | By the Kings MAJESTIES | SERVANTS ... With the allowance of the Master of REVELLS.” As numerous commentators have pointed out, the earlier performance date of 1605 most likely reflects the non-Gregorian Old Style dating system of the era’s court and legal calendar, whereby the year of 1605 extended until the modern New Style date of either 1 Mar 1606, or 24 Mar 1606. This may also be the case for the 1607 publication of Q.

LANGBAINE (1691 [297]): “… first acted in the Year 1605. by the Kings Majesties Servants, with the Allowance of the of the Reveils; printed fol. Lond. 1640....”

GIFFORD (1816 [3:160]): “This celebrated Comedy was first brought out at the Globe Theatre in 1605, and printed in quarto, 1607.”

FLEAY (1891 [1:373]): “the date of this Address <i.e. The Epistle>,’11th Feb 1607,’ must mean 1607–8, and the play was published in 1607(–8), which is to be taken as before 25 Mar 1608.”


REA (1919 [vii, pass.]), based on the date of the Epistle, Q “was evidently published in Feb or Mar, 1607–8.”

[xxx–xxx] “If the character of Sir Politique Would-bee is studied in connection with the events of the time at which *Volp* [xxx] was written, some interesting conclusions are suggested. The play ... is a very easy one to date. It was acted not later than 25 Mar 1606, and not earlier than 19 Jan. Its composition was completed within less than two months, according to the author; its actual writing took only five weeks. Apparently, then, it was begun in Dec 1605 or Jan 1606.”

304
GREG (1926 [340–41]): “Had J. any fixed practice in dating? […] Did he adopt the date of the incoming year on 1 Jan, or did he cling to the old date up to and including 24 Mar? The latter practice, which reckoned the year from Lady Day, I shall call the Legal dating, since it was used in official documents; the former I shall call the Calendar dating, since it was followed in almanacks and the like: New Year’s Day meant anything but 1 Jan. […] J was a bad man who seldom dated his letters. There are, however, one or two interesting exceptions. The Q of Volp has an epistle dated 11 Feb 1607. The play was not entered in the Stationers’ Register, but the date on the t.p. is 1607, and this is very probably, though not necessarily, a Calendar date.”

H&S (1937 [5:3]) “The date 1607 on the t.p. of Q is probably a calendar date, i.e., beginning the year on 1 Jan.” If so, the play was printed early in the year. But Thorpe did not enter it on the Stationers’ Register till he transferred it along with Sej on 3 Oct 1610 to Walter Burre.”

HOTINE (1991 [80n]): “Although New Year’s Day was kept on 1 Jan, the year legally began on 25 Mar, so that dates between these two can be dated in either year, and writer are not consistent. J could be writing in either 1607 or 1608 by modern reckoning.”

PARKER (1999 [2]): “Greg suggests [11 Feb 1607] is a calendar date, and that, as the preliminaries of the ed. were the last part to be completed, the text was most likely printed in Jan 1607.”

2. Internal Evidence

As J proclaims in the Prologue regarding the conception and composition of Volp: “this his creature, / Which was, two monthes since, no feature; / And, though he dares give them five lines to mend it, / 'Tis knowne, five weekees fully pen’d it” [365–68]. Such an explicit declaration, taken in relation to the work’s printed and internal evidence, places the play’s composition time-frame in Dec 1605–Jan 1606. J remains the only authority for the swiftness of the play’s composition.

WHALLEY (1756 [1:xl]): “After an intermission of two years, he wrote his comedy of Volp, which was acted in 1605, by the same performers as the tragedy of Sej….. […] The enemies of J industriously gave out, that all he wrote was produced with extreme pains and labour…. […] To this objection, he hath retorted in the prologue to this play: and from thence we learn, that the whole was finished by him in five weeks.”

GIFFORD (1816 [1:lxxi–lxxxiin]): “The Fox was rapidly written; but it is not, therefore, incorrect: and what Mr. Cumberland adds of it as creditable to [lxxxiin] his taste as learning.”

H&S (1925 [2:49]): “Volp, the amazing product of five weeks’ labour, was most probably written during the first months of 1606.”

Other commentators who agree that J first composed Volp in a five-week period of the winter of 1605–6 include KERNAN (1962 [229]).

Attempts to date Volp according to its internal evidence tend to center upon potential correlations between contemporary records and the various prodigies alluded to in the following exchange between Sir Politic and Peregrine in 2.1 (or 1050–63): “PER. Yes, and your Lions whelping, in the Tower. / POL. Another whelpe? PER. Another, Sir. POL. Now heauen! / What prodigies be these? The Fires at Berwike!
And the new Starre! these things concurring, strange! / And full of omen! Saw you those Meteors? / PER. I did Sir. POL. Fearfull! Pray you Sir, confirme me, / Were there three Porcupises seeene, aboue the Bridge, / As they give out? PER. Sire, and a Sturgeon, Sir. / POL. I am astonish'd. PER. Nay Sir, be not so; / I'll tell you a greater prodigie, then these— / POL. What should these things portend! PER. The very day / (Let me be sure) that I put forth from London, / There was a Whale discouer'd, in the riuier, / As high as Woolwich....”

FLEAY (1891 [1:373]): “The new star, 2.1, appeared 1604, Oct 10, and was visible about a year. The porpoises and whale at Woolwich date 1606, Jan 19, and a few days after (Stow, p. 881); a second lion whelp in the Tower, 1605, Feb 26 (Stow, p. 857); a former one was on 5th Aug 1604 (Stow, p. 884). But a lioness had two whelps 1605, Jul 27, according to Stow, p. 870, and these must be those here alluded to. Gifford’s dates are all wrong, and have given me much trouble. The whale gives the decisive date. The play (which was only five weeks in writing) must have been produced Jan–Feb 1606, immediately before Mucedorus was acted on Shrove Sunday, Mar 2.”

HOLT (1905b [164-65]): “Fleay has pointed out the importance of the whale reference in connection with this inquiry. [...] The date of this discovery is to be found by comparing the account above [1060–63] with Stow’s Annales for Jan 19, 1605–6 <whose marginal note reads, A great whale came up as high as Woolwich>: ‘The 19 of Jan, a great Porpus was taken aliue at Westham, in a small creeke, a mile and a halfe within the Land, and presented to Francis Goston Esquire, chiefe Auditor of the Imprests, and within few dayes after, a very great Whale came up within eight mile of London, whose body was seeen divers times above water, and judged to exceede the length of the longest Ship in the River, and when she tasted the fresh water, and sented <sic> the land, she returned into the Sea.’ The date of this whale, as Fleay says, determines one limit for the production—it must have been later than Jan 19, 1606; but what neither Fleay nor any other, so far as I am aware, has noted is that only a few lines above a very direct hint is given as to the length of time which ensued between the date of the whale’s appearance and the date of the production of the play. [quotes 1030–31; 1060–62] In other words, Peregrine is represented as holding this conversation with Sir Politique in Venice just seven weeks after Jan 19, 1606—i.e., Mar 9, 1606. If this were an isolated instance, we might take it for granted that J merely wrote seven weeks to give adequate time for Peregrine to reach Venice from London, but a significant passage in the Prol. mentions approximately the same length of time in discussing the composition of the play: [quotes 365–68] [165] J’s exceptional care in the minor details of his art warrants us, I believe, in using the seven weeks or two months which he mentioned, as accurate for determining the date of the production. Two contingencies should be mentioned … first, that the phenomenal appearance of the whale occurred while the play was in the course of composition; second, that J, in revising the play for printing … inserted these lines. If either were true, it would invalidate our conclusions, but there is no reason to suspect such a thing. The mention of the whale comes early in the play; it is introduced in a perfectly natural manner with a number of other prodigies collected in J’s memory from the reports of the preceding year or more; and it forms an apt
climax, a local hit, with which the audience were supposed to be familiar, having occurred only ‘seven weeks’ before.’

H&S (1925 [2:49n]): The allusions in 2.1 to ‘another’ young lion ‘whelped in the Tower’ [1050–51], ‘three porcupises scene, about the bridge,’ and ‘a whale discover’d, in the river as high as Woolwich,’ are very explicit, and the two latter, in any case, can only refer to the incidents which Stow thought it worth while to record under Jan 19, ‘and a few days later,’ in 1606, in terms almost identical with J’s. Peregrine, who reports these wonders, says that he left London on the very day of the appearance of the whale, and that this was ‘seven weeks’ before. We are not bound to take this reckoning as exact, but it would be quite in the manner of J’s realism to identify the supposed date of the action with the actual date of the performance. In this case, the piece must have been played about the middle of Mar (allowing a week from Jan 19 for Stow’s ‘a few days later’); in any case before the 25th, if we are to rely upon the date ‘1605’ of the Q. t.p.” [The eds. clearly meant the performance dates added to the F t.p.]

GREG (1926 [345]): “Howes records in 1606: ‘The 19. of Jan. a great Porpus was taken alive at West ham, in a small creeke a mile, & a halfe within the land, … & within a few days after, a very great Whale came vp within 8. nhle of Lon.’ Now, although this entry is incorrectly described by the poet’s latest eds. as being ‘in terms almost identical with J’s’ (for West Ham, far from being above London Bridge, is barely above Woolwich), there is a good deal of weight in the contention that dramatist and annalist are alluding to the same events. Conclusive, however, it is not, while other allusions, so far as they can be checked, fit somewhat better with an earlier date. A confident decision either way would be unwise, but, in view of the double possibility of interpolation and coincidence, I cannot regard the evidence as sufficiently certain to negative <sic> the presumption of a Calendar date.”

DUTTON (1983 [147]): “To judge from internal evidence, the play cannot have been completed before Jan 1606.”

3. Secondary Evidence

The 1606 production of the anonymous Mucedorus (ca. 1588–98) and its possibly reactionary epilogue have been used by commentators to date the earliest performances of Volp and to gauge its reception among certain audiences. The passage in question reads: “ENVY. From my foul study will I hoist a wretch, / A lean and hungry meager cannibal, / Whose jaws swell to his eyes with chawing malice, / And him I’ll make a poet. / This scrambling raven with his needy beard / Will I whet on to write a comedy, / Wherein shall be compos’d dark sentences, / Pleasing to factious brains. / And every other where place me a jest, / Whose high abuse shall more torment than blowes.”

FLEAY (1891 [1:373]): Volp “must have been produced Jan–Feb 1606, immediately before Mucedorus was acted on Shrove Sunday, Mar 2.”

[1:348–49]: “On 1606, Jan 6 J’s Mask for the Marriage of the Earl of Essex was performed at Court; and shortly afterwards, probably Feb 2, Volp, which had been acted at the Globe in the previous year. That this play gave offence is clear from the additions to Mucedorus, presented on Mar 2, and this, doubtless, was the reason of [J’s] again leaving the King’s company. It is noteworthy that Sh. did not act in this play;
his natural tact probably foresaw the trouble to come. [...] Returning to Court matters; Jonson’s offence in Volp was marked by Campion’s employment for the 1607 mask...."

FLEAY (1891 [2:50–51]): “In 1610 (and beyond doubt in the lost ed. of 1606) Mucedorus was issued with new additions, as acted before the King at Whitehall on Shrove Sunday night by the King’s servants usually, playing at the Globe. This title must belong to the 1606 ed., for there were no performances at Court at Shrovetide 1610 on account of the plague; and this is further proved by the allusions to the EastHo restraint in the added parts, ‘a trap for boys, [51] not men’ (ind. at the end of the play), and to ‘our unwilling error So late presented,’ in which a ‘raven with a needy beard,’ ... ‘a lean and hungry meagre cannibal’ had written a comedy with dark sentences and high abuse pleasing to factious brains; J’s Fox, in which the King’s miraculous healing powers by touch are perhaps ridiculed as Oglio del Scoto <rf. 1228–29>, and the ravens Corbaccio and Corvino are chief characters. Moreover, ‘usually at the Globe’ implies a date before the taking over of the Black-friars by the King’s men at Christmas 1609. From its shortness I conjecture that this play may have been one of the Four Plays in One of 1605–6, with the Yorkshire Tragedy, The Merry Devil of Edmonton, and Cloth Breeches.”

SMALL (1899 [116–17n]), following Fleay, notes that “it is apparently to this play <i.e., EastHo> and Volp that the 1606 epil. to the anon. play Mucedorus refers [quotes passage above]. This is clearly a hit at J and his reflection on Scotch dignitaries and probably on the king himself.”

HOLT (1905b [165]): “The importance of the date, Mar 9, 1606, as the earliest possible for the production of the play is manifest when we come to examine Fleay’s contention that J and Volp are referred to in the additions to Mucedorus. Putting aside his practically unsupported declarations that these additions to the old play were made in 1606; and disregarding also his impossible identification of ‘a lean and hungry meagre cannibal’ with the known mountain-bellied J then just rising to the height of his fame: the date he mentions, Shrove Sunday, Mar 2, 1606, as the date of the production of Mucedorus is a week earlier than the earliest possible date for the production of Volp. To state this briefly: The period of the time between the appearance of the whale, Jan 19, 1606, and the date which Fleay assign to Mucedorus, containing, (he says) an apology for the Volp, is just six weeks. Now J himself says his play ‘was, two months since, no feature,’ and one of the characters in the play discusses the appearance of the whale which, according to his own words, he saw seven weeks before. Placing the earliest possible date as Mar 9, 1606, we have the latest possible supplied by the end of the year, Mar 25. Somewhere between these two dates we may place the first production of Volp: nearer than this it is hardly possible to come.”

REA (1919 [xlin]) is “inclined ... to accept Fleay’s theory that the references in Mucedorus are to Volp. One particularly significant piece of dialogue among the additions to the play, presumably made in 1608, Fleay does not, I believe, mention. Mucedorus is thinking of disguising himself: MUC. ... A more obscure, servile habiliment / Besems this enterprise. / AN. Then like a Florentine or mountebank! / MUC. "Tis much too tedious.”

4. Earliest Performances (1606–1642)
a) The Globe

*Volp* premiered at the Globe in Southwark as presented by the King’s Men; see the F (1616) t.p., which records that the play was “Acted in the yeere 1605. By | the K. MAIESIES | SERVANTS.” As with the printed text of the play, this published date most likely represents the modern calendar year of 1606; cf. SCHELLING (1914 [166]). Most scholars agree that *Volp* was produced early in 1606, almost as soon as J completed the play. Speculative earlier dates for the play’s first performances appear to clash with the dates assigned to its initial period of composition, e.g., KERNAN (1962 [229]) suggests sometime “during the early winter of 1606”; DUTTON (1983 [147]) thinks “a first performance in late Jan or Feb 1606 seems likely.”

FLEAY (1891 [1:373]): “The date of original production must be 1606, before 25 Mar.”

H&S (1925 [2:49]): “It was acted shortly after it completion <i.e., early 1606> by the King’s Men at the Globe.”

DUTTON (1983 [147]) interprets the 1605 performance date thus: “given that Old Style dating was still in use in England at the time, that could mean any time up to what we should call 1 March 1606.”

DONALDSON (1985 [617]) interprets the 1605 date as “a dating according to the legal year, which ran until 24 Mar,” which may be taken to suggest that *Volp* “was first performed around mid Mar 1606”; and also adds that “Arguments for an earlier dating of mid 1605 have been advanced on account of apparent borrowings from *Volp* in plays by Marston and Middleton, but it is not easy to tell who borrowed from whom.”

b) The University Towns

Gifford (1816 [1:lxv]): “The Fox is dedicated ... to the two Universities, before whom it had been represented with all the applause which might be anticipated from such distinguished and competent judges of its worth. [Quotes in a footnote 266–69.] The Eng. stage had hitherto see nothing so truly classical, so learned, so correct, and so chaste.”

FLEAY (1891 [1:373]): “The acting at the Universities was most likely during the plague, 1606 Jul–Dec, but may have been 1607 July–Nov.”

NEILSON (1911 [857]): “performed in 1605 or 1606 ... at both Oxford and Cambridge...”

SCHELLING (1914 [223–24]) refers to Eliz. academic productions, the later 1607 “epidemic of theatromania” at Oxford, and the contemporary controversy regarding the propriety of presenting popular English plays in the universities; but notes that early 17th-c. performances of *Volp* and *Ham* may have initiated a shift in taste or standards at Oxford and Cambridge.

KERNAN (1962 [205]): “At some time after *Volp* had been played in London by the King’s Men (Shakespeare’s company) in the winter of 1605–06, the play was presented at Oxford and Cambridge. The probable date of these performances is the summer of 1606.”

KERNAN (1962 [229]) dates the universities performances in “either 1606 or 1607.”

DONALDSON (1985 [617]): “*Volp* was performed with evident success at Oxford and Cambridge in 1606 or 1607.”
PARKER (1999 [8]): "J's subsequent dedication of Q to [the two universities], with Bolton's commendatory verse [134–50] point to an early and very successful production of the play at Oxford and Cambridge. If the dating of the Epistle as Feb 1607 is a calendar dating, as has been suggested, the production probably took place in Jul 1606, a period of plague when we know the King's Men were at Oxford; if the dating is old-style, then the production may have been in Sept 1607, when the company was also at Oxford. In either case, it was very unusual for the University authorities to have encouraged such a professional production; hence J's special exultancy, as BOAS (1923 [261–66]) points out."

c) The Court

FLEAY (1891 [1:348–49]): "On 1606, Jan. 6. Jonson’s Mask for the Marriage of the Earl of Essex was performed at Court; and shortly afterwards, probably Feb. 2, Volp, which had been acted at the Globe in the previous year. That this play gave offence is clear from the additions to Mucedorus, presented on Mar 2, and this, doubtless, was the reason of his again leaving the King’s company. It is noteworthy that Shakespeare didn’t act in this play; his natural tact probably foresaw the trouble to come. [...] Returning to Court matters; Jonson’s offence in Volp was marked by Campion’s employment for the 1607 mask...."

B. First Publishers and Printers

1. The Quarto: Thomas Thorpe and George Eld

The t.p. of Q records that it was “Printed for Thomas Thorpepe” [7]. A complete list of the works published by Thorpe may be found in STC 3:168. The printer has more recently been identified as George Eld. In addition to the 1607 quarto of Volp, Thomas Thorpe published a number of J playtexts: Sej (1605), EastHo (1605), Hym (1606), and MasBlack and MasBeaut (1608). George Eld served as the printer of Q. Consult STC (1989–91 [3:168]) for a complete list of Thorpe’s publications; see DUNCAN-JONES (1983) and MARTIN & FINNIS (2003) for discussions of his career. Most commentators discuss J’s close working relationship with his publisher and printer, between the initial Q publication and the subsequent F version of the text.

WHALLEY (1756 [1:ii]): “a folio volume of J’s works was printed in his life-time, and under his own inspection; so that we have an authentic copy for our pattern, and which we found of great use in correcting the mistakes of subsequent editions.”

GIFFORD (1816 [3:160]): “I republished [Volp] in 1616, without alterations or additions, and with the former appropriate motto, from Horace, Simul et jucunda, et idonea dicere vitae.”

FLEAY (1891 [1:347]) surveys the turbulent series of events between the publication of EastHo and Volp. Despite some factual errors—that J and Chapman had been jailed together for Sej—Fleay correlates the date of J’s prison letter to the newly dubbed Earl of Salisbury (Sir Robert Cecil), which could not have been written earlier than May 1605, with the advent of Thorpe as J’s publisher: “After May 4, the date of the creation of the Earl of Salisbury, J and Chapman were in ‘a vile prison’ on account of ‘a play.’ Jonson writes to the ‘Earl of Salisbury’ asking him and the Lord Chamberlain (the Earl of Suffolk) to procure them
an immediate trial. He alludes to his ‘first error,’ for which he had been in ‘bondage’ (in *EastHo*) <which H&S (1925 [1:196n]) correctly identify as *The Isle of Dogs*>. He has in his works ‘given no cause to any good man of grief’; he desires to be judged by his ‘works past and this present,’ appeals to his ‘books’ (note that *EastHo* was not published until Sept and that *Sej*, entered for Blount <on> 1604 Nov, had probably been stayed in the press, for it came out in 1605 ‘for Thorpe,’ and *EastHo* ‘for Aspley,’ both of whom were Chapman’s, not J’s, then usual publishers) as to his giving no offence to nation, state, or person. This pleading is ingenious; but, in fact, the only play written by J since his imprisonment for his ‘first error’ was *Volp* ... and none whatever had been published” (1:347).


H&S (1937 [5:3]): *Volp* “was published by Thomas Thorpe in 1607.” “The printer is unknown.” “Thorpe had published *Sej* in 1605, the copyright of which had been transferred to him by Edward Blount on 6 Aug. On 4 Sept he had entered *EastHo* along with William Aspley, though only Aspley’s name appeared on the t.p. On 21 Apr 1608 he entered *MasBlack* and *MasBeaut*, which he published in that year, and followed these with *Hym*, the signatures of which are continuous with those of the two masques. From 1605 to 1608, therefore, he was J’s publisher.”

KERNAN (1962 [229]): “Unlike the majority of the dramatists of his age, J was extremely careful about the publication of his plays, and so both *Q* and *F* give us excellent texts. He corrected the proofs of *F*, but the changes he made in *Volp* are relatively minor, chiefly involving spelling and punctuation.”

DONALDSON (1985 [617]): Both Eld’s *Q* and Stansby’s *F* “were approved by J.”

PARKER (1999 [2]): “No printer is indicated for [Q], but from its solitary ornament, and initial N with a chip in the upper rule on sig ¶1 verso, the printer has been identified as George Eld. Eld had a flourishing business at this time, with at least two, probably three, presses and four workmen; he had already printed *Sej* (1605) and three editions of *EastHo* (1605) for Thorpe, and in 1608 was also to print *MasBlack* and *MasBeaut* for him.”

Other scholars who have identified George Eld as the printer of *Q* include DONALDSON (1985 [617]), et al. Also cf. LAVIN (1970), LEE (1916 [675n]). For a list of studies devoted to Eld as a compositor, see PARKER (1999 [50, n. 9]). For more on the roles of Thorpe and Eld in the publication of *Volp* and *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, cf. app. *Extra-Dramatic Texts*, s.v. “The Dedication.”

C. Historical, Biographical, and Literary Contexts

*General Comments*

EVANS (1989 [307]): “Whether by accident or design, *Volp* treats a subject that was highly topical at the time the work was written. The extraordinary speed with which J penned his masterpiece ... can reasonably cause one to wonder if something other than his reading alone may have jogged his imagination.
In any case, and for whatever reasons, he hit upon a subject that must have struck many auditors as especially timely and pertinent."

For the general biographical background surrounding Volp, see CHUTE (1953 [142–48, pass.]), RIGGS (1989 [122–45, pass.]), et al.

1. Cambridge and Oxford

DRUMMOND (1619 [1:139]): “He was Master of Arts in both ye Universities by y’ favour not his stúGe.”

GAYTON (1654 [20]): “We will therefore end this perplexed piece of controversy (as our father Ben hath given example,) who dedicating his Fox to the two Universities of this Iland, Fox-like (knowing they always quarrelled for Antiquity) in a most handsome and unenviable compellation, stil’d them most equall Sisters.”

FULLER (1662 [2:425]): “He was statutably admitted into Saint John’s College in Cambridge (as many years after incorporated an honorary member of Christ Church in Oxford) where he continued but few weeks for want of further maintenance, being fain to return to the trade of his father-in-law. [...] He helped in the new structure of Lincoln’s-Inn, when, having a trowel in his hand, he had a book in his pocket.”

AUBREY (1669–96 [177]), MS. 6 Bodley, fol. 108, as repr. in H&S (1925 [1:178; 179n]): “His mother, after his fathers death, married a Bricklayer, & ’tis grally Gyd that he wrought some time with his father in lawe, & pticularly on the Garden-wall of Lincolns Inn next to Chancery lane, and that .... a knight .... a Bencher walking thro & hearing him repeat some Greeke verfes out of Homer, discoursing w’ him & finding him to have a Witt extraordinary, gave him some Exhibition to maintaine him at Trinity College in Cambridge....” This manuscript also includes a marginal note that refers to Antony à Wood’s history of Oxford: ‘W. in his HiA. sayes he was borne in Welfminster that (at riper yeares) after he had studied at Cambridge) he came of his owne accord to Oxon, and there entred himself in Ch. Ch. and tooke his Masters degree in Oxford (soe conferred on him) Anno 1619. / lib. 2. p. 273.”

LANGBAINE (1691 [283–84]): “… afterwards he was sent to Saint John’s Colledge in Cambridge; from thence he remov’d to Oxford, and was enter’d of Christ-Church Colledge; where in the year 1619. (as Mr. [283] Wood sayes) he took his full Master of Arts Degree: tho’ Dr. Fuller says, ‘He continu’d there but few Weeeks ...’”

CHETWOOD (1756 [12–13]): “… made Overfeer of the Workmen in Building Lincoln’s-Inn, where he was first [13] taken Notice of by Sutton, Founder of the Chartereux, who observing him often with a Horace in his Hand, contracted a Friendship that lasted for Life.” Also rf. app. “Personal Satire.”

[14] “Upon his Return for England he applied himself, with great Affiduity, to his Studies, and was admitted into St. John’s College, Cambridge; tho’ his Continuance in that University was but short. He was afterwards of the University of Oxford; and his Dedication to his Volpone, or the Fox, seems to confirm that Report; where he says, ‘For the present, molt reverend and equal Sistars, as I have cared to be thankful for your Affections past, and here made the Understanding acquainted with some Ground of your Favours, let me not despair their Continuance to the maturing of some worthier Work.’ He was enter’d of Christ-Church
College, and took his Degree of Master of Arts, 1619, invited by the Heads of the College; the same Year he was made Laureat."

CHALMERS (1810 [444]): "On his return <from the Netherlands>, he is said to have resumed his studies, and to have gone to St. John's College, Cambridge. This fact rests chiefly upon a tradition in that college, supported by the gift of several books now in the library with his name in them. As to the question why his name does not appear in any of the lists, it is answered that he was only a sizar, who made a short stay, and his name could not appear among the admissions where no notice was usually taken of any young men that had not scholar-ships; and as to matriculation, there was at that time no register. If he went to St. John's it seems probable enough that the shortness of his stay was occasioned by his necessities, and this would be the case whether he went to Cambridge in 1588, as Mr. Malone conjectures, or after his return from the army, perhaps in 1594."

[446—47] "Among other marks of respect, he was presented with the honorary degree of master of arts by the university of Oxford; he had [447] been invited to this place by Dr. Corbet, senior student, and afterwards dean of Christ Church and bishop of Norwich."

GIFFORD (1816 [i:vii]): "From school J seems to have gone, at once, to the University. The person who had hitherto befriended him, and whose name is unfortunately lost, gave a farther proof of kindness, on this occasion, and if we may trust Aubrey, procured him an Exhibition, at Cambridge, where, according to Fuller, 'he was statuously admitted into St. John's College.' No note of matriculation is to be found. [vii] Aubrey says, 'Trinity Collge'; and indeed if J had been on the foundation at Westminster, and went, regularly, to Cambridge, this must have been the college: but his name does not appear among the candidates."

[viii] "How long he continued at college cannot be known. Fuller says 'a few weeks'; it was more probably many months: he had unquestionably a longer connection with Cambridge, than is usually supposed; and he speaks of his obligations to the members of that University in terms which cannot be justified by a slight acquaintance."

[cxxv] "Crowned with the favour of his sovereign, J saw (say the writers of the Bio. Brit.) the most distinguished wits of the time crowding his train, and courting his acquaintance; and in this spirit he was invited to Christ Church by Dr. Corbet, then senior student of that college.'"

[cxxv—cxxxvi] ‘Thus,’ exclaims HEADLEY (1767 [xxxviii]), 'J was rescued from the arms of a sister University who had long treated the Muses with indignity. We do not find that Ben expressed any regret at the change of situation: companions whose minds and pursuits were similar to his own were not always to be found in the gross atmosphere of the muddy Cam, though easily met with on the more genial banks of the Isis.' Mr. Headley ... is so ignorant J's history as to suppose that he was then resident at Cambridge—this, however, may be [cxxxvii] easily overlooked; but his attempt to implicate the poet in his personal quarrels, in his spelentic and vulgar abuse of Cambridge, merits castigation. J neither felt nor expressed any disrespect to Cambridge. In the Ded. of the Fox to both Universities, he calls them 'most noble equal sisters'; and mentions, in terms of respectful gratitude, his obligations to their 'favour and affection.' From

313
this language he never varied; and, unfortunately for Mr. Headley, Cambridge, which had also conferred on
him a Master of Arts degree, was fondly remembered by him to the last."

[ccxxvin] "When Birch (1734-41) was writing the life of J for the Gen. Dict. folio, 1738, he applied to
a member of St. John's College for information respecting the residence of the poet, &c. This person
procured several memoranda for his use, from the learned T. Baker, one of the fellows. The last of them
runs thus: 'Mr. Baker adds that there has always been a tradition handed down that he was of our college—
the Registrar tells me that there are several books in our Library with Ben Jonson's name, given by him to
the college; particularly an ancient edition of Aristotle's Works.' It is observable that this life of J is
entirely free from the deplorable raving about the poet's envy, &c. which disgraces all the subsequent
accounts. Birch could not forge, and he would not calumniate."

[ccxxvi–ccxxvii] "Here Wood tells us, he continued [ccxixvi] some time writing and composing of plays,
and was created Master of Arts (July 19) 1619. [ccxxvii] The historian is wrong in the first part of his
assertion. J certainly 'composed' no plays at Oxford or elsewhere: this was a labour from which he always
delighted to escape, and he was now in such a comparative state of affluence as to justify his indulging in
pursuits more congenial to his feelings."

CORNWALL (1838 [x–xi]): "[J] probably went from Westminster direct to Cambridge, and was there
admitted, either into St. John's or Trinity College;—the records of the University do not enable us to
determine precisely where, nor how long he was resident at Cambridge. It is supposed that the friend, who
defrayed his school-expenses (his name has unfortunately escaped all research), befriended him at College,
by procuring him an exhibition: but whatever J's resources were, they appear to have been insufficient to
maintain him there, for he was compelled, after a short stay (of a few weeks, or months), to quit the
University altogether, and to return to his mother's house."

CUNNINGHAM (1875 [1:156]), re: Gifford's speculation of J's "longer connection with Cambridge": "J
told Drummond that 'he was Master of Arts in both Universities, by their favour, not his studies,' and had
he owed much more to one than to the other the fact would certainly have been apparent in his highly
elaborated Ded. of the Fox...."

FLEAY (1891 [1:351]) comments on the record of Drummond's conversation, with a clear reference to
Wood, regarding J's honorary degrees: "On 19th July 1619 Jonson was 'actually' (in person, I suppose)
created M.A. at Oxford in full convocation (Antony Wood), but he was M.A. of both Universities before he
met Drummond. I suppose these degrees had been conferred on him, but not with admission, when Volpone
was acted at Oxford and Cambridge in 1606."

HERFORD (1893–95 [viii]): "...academic commentators have listened favourably to the theory that the
most scholarly of Eng. poets was not quite a stranger to the Eng. Universities. That theory, however, is
supported merely by the assertions of Fuller and Wood, and it conflicts not only with J's statement that
when at a later they made him a master, he owed it 'to their favour, not to his studie' but with his own
narrative of his life, as reported by Drummond, who, himself of the schools, would hardly have omitted
such an incident. [viiin] At the same time this phrase has been misquoted and misunderstood [see
Cunningham and Ward above]. J’s word is *studie not studies*, and he surely meant to assert, not only that he had not gone through the University—but that he had not sought the degree spontaneously offered to him.”

**REA (1919 [139]):** “David Laing, in a note on the passage from *ConvDrum* given above, quotes WOOD (1691–92 [1:392]). [...] It is not clear whether this refers to a second conferring of the degree; Fleay thinks the word *actually* means that Jonson was present in person to receive the degree at this time.”

**H&S (1925 [1:83]):** “It seems likely that this visit [to Oxford] was the occasion rather than the result of the somewhat tardy proposal of the University to induct him formally into the degree of Master of Arts; this having long before been conferred upon him, on the recommendation of his friend Lord Pembroke, and perhaps a little also in acknowledgement of the splendid dedication of *The Fox*.”

**PARKER (1999 [62n]):** “[J] was formally inducted to the degree at Oxford as late as July 1619, but it had been conferred on him considerably earlier on the recommendation of Lord Pembroke.”

2. **Blackfriars**

J signed the Epistle that preaced *Volp* as “From my house in the Black-Friars | this I I. of February. 1607” [132–33]. Various scholars have remarked upon J’s residence in conjunction with the setting and circumstances related to the work’s initial composition.

**CORYAT (1616), per H&S (1950 [9:686]):** “Thomas Coryat, *Traveller for the English Wits* (1616), wishes to be remembered to ‘Maister Beniamin Johnson the Poet, at his chambere at the Blacke Friers.’”

**FLEAY (1891 [1:348]):** “He was employed 1606, July 24, to entertain the Kings of England and Denmark at Theobald’s, and again in 1607, May 22, at the delivery of that house to the Queen. Meantime he returned to his wife, whom he had left in Feb. 1602. ‘5 yeers he had not bedded w’ her but remained w’ my lord Aulbanis’ [DramConv 254–55]; but 1607, Feb. 11, he dates his Ded. to *Volpone* ‘from my house in the Blackfriars.’ Aubigny was married in 1607, and J’s residence with him was no longer desirable.”

**REA (1919 [144])** cites W&C (1891), who describe Blackfriars as “A church, precinct, and sanctuary with four gates, lying between Ludgate Hill and the Thames, and extending westward from Castle Baynard (St. Andrew’s Hill) to the Fleet river. It was so called from the house of Black, Preaching, or Dominican Friars, founded by Hubert de Burgh, Earl of Kent, A.D. 1221.…. J dated the dedication to his *Volp* “from my house in the Black Friars this I Ith day of February 1607 <sic>,” and here he laid the scene of *Alch*. In 1613 Shakespeare bought here a house from Henry Walker for £140; and refers to ADAMS (1912 [184]) which offers a “full account of the theatres in Blackfriars,” and “a considerable list of prominent persons living in the precinct,” “showing that this must have been a good residence district. Many Puritans lived here, and it is likely that J acquired his knowledge of them and dislike for them by observation of some of his neighbors.”

**KERNAN (1962 [137]):** “A fashionable residential area in the heart of the City of London. Several indoor theaters were in this area.”

**PARKER (1999 [70n]):** “The dates of J’s stay in Blackfriars are uncertain. Coryat sent a letter to him as late as 1616 but by 1620 he had moved to the environs of Cripplegate; H&S (1925 [1:139]) speculate that he moved there earlier in 1607.”

315
4. The Poets’ War, 

As the composition of *Volp* followed J’s interrogation regarding *Sejanus* and imprisonment for *EastHo*, which prompted his letter to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, various commentators have interpreted aspects of the play according to the recorded details of J’s personal life and his various, evolving relationships with both England’s nobility and government authorities. Early critics and commentators lacked knowledge of J’s lost collaboration with Thomas Nashe, *The Isle of Dogs*, whose performance led to J’s imprisonment at Marshalsea in the summer of 1597, but their speculative attempts to identify J’s “first Error” have contributed greatly to the historical study of *Volp*. Here follows the text of the letter from the Cecil Paper (114:58), as it has been reprinted in H&S (1925 [1:194–96]).

To the most nobly-vertuous and thrice-honor’d
Earle of Salisbury

Most truly honorable,

It hath still bene the Tyranny of my Fortune so to oppresse my endeavors, that before I can shew my selfe gratefull (in the leaf) for former benefits, I am enforced to prouoke yo' Bountyes, for more. May it not feeme grieuous to yo' Lordship, that, now, my Innocence calls vpon you (next the Deity) to her defence; God himselfe is not auerted at iult mens Cries; And you, y’ approach that divine goodnesh, and supply it here on Earth in yo' place and honors, cannot employ yo' Aydes more worthily, then to the commune fuccour of honestly, and vertue, how humbly fouuer it be plac’d. I am here (my molt honor’d Lord) vn-examined, or vnheard, committed to a vile prifon, and (w’t mee) a Gentleman, (whole Name may perhaps haue come to yo’ Lo:) one Mr. George Chapman, a learned, and honest Man; The Caule (would I could name some worthier) though I with we had knowne none worthy of Imprifonment is, a (the word yrkes mee, that o’ Fortune hath necellit照 vs to so defiled a Courfe) a Play, my Lord; whereof, we hope, there is no Man can iustly complayne, that hath the vertue to thynke but fauorably of himselfe, if o’ fudge bring an aquall Eare; mary, if w’h præiudice wee bee made guilty, afore o’ Time, we must embrace the Afnine vertue, Patience./ My noble Lord, they deale not charitably, Who are too witty in another mans Workes, and vter, some times, they° owne malicious Meanings, vnder o’ Words. I protest to yo’ Honor, and call God to Telemony (since my first Error, w’h (yet) is punish’d in mee more w’h my flame, than it was then w’h my Bondage) I haue so attempred my file, that I haue givn no caufe to any good Man of GreiF; and, if to any ill, by touching at any generall vice, it hath always bene w’h a reguard, and sparing of perticular perfons: I may be otherwise reported, but if all, that be accufl, shoule be presently guilty, there are few Men would fland in the flate of Innocence./

I beseech yo’ molt ho: Lordhip, suffer not others mens Errors, or Falts paft, to be made my Crimes; but let Mee be examind, both by all my workes paft, and this present, and not truft to Rumor; but my Bookes (for he is an vnjuif deliverer both of great, and small Actions) whether, I haue euere (in any thing I haue written priuate, or publique) givn offence to a Nation, to any publique order or statute, or any perfon of honor, or Authority but haue equall labord to keepe they° Dignity, as mine owne perfon safe; If others have tranfgred, let not me bee entitled to they° Follyes. But leaft in being to diligen for my excuse, I may incurre the sufficion of being guilty: I become a molt humble fitter to yo’ Lo: that w’h the ho: Lord Chamberlayne (to whomme I haue in like manner petition’d) you wilbe pleased to be the gratefull means of ou’ coming to anwvere; or if in yo’ Wiltomes it shall be thought vnneeceffary, that yo’ LLo: will be the molt honor’d Caufe of o’ Liberty, where freinig vs from one prifon, you shall remove vs to another, w’h is eternally to bind vs and o’ Mules, to the thankfull honoring of you and yo° to Pofferty; as your owne virtues haue by many defcents of Ancelstors ennobled you to time./

Yo’ Honors most deuoted
in heart as wordes./

Ben. Jonson

316
Gifford (1816 [1:xxxviiin]) thanks Disraeli for forwarding this letter to him, which had been discovered initially among the state papers at Hatfield by Birch and inscribed with the note “Ben Jonson to the earl of Salisbury, praying his lordship’s protection against some evil reports.” Before transcribing the unaddressed “draft” in the White MS. (rf. H&S [1925 (1:194n)], Gifford observes that the letter “shews (what indeed every circumstance of his life proves) that he was high-spirited, dauntless; confident in his worth, more confident in his innocence; complaining when wronged, with dignity, and soliciting when afflicted, with decorum. [...] There are many points of similarity between the letter, and the ded of the Fox, which may be consulted with advantage.”

Ward (1875 [2:312]): “In the spring of 1605, however, J and Chapman were once more in trouble, being imprisoned on account of ‘a play’ of name and contents unknown. They appear to have been released as a result of an eloquent appeal, which is extant, addressed by J to the newly-created Earl of Salisbury; but is seems useless to speculate as the identity of the play in question.”

Holt (1905b [166]): “It is generally believed that the indignation expressed in the ded of this play is caused by the EastHo trouble, which brought about the imprisonment of J, Marston, and Chapman, and by the famous stage quarrel between J on the one hand and Marston and Dekker on the other, but a letter found by Dr. Birch among the Hatfield State papers and given by D’Israeli to Gifford, who published it in toto in the notes to his introduction, seems to disprove the. The date of this letter is 1605, and several phrases in it bear so remarkable a resemblance to passages in the ded. to this play that it is worth quoting them here. [Quotes “My noble Lord, they deale not charitably ... let not me bee entitled to they” Follyes.”] […] The stage-quarrel was a thing of the distant past at the end of the year 1605, and J had collaborated with his opponents in the years between. Furthermore, in the parenthesis quoted—(since my first error, etc.)—J specifically mentions the EastHo trouble as distinct from the present. The coincidence of date and the striking similarity of expression as illustrated by the above extracts, make it probable that the ded. to our play and the letter quoted were written under the same provocation—an imprisonment for libel sometime in 1605.”

H&S (1950 [9:684]), re: “what Nation, Society, or generall Order, or State” [63]: “So in the appeal to Lord Salisbury on EastHo: ‘let Mee be examind … offence to a Nation, to any publique order or flate, or any perfon of honor, or Authority….’ J had been credited with attacking the Court in CynRev, the army, the law, and the stage in Poet, and the Scots in EastHo.”

Dutton (1983 [140]) identifies J’s “youngest infant” [62] as Sej and interprets J’s defense of dramatic technique in this passage as a response to recent events: “J, of course, vehemently and repeatedly denies that any such ‘applications’ are intended in his plays; in the Epistle …., he directly addresses the question of ‘glancings’ [quotes 60–65]. J writes from the security of the allegorical method, drawing on the age-old defence of the satirist: he depicts only historical figures and generalised embodiments of vice—it is not his fault if malicious or ill-formed people decide that the caps fits some particular modern figure. [Quotes 66–68.] He proceeds to warn against over-ingenious interpretations, in a way that any modern reader must take to heart: [quotes 70–76].”

BRUNNING (2000 [6]): “The ded. of the play in the 1607 Epist. is to ‘The Two Famous Universities.’ The Chancellor of Cambridge was Salisbury and the Chancellor of Oxford was Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset, who was the Lord Treasurer and J’s benefactor.”

Also see De LUNA (1967 [39]); and app. Extra-Dramatic Texts, s.v. “The Epistle.”

5. The Gunpowder Plot

WARD (1875 [2:312]): “So far, at all events, was [J] from having by these two imprisonments incurred any lasting suspicion of disloyalty, that Nov. 1605, immediately upon the discovery of the so-called Gunpowder Plot, the Privy Council chose him as an agent for applying to certain priests of the Church of Rome to take some line of action desired by the King’s Government. J, however, was obliged to inform the Earl of Salisbury <Robert Cecil> that he had failed in the application which he made first to the Chaplain of the Venetian Ambassador, and then in other quarters; he added that, had he been a priest, he ‘would have put on Wings to such an occasion’; and that he prepared to make a fresh attempt ‘if a better person cannot be found.’ There seems little doubt but that the purport of his mission had been to discover some priest who, in spite of the rules as to the secrets of the confessional, would make revelations as to the authorship of the plot.”

De LUNA (1967 [145]): “… [J]n Jacobean London there was no shortage of vicious persons quick to put the darkest possible construction on [J’s] ‘co-operating’ with the Government in 1605, and J’s uncompromising arrogance inclined few to be charitable toward him. And while no sane Englishman of any religion had actually wanted the Powder Plot to succeed, still there were those around perversely enough to chide J for the unseemly eagerness he displayed in turning against his co-religionists. Dekker’s attack on J in *A Papist in Armes* is a case in point…. […] In this same preface to *Volp*, we find J protesting vigorously, indeed feigning scandalized indignation, at the current craze for stage productions based on ‘applications’—the parallellographs and state-satires which expose ‘the wounds of private men, of princes and nations.’ […] Cecil appears to have been quite aware that he was being satirized on the stage at this period, esp. for his handling of the Powder Plot.”

SLIGHTS (1985 [371]): “The play, better known throughout the 17th c. by its running title, *The Foxe,* was composed and played in the immediate wake of the plot to blow up Parliament, which was engineered unsuccessfully in 1605 by Guy Fawkes, the man whose name was to live in Eng. history as a synonym for stealth and treachery. Whether or not the Fawkes-Fox pun was intended to signal the topicality of J’s satire, there can be little doubt that conspiracy was an issue of high interest at the time.”

[372–73] “Although, as we shall see, J had recognized the dramatic potential of conspiracy in tragedy well before the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot and the subsequent period of paranoia during which *Volp* was written, the play marks the beginning of [373] J’s penetrating analysis of the problems of his secrecy-
ridden society on the comic stage. In the play, conspiracy takes the form of earnest financial fraud, medical quackery, courtroom perjury, and sexual assault, among others.”

Brunnering (2000 [3]): “… Volp, composed as it was hard on the heels of the biggest crisis to threaten the state, The Gunpowder Plot, constitutes a deliberate attempt to engage with matters of religion, and attempt to draw on Anti-Catholic sentiment that followed this threat to peace.”

[4] “J though was no Protestant propagandist. He had converted to Catholicism in prison in 1598 and continued to be a Catholic until 1610. However his continuing recusancy could only have increased the tense relationship with authority which his seemingly seditious plays had instigated. […] Volp … allow<s> J a way of presenting elements of anti-Catholicism while at the same time stubbornly resisting rejection of his faith.”

[5] “This sort of double dealing or duplicity has been the subject of several critical studies which speculate on J’s involvement in the Gunpowder Plot. The facts known are that, following his release from prison, J was reported attending a dinner party on the 9th Oct with Catesby and several of the Gunpowder plotters. On 7th Nov he was summoned before the head of the Privy Council, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. The next day he was sent a letter which reveals that he had been summoned to find a priest who might be able to help the government root out the seditious recusants.”

[7] “The performance of Volp in late Feb or early Mar came at a time of heightened anti-Catholic feeling in London. The plotters were executed in Jan and the trial and torture of the Jesuit priest Garnet took place in Mar, he was executed just after Easter on the first of May.”

Slichts (1994 [22]): “I knew very well that secrets can both constitute and subvert authorized truths…. His activities on the margins of the Gunpowder Plot, which he dramatized in the subplot of Volp, would seem to indicate that as a loyal Englishman he fully co-operated with the elite group charged with guarding state secrets and that as a Catholic recusant he knew the vulnerability of the individual conscience to state-authorized intrusion.”
II. SOURCES, ANALOGUES, AND INFLUENCES

A. Sources and Analogues

General Comments

No one isolated literary work served as J's primary source in either the design or the composition of *Volp*. However, as many critics and commentators have demonstrated over the centuries, there is an extensive series of source materials and literary analogues that J drew upon for the plot, characters, themes, and language of his play. The following appendix provides a chronological catalogue of the various authors and texts that have been identified by critics as either sources of material or sources of inspiration for *Volp*. The catalogue is organized and numbered by topic, with each entry alphabetized by author. The matter of certain works' less direct influence upon *Volp* follows below.

REA (1919 [xi]): "Perhaps the discussion of sources is more important in the case of a work of J's than in that of almost any other dramatist. This is because the sources are almost the play itself: the author found his material in books, rather than in human life, though undoubtedly often applying what he found in books to persons or types seen in life about him. The method used in such a play as *Volp* is that of the mosaic-maker, rather than that of the painter. It is possible to state definitely not merely the source from which the suggestion for the work as a whole was obtained, but also the sources of almost all the important parts."

[xxi] "An understanding of the real sources of *Volp* is of value in the light it throws both on the author's purpose in the play and on his usual method of composition. The play is a patchwork, or mosaic, rather than a work produced by the imagination, or by observation of life. But J's prodigious memory and wide reading in the classical authors are frequently referred to by commentators; both, I believe, have been considerably exaggerated. His apparent readiness in quotation has often deceived his best editors...."

[xxxii] "Such a work as the present, one of J's greatest comedies, is a product not so much of genius and originality, as of industry and patience. Its author must have kept careful notes, jotting down passages that struck him in his reading, and sometimes his own reflections on them.... These notes were later amalgamated into whatever work the author happened to be writing."

H&S (1950 [9:679]): "For Dr. Rea the finished product is simply the raw material. The artist sinks to the amanuensis."

KERNAN (1962 [229–30]): "The accepted practice in the Eliz. theater was for the playwright to take a story or plot from another work—history, romance, or older play—and then elaborate on this structure. [...] But J worked in a different manner, and despite a number of attempts to show that one particular work or another was the source of *Volp*, it is by now clear that his plot, while it has many analogues, is his own work. If Sh. began with a story, J began with an idea for which he then proceeded to construct an
appropriate action. And since he was a very learned and extremely well-read man for whom literature was a living thing, inevitably his idea focused lines, characters, and situations from his reading, and these are echoed in his play and mingled with contemporary events to create that tone of historical density so characteristic of his works.”

BAMBOROUGH (1963 [xv]): “... [S]cholars have succeeded in tracing many of his sources. Such investigations can tell us much about J’s reading and of his habits of mind, but they cannot explain the power of the play. What is important is not what he borrowed, but what he made of his borrowings, and indeed the effect of Volp is one of true originality. There is nothing really like Volp elsewhere in Eng. literature, not even among J’s other writings. He succeeded in creating a particular world, with its own inhabitants.”

1. Legacy Hunting

H&S (1925 [2:50–53]): “Among Rom. institutions thus capable of yielding terror and scorn, yet rich in the grim and sardonic comedy which suited J’s present mood, that of the legacy-hunting (captatio) stood in the front rank. The Rom. captator who presented his fortune to the legatee in the expectation of a more than corresponding reward, and the prospective legatee who played maliciously on the greed of rival candidates for his bequests, might seem to be ready-made sources for Jonsonian comedy, so aptly do they fall into his standing categories of the cheated and the cheat. [...] The Rom. institution of legacy-hunting provided an example of organized humbug better fitted perhaps to call into play the energies of J’s comic satire than any of these—save in the one respect that it was un-English, and that his powerful realism was thus deprived of one of its sustaining sources. On the other hand, like the career of Sejanus, the institution of legacy-hunting was illuminated by a mass of ancient literature; for the scholar the satire of the first and second centuries had left brilliant and incisive pictures of this vice of the [57] early empire, the captator was derided by Horace, Juvenal, and Pliny; he provided the theme of an amusing episode in Petronius’ Satyr; and, in particular, his appetences and mortifications, and the strategy on both sides evolved in the conflict of base interests, provided the material for some of the wittiest of Lucian’s Dialogues of the Dead. [...] [53] It will be seen that neither Lucian nor Petronius can be said to have provided the plot of Volp. But to one or both J doubtless owed the fundamental situation of the legator who makes game of the legacy-hunters, and a few details of the execution.”

a) Horace (65–8 BCE), Satires

UPTON (1749 [18]): “Horace has a whole satire written to ridicule the heredipetae of the age, the very intent of this play.” Rf. n. 580–82, pass.

ADAMS (1904 [289–99]): “Upton, it seems to me, pointed out the real source of this incident.... He refers to the Satires of Horace, 2.5. Horace, we hardly need say, was J’s favorite author; a glance at the notes collected by Gifford will show frequently in this very play the dramatist went to the Satires. Moreover, this particular satire treats the same theme that Volp does, and hence would naturally come to J’s mind.
Horace, Satire 2.5, “The Art of Legacy-Hunting”

ULYSSES. One more question pray answer me, Tiresias, besides what you have told me. By what ways and means can I recover my lost fortune? Why laugh?

TIRESIAS. What! not enough for the man of wiles to sail back to Ithaca and gaze upon his household gods?

ULY. O you who have never spoken falsely to any man, you see how I am returning home, naked and in need, as you foretold; and there neither cellar nor herd is unrifled by the suitors. And yet birth and worth, without substance, are more paltry than seaweed.

TIR. Since, in plain terms, ‘tis poverty you dread, hear by what means you can grow rich. Suppose a thrush or other dainty be given you for your own, let it wing its way to where grandeur reigns and the owner is old. Your choice apples or whatever glorifies your trim farm bear you, let the rich man taste before your Lar; more to be reverenced than the Lar is he. However perjured he may be, though low of birth, stained with a brother’s blood, a runaway slave, yet, if he ask you to walk with him, do not decline to take the outer side.

ULY. What! give the wall to some dirty Dama? Not so at Troy did I bear myself, but ever was matched with my betters.

TIR. Then you will be a poor man.

ULY. I’ll bid my valiant soul endure this. Ere now worse things have I borne. Go on, O prophet, and tell me how I am to rake up wealth and heaps of gold.

TIR. Well, I have told you, and I tell you now. Fish craftily in all waters for old men’s wills, and though one or two shrewd ones escape your wiles after nibbling off the bait, do not give up hope, or drop the art, though baffled. If some day a case, great or small, be contested in the Forum, whichever of the parties is rich and childless, villain though he be, who with wanton impudence calls the better man into court, do you become his advocate; spurn the citizen of the better name and cause, if he have a son at home or a fruitful wife. Say: “Quintus” it may be, or “Publius” (sensitive ears delight in the personal name), “your worth has made me your friend. I know the mazes of the law; I can defend a case. I will let anyone pluck out my eyes sooner than have him scorn you or rob you of a nutshell. This is my concern, that you lose nothing, and become not a jest.” Bid him go home and nurse his precious self; become yourself his counsel. Carry on, and stick at it, whether “the Dog-star red / Dumb statues split,” or Furius, stuffed with rich tripe, “With hoary snow bespew the wintry Alps.” “Do you not see,” says someone, nudging a neighbour with his elbow, “how steady he is, how helpful to his friends, how keen?” More tunnies will swim up, and your fish-ponds swell. Again, if one with a fine fortune rears a sickly son whom he has taken up, then for fear lest open devotion to a childless man betray you, by your attentions worm your way to the hope that you may be named as second heir, and if some chance sent the child to his grave, you may pass into his place. Seldom does this game fail. Suppose someone gives you his will to read, be sure to decline and push the tablets from you; yet in such a way that with a side glance you may catch the substance of the second line on the first page. Swiftly run your eye across to see whether you are sole heir or share with others. Quite often a constable, new-boiled into a clerk, will dupe the g^ in g  raven, and Nasica the fortune-hunter will make sport for Coranus.

ULY. Are you mad? or do you purposely make fun of me with your dim oracle?

TIR. O son of Laertes, whatever I say will or will not be; for prophecy is great Apollo’s gift to me.

ULY. But what means that story? Tell me, if you may.

TIR. In the days when a youthful hero, the Parthian’s dread, scion of high Aeneas’s lineage, shall be mighty by land and sea, the tall daughter of Nasica, who dreads paying up in full, shall wed gallant Coranus. Then shall the son-in-law thus proceed: to his father-in-law he shall give the tablets of his will, and pray him to read them. After many a refusal at length Nasica shall take them, and read them to himself, and shall find that nothing is left to him and his but—to whine. Here’s another hint I’ll give you. If it so chance that some crafty dame or freedman sways an old dotard, make common cause with them. Praise them, that they may praise you behind your back. This too helps; but far better is it to storm the citadel itself. Will the idiot write poor verses? Praise them. Is he a libertine? See that he has not to ask you; yourself obliquely hand over Penelope to your better.

ULY. You think so! Can she be tempted,—she so good, so pure, whom the suitors could not turn from the straight course?
TIR. Yes, for the young suitors who came were sparing of their gifts; their thoughts were not so much on loving as on eating. So it is your Penelope is virtuous; but if just once she gets from one old man a taste of gain in partnership with you, then she will be like the hound, which can never be frightened away from the greasy hide. I will tell you something that happened when I was old. A wicked old crone at Thebes, by the terms of her will, was buried thus: her corpse, well oiled, her hair carried on his bare shoulders. She wanted, of course, to see whether she could give him the slip when dead. I suppose, when she was living, he had borne too hard upon her. Be cautious in your approach; neither fail in zeal, nor show zeal beyond measure. A chatterbox will offend the peevish and morose; yet you must not also be silent beyond bounds. Act the Davus of the comedy, and stand with head bowed, much like one oversaw. With flattery make your advances; warn him, if the breeze stiffens, carefully to cover up his precious pate; shoulder a way and draw him out of a crowd; make a trumpet of your ear when he is chattering. Does he bore you with his love of praise? Then ply him with it till with hands uplifted to heaven he cry “enough!” and blow up the swelling bladder with turgid phrases. And when from your long care and servitude he sets you free, and wide awake you hear the words, “To one-fourth let Ulysses be heir,” then, now and then, scatter about such words as these, “Ah! is my old friend Dama now no more? Where shall I find one so firm, so faithful?” and if you can do a bit of it, drop in some tears. If your face betray joy, you can hide it. If the tomb is left to your discretion, build it in style: let the neighbours praise the handsome funeral. If one of your co-heirs happens to be older than you, and has a bad cough, say to him if he would like to buy land or a house that is in your share, you would gladly knock it down to him for a trifle. But Proserpine, our queen, calls me back. Live and fare well! (Fairclough, trans., 199–207).

b) Juvenal (ca. 55–127 CE), Satires

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxviii]): “... the suggestion of the plot is rather caught from the lurid passages of Juvenal.”

Juvenal, Satires 10.188–255

Give me length of days, give me many years, O Jupiter!” Such is your one and only prayer, in days of strength or of sickness; yet how great, how unceasing, are the miseries of long old age! Look first at the misshapen and ungraceful face, so unlike its former self; see the unsightly hide that serves for skin; see the pendulous cheeks and the wrinkles like those which a matron baboon carves upon her aged jaws where Thabraca spreads her shaded glades. The young men differ in various ways: this man is handsomer than that, and he than another; one is far stronger than another: but old men all look alike. Their voices are as shaky as their limbs, their heads without hair, their noses drooping as in childhood. Their bread, poor wretches, has to be munched by toothless gums; so offensive do they become to their wives, their children and themselves, that even the legate-hunter, Cossus, turns from them in disgust. Their sluggish palate takes joy in wine or food no longer, and all pleasures of the flesh have been long ago forgotten... And now consider the loss of another sense: what joy has the old man in song, however famous be the singer? what joy in the harping of Seleucus himself, or of those who shine resplendent in gold-embroidered overcoats? What matters it in what part of the great theatre he sits when he can scarce hear the horns and trumpets when they all blow together? The slave who Annunciates a visitor, or tells the time of day, must needs shout in his ear if he is to be heard. Besides all this, the little blood in his now chilly frame is never warm except with fever; diseases of every kind dance around him in a troop; if you ask of me their names, I could more readily tell you the number of Oppia’s paramours, how many patients Themison killed in one autumn, how many partners were defrauded by Basilus, or wards by Hirrus, or pupils corrupted by Hamillus, how many lovers tall Maurus wears out in one day; I could sooner run over the number of villas now belonging to the barber under whose razor my stiff youthful beard used to grate. One suffers in the shoulder, another in the loins, a third in the hip; another has lost both eyes, and envies those who have one; another takes food into his pulillid lips from someone else’s fingers, while he whose jaws used to fly open at the sight of his dinner, now only gapes like the young swallow whose fasting mother flies to him with well-laden beak. But worse than any loss in body is the failing mind which forgets the names of slaves, and cannot recognise the face of the old friend who dined with him last night, nor those of the children whom he has begotten and brought up. Yes, by a cruel will he cuts off his own flesh and blood and leaves all his estate to Phiale—so potent was the breath of that alluring mouth which had plied its trade for so many years in her narrow
archway. And though powers of his mind be strong as ever, yet must he carry forth his sons to burial; he must behold the funeral pyres of his beloved wife and his brothers, and urns filled with the ashes of his sisters. Such are the penalties of being the long liver: he sees calamity after calamity befall his house, he lives in a world of sorrow, he grows old amid continual lamentation and in the garb of woe. If we have any belief in mighty Homer, the King of Pylos was an example of long life second only to the crow; happy forsooth in this that he had put off death for so many generations, and had so often quaffed the new-made wine, counting now his years upon his right hand. But mark for a moment, I beg, how he bewails the decrees of fate and his too-long thread of life, when he beholds the beard of his brave Antilochus in the flames, and asks of every friend around him why he has lived so long, what crime he has committed to deserve such length of days. (Ramsay, trans., 207–13)


But most intolerable of all is the woman who as soon as she has sat down to dinner commends Virgil, pardons the dying Dido, and pits the poets against each other, putting Virgil in the one scale and Homer in the other. The grammarians make way before her; the rhetoricians give in; the whole crowd is silenced: no lawyer, no auctioneer will get a word in, no, nor any other woman; so torrential is her speech that you would think that all the pots and bells were being clashed together. Let no one more blow a trumpet or clash a cymbal: one woman will be able to bring succour to the labouring moon! She lays down definitions, and discourses on morals, like a philosopher; thirsting to be deemed both wise and eloquent, she ought to tuck up her skirts knee-high, sacrifice a pig to Silvanus, and take a penny bath. Let not the wife of your bosom possess a special style of her own; let her not hurl at you in whirling speech the crooked enthymeme! Let her not know all history; let there be some things in her reading which she does not understand. I hate a woman who is for ever consulting and poring over the “Grammar” of Palaemon, who observes all the rules and laws of language, who like an antiquary quotes versus that I never heard of, and corrects her unlettered female friends for slips of speech that no man need trouble about: let husbands at least be permitted to make slips in grammar! (Ramsay, trans., 119–21)


There is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds, and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears: there is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman. Meanwhile she ridiculously puffs out and disfigures her face with lumps of dough; she reeks of rich Poppean unguents which stick to the lips of her unfortunate husband. Her lover she will meet with a clean-washed skin; but when does she ever care to look nice at home? It is for her lovers that she provides the spikenard, for them she buys all the scents which the slender Indians bring to us. In good time she discloses her face; she removes the first layer of plaster, and begins to be recognisable. She then laves herself with that milk for which she takes a herd of she-asses in her train if sent away to the Hyperborean pole. But when she has been coated over and treated with all those layers of medicaments, and had those lumps of moist dough applied to it, shall we call it a face or a sore? It is well worth while to ascertain how these ladies busy themselves all day. If the husband has turned his back upon his wife at night, the wool-maid is done for; the tire-women will be stripped of their tunics; the Liburnian chair-man will be accused of coming late, and will have to pay for another man’s drowsiness; one will have a rod broken over his back, another will be bleeding from a strap, a third from the cat; some women engage their executioners by the year. While the flogging goes on, the lady will be daubing her face, or listening to her lady-friends, or inspecting the widths of a gold-embroidered robe. While thus flogging and flogging, she reads the lengthy Gazette, written right across the page, till at last, the floggers being exhausted, and the inquisition ended, she thunders out a gruff “Be off with you!” Her household is governed as cruelly as a Sicilian Court. If she has an appointment and wishes to be turned out more nicely than usual, and is in a hurry to meet some one waiting for her in the gardens, or more likely near the chapel of the wanton Isis, the unhappy maid that does her hair will have her own hair torn, and the clothes stripped off her shoulders and her breasts. “Why is this curl standing up?” she asks, and then down comes a thong of bull’s hide to inflict chastisement for the offending ringlet! Pray how was Psecas in fault? How would the girl be to blame if you happened not to like the shape of your own nose? Another maid on the left side combs out the hair and rolls it into a coil; a maid of her mother’s, who has served her time at sewing, and has been promoted to the
wool department, assists at the council. She is the first to give her opinion; after her, her inferiors in age or skill will give theirs, as though some question of life or honour were at stake. So important is the business of beautification; so numerous are the tiers and storeys piled one upon another on her head! In front, you would take her for an Andromache; she is not so tall behind: you would not think it was the same person.

What if nature has made her so short of stature that, if unaided by high heels, she looks no bigger than a pigmy, and has to rise nimbly on tip-toe for a kiss! Meantime she pays no attention to her husband; she never speaks of what she costs him. She lives with him as if she were only his neighbour; in this alone more near to him, that she hates his friends and his slaves, and plays the mischief with his money. (Ramsay, trans., 121–25)

c) Lucian, *Dialogues of the Dead*

FRANCKLIN (1781 [1:237]): “The practice of legacy-hunting hath been a fruitful and inexhaustible object of ridicule and satire among wits, both ancient and modern, from the days of Lucian to those of J, who has, perhaps, treated it more fully and comprehensively than any of them: the plan of his excellent comedy of Volpone seems to have been taken from this dialogue.”

DAVIES (1785 [2:97]): “The fable of Volpone is chosen with judgement, and is founded upon avarice and luxury. The paying obsequious and constant courtship to childless rich people, with a view to obtain from them bountiful legacies in return, has been a practice of all times, and in all nations. There is in Lucian, the father of true ridicule, an admirable dialogue, on this subject, between Pluto and Mercury. An old man of ninety is assiduously courted by several young fellows, who, in hopes of being his heirs, perform the lowest and meanest offices to him. Pluto orders Mercury to carry off these who are dividing, in their minds, the old fellow’s riches, to the infernal shades, but commands him to double, nay treble, the age of him who is the object of their obsequiousness. Lucian has no less than five or six dialogues on the same subject.”

ADAMS (1904 [289–99]): “No one, so far as I can learn, has suggested any other possible source. But those who have assigned the source of *Volp* to the *Satyr* have overlooked, it seems to me, another version of the same story, presenting the same plot, and closer in its details to the Eng. play. This story is found in Lucian’s *Dialogues of the Dead* nos. 5–9 (and, as a supplement to no. 8, no. 11). It may be easily seen that, though different names are employed, the dialogues all refer to the same character, and in the order in which the author has placed them, they tell a complete story.” [Adams, 289n, notes that “between the first ed. of Lucian in 1475 and the writing of *Volp* there appeared no less than seventy-five editions, in whole or part, of the Gr. satirist. [...] [290] J was thoroughly familiar with Lucian, and he frequently went to him for material. In *CynRev* he refers to him by name [1.4.18]; 1.1 of the same play is borrowed with slight change from the *Dialogues of the Gods*; the purging of the playwright in *Poet* comes from *Lexiphanes*. *NewWorld* takes material freely from the dialogue *Icaromenippus* [nos. 7 and 24].... Moreover, in writing *Volp* itself, J (who seems to have [291] written the play in a hurry) goes straight to Lucian for material. The masque presented by Nano, Castrone, and Androgyno ... is taken wholly from Lucian’s *Dream*; the monologue of the parasite [3.1; or 1602ff.], the reader of Lucian will at once recognize as inspired by the dialogue *Parasitism as an Art*; two proverbial sayings are taken from the Gr. writer; and the remarks on gold [5.1; or 3010–16], are taken with little alteration from the *Dream*. [...] With such facts before us we are prepared to
believe that J got from Lucian as well the plot of the story. [...] The old man of Lucian and the old man of
J are quite alike, and [292] little change is necessary in worldly position, or mental or moral characteristics.
Even in the physical description of the two there is a resemblance." Adams performs a comparative
analysis of Volp and the Dialogues of the Dead cited above and reproduced below.

HOLT (1905a [63–64]), prompted by ADAMS (1904), alerted readers to the earlier identifications of
FRANKLIN (1781) and DAVIES (1785).

BROWNE (1906 [113]): "Ward accepts the conjecture of Gifford that J took the plot of Volp from an
incident in Petronius [i.e., sect. 124 (see below)]. [...] I do not believe this to have been the source of Volp.
J could have got as much from Horace and Juvenal [see above]. But there are two passages from Lucian
which fit the case exactly; so closely, indeed, that I can hardly believe that they have escaped all the
commentators, though I have not met with any reference to them. The first occurs in the dialogue between
Terpsion and Pluto [i.e., 16 (6)]. [...] The second is the Dialogue of Simylus and Polystatus [i.e., 19 (9)],"
after which Browne concludes: "The comedy of Volp, except the peripeteia in the last act, is in these
passages as an oak is in an acorn."

H&S (1925 [2:51]): "It was on this strategical aspect of legacy-hunting, with its rich development of
make-believe, of criminal invention and resource, that J fastened. He found especially in Lucian amusing
pictures of the legator who meets game with counter-game, the laugh being regularly with him, not with his
persecutors." The eds. discuss dialogues 15 (5), 16 (6), 17 (7), 18 (8), 19 (9).

PARKER (1999 [302–3]) accounts for dialogues 15 (5)–19 (9) in the app. of his ed.

The Dialogues of the Dead 15 (5), "Pluto and Hermes"

PLUTO. Do you know the old man—I mean that veritable greybeard, Eucrates the rich—the man with
no sons, but with fifty thousand men hunting his estate? HERMES. Yes, you mean the man from Sicyon.
Well, what? PLUTO. Let him go on living, Hermes, and, over and above the ninety years he’s had already,
measure out as many more for him, if possible, or even more; but as for his toadies, young Charinus and
Damon and the rest, drag them all down here one after the other. HERMES. That would look queer.
PLUTO. No; it would be perfectly just. What possesses them that they pray for his death, or aspire to his fortune,
although not related? But what’s most disgusting of all is the way they shower attentions on him in public
in spite of such prayers, and make their plans obvious to everyone when he’s sick, but, in spite of it all, they
promise sacrifices if he recovers; in fact there’s no little versatility in their flattery. So, I’d like him to be
immortal, and them, thwarted in their open-mouthed greed, to depart the scene before him. HERMES. That
will be an amusing fate for the rascals to suffer. PLUTO. He himself often leads them up the garden path
with great skill, and has hopes of his own. In fact, though he always looks ‘close to death’s dark vale,’ he’s
a lot healthier than the young men. But they’ve already divided up his property amongst themselves and
batten on it, thinking a life of bliss is already theirs. So, let him cast off his old age like Iolaus, and grow
young again, and let them leave behind the wealth they dreamed of, and in the midst of their hopes come
here forthwith, dying the sorry death they deserve. HERMES. Don’t worry, Pluto. I’ll start fetching them for
you now, one after the other. There are seven of them, I think. PLUTO. Drag them down, and he’ll change
from old age to the prime of youth, and attend each of the funerals. (MacLeod, trans., 7:79–81)

The Dialogues of the Dead 16 (6), "Terpsion and Pluto"

TERPSION. Is this just, Pluto? Me to die at thirty, and old Thucritus, already over ninety, to go on
living? PLUTO. Perfectly just, Terpsion; he lives on without praying for the death of any of his friends, but
you spent all your time plotting against him and waiting for his possessions. [...] TERPSION. Then I object
to the present arrangement. It ought to be a matter of turn, with the oldest man first, and after him the next oldest, without the slightest change in the order. Your Methuselah shouldn’t live on, when he has no more than three teeth still left, and is scarcely able to see, supported by four servants, with his nose always running and his eyes bleary, past knowing any of the pleasures of life, a living tomb laughed at by the young men. He shouldn’t live, while handsome lusty young men die.... PLUTO. ...

Tell me now, what makes you gape with greed at other people’s property, and foist yourselves upon childless old men? As a result you provide a good laugh, if your burial comes before theirs, and most folk find the situation really delightful. The more you pray for their death, the more delighted people are, if you die first; for there’s never been anything like this art you’ve invented, with your love for old men and women, and for the childless ones in particular, while the ones with children inspire no love in your hearts. [...] But later, when the wills are read, the bodyguard, for all their years of service, are excluded, and the sons and Nature herself, as is only right, prevail over all of them, and they gnash their teeth in secret at having been made to look such fools. TERPSION. True enough. Take me, for example—how much of mine has Thucritus devoured! Yet he always seemed on the point of death, and whenever I came in, would be groaning to himself, and his voice would be as Mint and squeaky as an unfledged chicken straight from the egg; and so I, thinking I’d be putting him in his coffin any minute, would send in most of what he got, so that my rival in love shouldn’t outdo me in generosity, and usually I lay awake at night, sleepless with worry, calculating each penny and arranging each move. It is this that has caused my death—the loss of sleep and worry. But he gobbled down all my bait, and turned up the other day to gloat at my funeral. (Macleod, trans., 7:83–87).

The Dialogues of the Dead 17 (7), “Zenophonatus and Callidemides”

ZENOPHANTUS. Well, Callidemides, how did you die? I used to be a parasite of Dinias, and choked myself to death by eating too much, as you know; for you were there when I died. CALLIDEMIDES. Yes, I was there, Zenophonatus. But my death was a strange one. I think you know Ptoeodorus, the old man? ZENOPHANTUS. The rich man with no children? I knew you were often with him. CALLIDEMIDES. I was always most attentive to him, because he promised I would benefit by his death. But since the matter was taking an unconscionable time, and he was living to be older than Tithonus, I found a short cut to the inheritance. I bought poison, and persuaded his butler, next time he asked for wine—he’s a pretty heavy drinker, you know—to have the poison ready in the cup, and give it to him. I promised him his freedom, if he did it. ZENOPHANTUS. Well, what happened? Your story looks like being a strange one. CALLIDEMIDES. When we’d come in after our bath, the lad had two cups ready, one with the poison for Ptoeodorus, and the other for me, but somehow he made a mistake, giving me the poison, and Ptoeodorus the harmless cup. A moment later, while he was still drinking, I was lying my full length on the floor, and the wrong man was dead. Why do you find it amusing, Zenophonatus? You oughtn’t to laugh at a friend. ZENOPHANTUS. Well, it was a droll thing to happen. But what did the old man do? CALLIDEMIDES. At first he was a little put out by the suddenness of it all, but then he understood what had happened, I suppose, and laughed himself at seeing what his butler had done. ZENOPHANTUS. But you oughtn’t to have taken that short cut; you’d have been surer of getting him here by the highway, even if he was a little slow in coming. (Macleod, trans., 7:89–91)

The Dialogues of the Dead 18 (8), “Cnemon and Damnippus”

CñEMON. It’s just like the proverb; the fawn’s caught the lion. DAMNIPPUS. Why so angry, Cnemon? CÑEMON. You ask why I’m angry? I’ve been outsmarted, poor fool that I am, and have left an heir I didn’t want, passing over those I’d have preferred to have my property. DAMNIPPUS. How did it happen? CÑEMON. I’ve been showering my attentions on Hermolaus, the childless millionaire, in hopes of his death, and he was glad enough to have them. So I thought of another clever move, and decided to make my will public. I’ve left him all my property in it, hoping he in turn would emulate me, and do the same by me. DAMNIPPUS. Well, what did he do? CÑEMON. What he put in his own will I don’t know; I can only tell you that I myself died suddenly, when my roof fell down upon me, and now Hermolaus is in possession of my property, like a greedy bass that has swallowed both hook and bait. DAMNIPPUS. Not only that, but he’s swallowed you the fisherman as well; you’ve been caught by your own cunning. CÑEMON. So it seems; that’s why I’m so sorry for myself.” (Macleod, trans., 7:91–95)
The Dialogues of the Dead 19 (9), “Simylus and Polystratus”

SIMYLUS. So you’ve come to join us at last, Polystratus, after living to be I think, almost a hundred? POLYSTRATUS. Ninety-eight, Simylus. SIMYLUS. Whatever sort of life did you have for these thirty years after my death? I died when you were about seventy. POLYSTRATUS. An exceedingly pleasant life, even if you will think it strange. SIMYLUS. Strange indeed, if you were not only old and weak but also childless, and yet could enjoy life. POLYSTRATUS. At first, I could do anything. I still could enjoy plenty of pretty boys, and the nicest women, unguents and fragrant wine, and a table to outdo any in Sicily. SIMYLUS. That’s something new. I knew you to be very sparing. POLYSTRATUS. Ah, but the good things came pouring in from others, my good fellow; at crack of dawn crowds of folk would start flocking to my doors, and later in the day all kinds of choice gifts from every corner of the earth would arrive. SIMYLUS. Did you become tyrant, Polystratus, after my time? POLYSTRATUS. No, but I had thousands of lovers. SIMYLUS. You make me laugh. Lovers? At your age? With only four teeth in your head? POLYSTRATUS. Yes indeed, the noblest lovers in the city. Though I was old and bald, as you see, yes, and blear-eyed and sniveling too, they were delighted to court me, and anyone of them I favoured with a mere glance thought himself in heaven. SIMYLUS. You weren’t another to have a divine passenger, as did Phaon, when he ferried Aphrodite over from Chios, and have your prayers answered, becoming young, handsome and attractive all over again? POLYSTRATUS. No, I was the desire of all, though just as you see me now. SIMYLUS. You’re talking in riddles. POLYSTRATUS. Yet this great love for rich, childless old men is there for all to see. SIMYLUS. Now I understand your beauty, you old wonder; it came from the golden Aphrodite. POLYSTRATUS. And no small enjoyment, Simylus, my loves have brought me; I was almost worshipped by them. Often I would be coy, and occasionally bar my door to some of them, but they would vie with each other in their zeal for my affection. SIMYLUS. But what decision did you make about your property in the end? POLYSTRATUS. I would keep saying in public that I had left each of them as my heir, and each would believe me, and show himself more assiduous than ever in his flattery; but all the time my real will was different and I left them—instructions to got to the devil one and all. SIMYLUS. And who was the heir under you final will? One of your family, no doubt? POLYSTRATUS. Good heavens no; it was a pretty boy from Phrygia I’d just bought. SIMYLUS. What sort of age was he? POLYSTRATUS. Roughly about twenty. SIMYLUS. Now I understand how he won your favour. POLYSTRATUS. Oh well, he deserved to be my heir much more than they did, even if he was a barbarian and a pest. He’s already being courted by the noblest of the all. So he became my heir, and is now numbered among the aristocrats, and despite his smooth chin and foreign accent, is credited with bluer blood than Codrus, greater beauty than Nireus, and more intelligence than Odysseus. SIMYLUS. That doesn’t worry me. Let him even be generalissimo of Greece, if he wishes to, so long as those fellows don’t inherit. (Macleod, trans., 7:95–101)

Lucian, The Dialogues of the Dead 21 (11), “Crates and Diogenes”

CRATES. Diogenes, did you know Moerichus, the rich man, the millionaire from Corinth, who owned a fleet of merchant ships, and had a cousin called Aristeas, another rich man, who used to quote Homer and say, ‘You try to throw me, or let me try to throw you?’ DIogenes. Why Crates? CRATES. They were of an age and showering attentions each on the other for his property. They made on secret of their wills; Moerichus was leaving Aristeas master of all he had, if he died first, and Aristeas was doing the same for Moerichus. This was all down in black and white, and they tried to outdo each other with obsequious attentions, and not only the prophets, divining the future from stars or from dreams in the best Chaldean tradition, but even the Delphic god himself would assign the victory first to Aristeas, and then to Moerichus, and the scales would dip in favour now of one, now of the other. DIogenes. Well, what happened in the end? The story’s worth hearing. CRATES. Both have died on one day, and the properties have passed on to Eunomius and Thrasycles, two relations who have never imagined things turning out thus. Their ship was halfway across from Sicyon to Cirrha, when a squall from the north-west caught her on the beam and capsized her. DIogenes. And a good thing too! We never had such thoughts about each other, when we were alive. I never prayed for death of Antisthenes, so that I could inherit his staff—though he had a very strong one that he had made for himself from the wild olive—nor did you, Crates, I imagine, wish that I should die and leave you my property, the tub and the bag with its two measures of lupines. CRATES. No, I didn’t need any of these things; but neither did you, Diogenes. All that was needful you inherited from Antisthenes and I from you—things far more important and august that the Persian empire. DIogenes. What things do you mean? CRATES. Wisdom, independence, truth, plain speaking, freedom.
DIOGENES. Good heavens, yes. I remember taking over these riches from Antisthenes, and leaving you them in still greater measure. CRATES. But no one else cared for wealth of this sort, or paid us attentions in the hope of inheriting it from us; it was gold on which they all had their eyes. DIOGENES. Only to be expected; they had nowhere to put such a legacy from us. They were falling apart from rich living, and were like rotten purses; and so no sooner did one put wisdom or plain speech or truth into them, than it would fall out through a hole, for the bottom couldn't hold it. It was just like what happens to those daughters of Danaus here, as they pour water into that jar full of holes. But their gold they would keep safe with teeth or nails or any means in their power. CRATES. In consequence we shall retain our wealth even down here, but they will bring with them no more than an obol, and even that won't go beyond the ferryman. (Macleod, trans., 7:119–123).

d) Petronius Arbiter (d. 65 CE), *The Satyricon*


Adams (1904 [289–99]) cites the German-language studies of Holthausen (1889) and KoeppeL (1895), each of which follows Gifford's identification of *Satyr* as a plot source. [290] “The incident in Petronius occupies but a few paragraphs in a long narrative of amorous adventures. As Holthausen points out, it could have suggested in a general way the plot of *Volp* But there are no close resemblances of phrase or thought, no 'hallmarks,' so to speak, which show clearly that J had this particular narrative in view rather than any other presenting the same story. […] [291] The old man of Petronius, vagabond, philosopher, poet, with a mania for spouting bad verse, must undergo quite a transformation to become Volpone. […] [297] To Petronius Holthausen assigns the source of the incident of [298] Corvino's offering his beautiful and chaste wife, Celia, for the healing of Volpone [i.e., *Satyr* 140].”

Browne (1906 [113]) notes that Ward also accepted Gifford's identification; as did Neilson (1911 [857]).

H&S (1925 [2:51–52]): “A more ambitious but scarcely more effective use of the legacy-hunting motive was made by Petronius, the arbiter elegantiarum of Nero's Court. Petronius, as little as J, was a mere observer; and he put into his book the same gifts of ingenious combination and piquant elaboration which, applied to the entertainment of Nero, had made his fortune and were to cost him his life.” The eds. discuss *Satyr* 116, 117, 124.

Cook (1962 [45–47]) notes that “The plot of *Volp* is original. However, the picture that J draws of would-be heirs fawning and at times preying on wealthy sickness and senility is no macabre invention of his own,” and reproduces “some particularly apt passages” from *Satyr* 116 and 124.

Kernan (1962 [229–30]): “A number of scholars have argued that J based his play on the *Satyr* […] J doubtless made use of this work … […] This practice [i.e. legacy hunting] was, however, satirized by both Horace and Juvenal in works which are verbally echoed in *Volp*.”

Parker (1999 [300–302]), in the app. to his ed. of *Volp*, accounts for and reproduces five sections from *Satyr* (116, 117, 124, 125, and 140), and in conclusion notes that “There may be also be a more general influence from Eumolpus’ poem on Rome in decline, concerned only for money and pleasure, and from the description of Trimalchio’s banquet, particularly Trimalchio’s habit of singing tunelessly, giving
garbled recitations, and encouraging his servants to sing and speak in recitative. There seem to be no
correspondences of detail, however."

COOKSEY (2000 [103–4]) identifies Satyr 141.2–11 with both the plot of legacy hunting and the play’s
ironically treated theme of metempsychosis, which “anticipates how J links them together. Thus as
Petronius joins legacy hunting and corruption through an inversion of Pythagorism, so, too, does J.” Cf.
“Metempsychosis” below.

Petronius, The Satyricon, § 116

So we buried Lichas as well as we could and set out in the direction we had decided upon. Not long
afterward, we arrived, drenched with sweat, at the peak of a mountain, and from here we could see, no
great distance away, a large town perched on the crest of a high hill. Since we were traveling completely
blindly, we had no idea where we were, but we learned from a peasant that the town was Croton, one of the
oldest cities in Italy, and once the foremost. Our curiosity aroused, we questioned him for details of the
people who inhabited that famous place; how in particular, we wanted to know, did they earn their
livelihood now that the long wars had destroyed their old prosperity. “Strangers,” said our informant, “if
you are merchants, let me advise you to change your plans and look for some other way of earning your
living there. If, however, you belong to that class of cultured men-of-the-world who can sustain with ease
a lifetime of lying, the road you are walking runs right to riches. In that town literature and the arts go utterly
unhonored; eloquence there has no prestige; and those who live the good and simple life find no admirers.
Any man you meet in that town you may be certain belongs to one of two classes; the makers of wills and
those who pursue the makers of wills. You will find no father there, for those with natural heirs of their
own are regarded as pariahs. A father is someone who is never invited to dinner, never entertained, who, in
short, is compelled to spend his life, outcast and excluded, among the poor and obscure. Those, however,
who remain bachelors in perpetuity and have no close relatives are held in the highest honor and esteem;
they and they alone are men of honor and courage, brave as lions, paragons without spot or flaw. In short,
sirs, you are going to a place which is like a countryside ravaged by the plague, a place in which you will
see only tow things: the bodies of those who are eaten, and the carrion crows who eat them.” (Arrowsmith,
trans., 125–26)

Petronius, The Satyricon, § 117

More astute than the rest of us, Eumolpus considered this new situation very carefully, declaring that
such a method of getting rich did not at all displease him. At first I took this as mere whimsy, some passing
poetic fantasy, but he was quite serious. “I only wish,” he said, “we could afford better scenery and props
for the little comedy I have in mind. More expensive clothing, for instance, would help; and if we could
manage to travel more comfortably, we could sustain our little illusion somewhat better. No, gentlemen, i f
the choice were mine, I’d set to work right now and in no time at all I’d make every one of you a rich
man.” For my part, I promised faithfully to do anything he should ask of me so long as there was no
objection to my wearing the same clothes I had worn during the robbery of Lycurgus’ villa or to making
use of our plunder. “As for any sums required for our immediate needs,” I added, “surely the Mother of
gods and men will supply us with all her usual generosity.” “Very well, then,” said Eumolpus, “let’s write
the plot of our little play right now. Now if no one objects, I’ll take the part of the master.” This suggestion
seemed harmless enough, and no one dared to object. But in order to keep the secret from ever being
divulged, we all took a solemn oath to obey Eumolpus in everything, to endure burning, imprisonment,
flogging or even death by the sword. In short, like gladiators, we dedicated ourselves utterly, body and
soul, to the service of our master. Then when the oath of service had been administered, we gathered
around our master and saluted him and learned from his lips the plot of our play. Eumolpus, it seemed, had
recently lost his only son, a boy of great eloquence and a promising future. Prostrated by grief and unable
to bear the daily sight of his son’s friends and dependents or even to look at the grave, the poor old man had
tried to forget his sorrow by leaving his native land. Then, as though he had not suffered enough already, he
had been shipwrecked, and his losses in the wreck had exceeded twenty millions. It was not, however, the
loss that grieved him but the fact that, having no servants, he could no longer recognize his own importance

330
in the world. In Africa, moreover, he possessed in land and capital investments a sum equivalent to thirty millions; and as for slaves, he had such an army of them scattered over the farms of Numidia that he could, had he wished, have sacked Carthage. As the finishing touches, we suggested that Eumolpus should cough constantly, complain now and then of diarrhea, and loudly proclaim that all food set before him was revolting stuff. The only subjects of his conversation must be gold and silver, the atrocious returns on his farms, and the intractable sterility of the soil. Every day without fail, moreover, he must scrutinize his accounts and his will must be totally revised every thirty days.... (Arrowsmith, trans., 126-127)

Petronius, The Satyricon, § 124

Eumolpus poured out his epic with a great, bursting torrent of eloquence, and at last we entered Croton. That night we ate and slept at a dirty little inn, but early the next morning we set out to find quarters a little more in keeping with the grandeur of our pretensions. On the way, however, we ran into a crowd of legacy-hunters who promptly asked us who we were and where we came from. As prearranged, we answered with such a flood of information that they were quickly satisfied on both counts and accepted our story without further question. Immediately a great struggle broke out among them to see which could shower Eumolpus with the most money.... (Arrowsmith, trans., 140-141)

Petronius, The Satyricon, § 125

And so we lived for some time at Croton... Eumolpus, drunk with his success, had so far forgotten the past that he began to boast to his intimates that no one in Croton dared to cross him and that, for any crimes we might commit, he could easily get us off through the influence of his new friends. For my part, thanks to the excellent food and the other gifts which Fortune showered on us in prodigious profusion, I had begun to put on weight again and had almost convinced myself that luck was no longer my enemy. Still, I couldn't help reflecting now and then on our present life and how it had come about. "What would happen," I used to wonder, "if one of these legacy-chasers had the wit to send us off to Africa for information and then exposed us? Or suppose Eumolpus' hired servant got bored with his present luck and dropped a hint to his friends, or gave the whole show away out of spite? No mistake about it: we'd have to run for it, right back to our old life of poverty. Why, we'd have to start begging again. And, gods in heaven, an outlaw's life is a miserable business. Always waiting to be punished.... (Arrowsmith, trans., 141)

Petronius, The Satyricon, § 140

One of our inheritance-hunters was an extremely respectable matron by the name of Phoebe, a lady whose ample charms in younger days had enabled her to come into several large legacies. Now old and faded, however, she made it her practice to offer her daughter and son as wards to childless old men with money, and in this way managed to keep her talents green and flourishing into the second generation. So it was not long before she came to pay a visit to Eumolpus, and after warmly praising his upright life, his largesse and conspicuous humanity, commended her children to his care. He was, she declared, the only man on earth who could be depended upon to give her darling daily instruction in firm moral principles. In short, she proposed to throw these children entirely on Eumolpus' mercy: his guidance and instruction was the only portion she could give them before she died. True to her word, she promptly left her very pretty daughter and her adolescent son there in the bedroom with Eumolpus and hurried off to the temple on the pretext of thanking heaven for this fulfillment of her dearest hopes. Eumolpus—whose frustrations had reached such a pitch that he was on the point of making me his Ganymede—lost no time and immediately invited the girl to a lesson in ritual buttock-thumping. But he had told everyone that he was gouty and cursed with a bad liver, and unless he maintained this fiction, he ran the risk of giving the show away. So, in order to sustain his story, he ordered the girl to sit down on his lap and test for herself at close quarters the full extent of that "uprightness and largesse and conspicuous humanity" her mother had just commended so warmly. Then he told Corax to slip under the bed, plant his hands firmly on the floor, and stroke the cadence for him by heaving with his buttocks. Corax carried out his orders to perfection: slow, smooth stoke, every thrust so timed that it coincided exactly with the girl's expert twisting and writhing. Then, as the lesson neared its conclusion, Eumolpus shrieked to Corax to quicken the tempo. Corax promptly obeyed, humping away like mad, while Eumolpus swung there in mid-air, bouncing and swaying back and forth between the servant and the girl, for all the world like a human seesaw. The first lesson over,
Eumolpus immediately began the second, much to our own amusement and also his own. Meanwhile, fearing that my long inactivity had left me out of shape, I approached the brother who was eagerly following his sister’s gymnastics through a chink in the door.... (Arrowsmith, trans., 162–63)

Pliny Minor (62–114 CE), *Epistles*

First identified as a possible source by H&S (1925 [2:51n]).

Pliny Minor, *Epistles* 2.20, “To Calvisius [On One that Angled for Legacies]”

Look me some copper, and I’ll pay you a Golden Story for it; nay, a string of them; for a fresh tale reminds me of a number before it; and it is no matter where I begin. Verania, Piso’s Lady, (that Piso, I mean who was adopted by Galba) lay dangerously ill: Regulus paid her a visit. First, mark the impudence of the fellow, to approach a sick woman, when he was a professed enemy to her husband, and extremely odious to her self. So far, good, had it been a bare Visit; but he drew his Seat very near the Bed, and enquired what Day and Hour she was born. As soon as he heard it, he set his Face in form, put on an earnest Look, moved his Lips, shook his Fingers, but counted upon them nothing at all, any further than putting the Wretch in suspense with a tedious Expectation: You are, says he, past your Climacteric, but you will recover; and to convince you better of it, I will consult a diviner, whom I have often tried. Without delay, he makes a Sacrifice, and affirms, That the intestines agree with the signification of the stars. She more inclined by her danger to be credulous, required her will, writes down a legacy to Regulus; presently sickens to a fatal degree, and exclaims, in a dying Condition, O villainous, perfidious Man, and more than perjured! Who swore to her falsely by the health of his son. This is the practice of Regulus, as impious, as it is frequent, to imprecate the anger of the gods, whom he daily mocks, on the life of the unhappy child. Valleius Blesus, that rich consular-man, was sick to an extremity; he desired to alter his will. Regulus, who promised himself an advantage by that change, as he had lately tampered with him, began to exhort the physicians, and urge them by all possible Methods to prolong the Life of the Patient. When the Will was signed, he varies his Character, turns his Address, and speaks to the same Physicians, How long do you torture the Afflicted? Why do you envy him an easy Death, when you cannot protract his Life; Blesus expires; and as if he heard all that Regulus did not leave a Farthing to Regulus. These two are sufficient; do you challenge a third, by the Law of Pastime? I can furnish you. Aurelia, a Woman of Fashion, on the point of signing her Will, laid her Hands on a very fine suit of clothes. When she came to sign, Regulus said to her, I would beg the Favour of you to leave these to me. Aurelia thought the Man was in Jest; he pressed her seriously: Immediately she commanded her Woman to open the Tables, and put him down the Dress she wore for a Legacy. He observed her Writing, and looked whether she had written it. And truly, Aurelia is alive; yet ye obliged her to this, as if she was dying. And he takes an inheritance, he receives a Legacy, as if he deserved it. But why do I stay in this City, where Impudence and Knavery have long since been more largely recompensed than Modesty and Virtue? Look upon Regulus, who advanced his Fortune from Poverty to Riches by ill methods; so far, that he told me himself, when he consulted the Soothsayer, how soon he should make 600 sestaces, that he found the Entrails doubled, which portended that he should raise it to a Thousand, and two Hundred. And he will have it, if, as he has begun, he proceeds to dispose of what he belongs to others according to his own Pleasure. (Henley, trans., 102–3)

Pliny Minor, *Epistles*, 4.2.2

“(Regulus has lost his son; the only evil he does not deserve, because I do not know, whether he thinks it an evil. The boy had an acute, but a doubtful genius; yet one, that might pursue a right path, if he did not resemble his father.) Regulus gave him a manumission, that he might be his mother’s heir; and, (as the common report goes, founded upon the known conduct of the man) he wheedled him, after it, with a vile dissimulation of kindness unusual with parents. This is scarcely credible, but consider it is Regulus” (Henley, trans., 157).

2. Metempsychosis and the Interlude
The following identifications center on source materials dealing with the philosophy and biography of Pythagoras, with particular attention to their influence upon the Interlude.

UPTON (1749 [8]) notes that “the whole <scene> is chiefly borrowed from one of Lucian’s dialogues, entitled The Dream, or The Cock.” Most critics agree with this identification, but tend to suggest additional possible sources, as follows.

REA (1919 [156–57]): “Upton pointed out that this interlude, as he calls it, is based on Lucian’s Dream; he also indicated some of the borrowed passages.”

[xxvii]: “J has merely substituted the group of professional fools as a dramatic equivalent for Folly herself, who, arrayed in cap and bells, serves a similar function in Erasmus’ MorEnc.”

LEVIN (1943 [232]): “The Lucianic influence has penetrated to the core of the drama. With the exception of few details, which seem to have been gathered from Diogenes Laertes, Mosca’s interlude is based on Lucian’s Dream. But J, who had great Lat. and less Gr., was most familiar with the dialogue in the translation of Erasmus.”

KERNAN (1962 [210]): “Mosca, the author of the entertainment, derived much of this mock-history of the soul from another cynical and sophisticated author, the second-century Greek satirist Lucian, in whose Dream or Dialogue of the Cobbler and the Cock a cock tells his owner, a poor cobbler, of the various transmigrations of soul which have brought him at last to the barnyard. But this tale of Lucian’s has a point to which Mosca does not refer: the cobbler is eaten up with envy of a friend of his who has become wealthy, and the cock in the end succeeds in showing the cobbler what miserable lives the wealthy lead. The moral of the story thus has an immediate bearing on the events of the play and reflects back in an ironic fashion on the gold-worshipping household of Volpone. These clever people are condemning themselves from their own mouths.”

BROCKBANK (1968 [xxi–xxii]: “In so [xxii] far as it idolises folly, the entertainment is rightly said to derive from Erasmus, but the debt is not profound; J’s debt in the play at large may be more so, but it cannot be adequately demonstrated from this scene alone.”

a) Lucian (ca. 128–180 CE), The Dream, or The Cock

Lucian, The Dream, or The Cock, 16–21

MICYLLUS. Yes, by Heaven, it is high time now for you to talk and tell me how you got transformed and what you know of each existence.

COCK. Listen; but first let me tell you thus much, that I have never seen anyone leading a happier life than you.

MICYLLUS. Than I, cock? I wish you no better luck yourself! You force me to curse you, you know. But begin with Euphorbus and tell me how you were transformed to Pythagoras, and then the rest of it till you get to the cock: for it is likely that you have seen many sights and had many adventures in your multifarious existences.

COCK. How my soul originally left Apollo, flew down to earth and entered into a human body and what sin it was condemned to expiate in that way would make a long story; besides, it is impious either for me to tell or for you to hear such things. But when I became Euphorbus...

MICYLLUS. But I,—who was I formerly, wondrous creature? First tell me whether I too was ever transformed like you.

333

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COCK. Yes, certainly.
MICYLLUS. Then what was I? Tell me if you can, for I want to know.
COCK. You were an Indian ant, one of the gold-digging kind.
MICYLLUS. Confound the luck! to think that I did not dare to lay in even a small supply of gold-dust before coming from that life to this! But what shall I be next, tell me? You probably know. If it is anything good, I'll climb up this minute and hang myself from the peg that you are standing on.
COCK. You can't by any possibility find that out. But when I became Euphorbus—for I am going back to that subject—I fought at Troy and was killed by Menelaus, and some time afterwards I entered into Pythagoras. In the meanwhile I stood about and waited without a house till Mnesarchus should build me one.
MICYLLUS. Without food and drink, my friend?
COCK. Yes, certainly; for they turned out to be unnecessary, except for the body.
MICYLLUS. Well, then, tell me the story of Troy first. Was it all as Homer says?
COCK. Why, where did he get his information, Micyllus? When all that was going on, he was a camel in Bactia. I'll tell you thus much, though: nothing was out of the common then, and Ajax was not as tall and Helen herself not as fair as people think. As I saw her, she had a white complexion and a long neck, to be sure, so that you might know she was the daughter of a swan; but as for the rest of it, she was decidedly old, about the same age as Hecuba; for Theseus eloped with her in the first place and kept her at Aphidnae, and Theseus lived in the time of Hercules, who took Troy the first time it was taken, in the time of our fathers,—our then fathers, I mean. Panthous told me all this, and said that when he was quite small he had seen Heracles.
MICYLLUS. But how about Achilles? Was he as Homer describes him, supreme in everything, or is this only a fable too?
COCK. I did not come in contact with him at all, Micyllus, and I can't tell you as accurately about the Greek side. How could I, being one of the enemy? His comrade Patroclus, however, I killed without difficulty, running him through with my spear.
MICYLLUS. And then Menelaus killed you with much greater ease! But enough of this, and now tell me the story of Pythagoras.
COCK. In brief, Micyllus, I was a sophist, for I must tell the truth, I suppose. However, I was not uneducated or unacquainted with the noblest sciences. I even went to Egypt to study with the prophets, penetrated into their sanctuaries and learned the books of Horus and Isis by heart, and then I sailed away to Italy and worked upon the Greeks in that quarter of the world to such an extent that thought me a god.
MICYLLUS. So I have heard, and I have also heard that you were thought to have come to life again after dying, and that you once showed them that your thigh was of gold. But, look here, tell me how it occurred to you to make a law against eating either meat or beans?
COCK. Do not press that question, Micyllus.
MICYLLUS. Why, cock?
COCK. Because I am ashamed to tell you the truth of it.
MICYLLUS. But you oughtn't to hesitate to tell a housemate and a friend—for I cannot call myself your master any longer.
COCK. It was nothing sensible or wise, but I perceived that if I made laws that were ordinary and just like those of the run of the legislators I should not induce men to wonder at me, whereas the more I departed from precedent, the more of a figure I should cut, I thought, in their eyes. Therefore I preferred to introduce innovations, keeping the reason for them secret so that one man might guess one thing and one another, and all be perplexed, as they are in the case of oracles that are obscure. Look here, you are laughing at me now.
MICYLLUS. Not so much at you as at the people of Croton and Metapontum and Tarentum and all the rest who followed you dumbly and worshipped the footprints that you left in walking. But after you put off the part of Pythagoras what other did you assume?
COCK. Aspasia, the courtesan from Mile tus.
MICYLLUS. Whew, what a yarn! So Pythagoras became a woman on top of everything else, and there was once a time when you laid eggs, most distinguished of cocks; when you lived with Pericles in the capacity of Aspasia and had children by him and carded wool and spun yarn and made the most of your sex in courtesan style?
COCK. Yes, I did all that, and I am not the only one; both Tiresias and Caeneus the son of Elnas preceded me, so that all your jokes at my expense will be at their expense too.
MICYLLUS. How about it? Which life did you find the pleasanter, when you were a man or when Pericles dallied with you?

COCK. Just see what question you have asked there! Even Tiresias paid dearly for answering it!

MICYLLUS. Whether you tell me or not, Euripides has settled the business well enough, for he says that he would sooner stand in line of battle thrice over than bear a single child.

COCK. I'll remind you of that before long, Micyllus, when you are in child-bed; for you too will be a woman again and again in your long cycle of existences.

MICYLLUS. Hang you, cock, do you think everybody hails from Miletus or Samos? They say that while you were Pythagoras and young and handsome you often played Aspasia to the tyrant. But what man or woman did you become after Aspasia?

COCK. The Cynic Crates.

MICYLLUS. Twin brethren! what ups and downs! First a courtesan, then a philosopher!

COCK. Then a king, then a poor man, and soon a satrap; then a horse, a jackdaw, a frog, and a thousand things besides; it would take too long to enumerate them all. But of late I have often been a cock, for I liked that sort of life: and after belonging to many men, both rich and poor, at length I am now living with you, laughing at you every day for bewailing and lamenting over your poverty and for admiring the rich through ignorance of the troubles that are theirs. Indeed, if you knew the cares they have, you would laugh at yourself for thinking at first that wealth was a source of extraordinary happiness.

MICYLLUS. Well then, Pythagoras—but tell me what you like best to be called, so that I may not muddle up our conversation by calling you different names.

COCK. It will make no difference whether you call me Euphorbus or Pythagoras, Aspasia or Crates; I am all of them. But you had better call me what you now see me to be, a cock, so as not to slight a bird that, although held in low esteem, has in itself so many souls.

MICYLLUS. Well then, cock, as you have tried almost every existence and know everything, please tell me clearly about the life of the rich and the life of the poor, each by itself so that I may learn if you are telling the truth when you declare that I am happier than the rich. (Harmon, trans., 2:203–15)

b) Diogenes Laertes, De Philosophorum Vitis

See the entry for [493–501] below; also see COOK (1962 [192]); COOKSEY (2000 [103–4]).

c) Iamblichus (ca. 250–ca. 325), Life of Pythagoras

Commentators who have identified Iamblichus as a possible source include COOKSEY (2000 [103]).

Iamblichus (ca. 250–ca. 325 CE), Life of Pythagoras, passim

(5) Such is the high birth ascribed to Pythagoras by his fellow-citizens; but one of the Samian poets says he was the son of Apollo: ‘Pythagoras, borne to Zeus-beloved Apollo / By Pythias, the fairest of the Samians.’ [...] (62) The starting point of his system of education was recall of the lives which souls had lived before entering the bodies they now inhabit. (63) … He aroused in many of those he met a most clear and vivid remembrance of an earlier life which their souls had lived long ago, before being bound to this present body. He gave indisputable proofs that he himself had been Euphorbos, the opponent of Patroklos, and the lines of Homer he most frequently recited, or sang to a melodious accompaniment on the lyre, where those on the death of Euphorbos…. The one point we wish to make from it all is this: Pythagoras knew his own previous lives, and began his training of others by awakening their memory of an earlier existence. (Clark, trans., 2–26)

d) Ovid (43 BCE–18 CE), Metamorphoses

335
COOKSEY (2000 [103]): "Met 15.75–478 is cited as the most obvious source for J’s treatment of Pythagoras and metempsychosis. [...] Ovid presents Pythagoras offering a long panegyric on the transmigration of the soul and the virtues of vegetarianism. The latter is to ensure the safety of the soul in its transmigrations from one life to the next. [...] J’s use of Pythagoras is ironic. The soul’s descent in Volp contrasts sharply with its ascent in Ovid, underlining the decadence of Venice and the corruption of Volpone. [...] In the last episode ... of Satyr (141.2–11), Encolpius, Giton, and Eumolpus find themselves in the ancient Italian city of Croton. To swindle the locals, the poet Eumolpus pretends to be a shipwrecked millionaire, while Encolpius and Giton masquerade as his attendant slaves. Eventually, to escape the legacy hunters, Eumolpus indicates that he is dying and prepares a will, dividing his (fictitious) fortune. His will stipulates that those who would inherit anything must agree to eat his body, a literal expression of their figurative consumption of his substance. The surviving episode ends with the captatores justifying the act of cannibalism to themselves. The resonances with the situation in Volp are readily apparent. No one, however, has observed that Croton or Cortona, originally a Gr. colony, was also the traditional centre of the Pythagorean brotherhood, which J could have known from Diogenes Laertius or Iamblichus. Important to the purity codes of the Pythagorean doctrine was a vegetarian diet, the point satirized by Ovid. By inference, the theme of cannibalism also relates to metempsychosis, since that is part of the justification for the vegetarian diet. The location of the episode is central to Petronius’ comic intent. The literal cannibalization of Eumolpus’ body by the legacy hunters takes on an added irony when set at the site of the vegetarian Pythagoreans, an irony that underlines their unscrupulousness.”

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 15.66–532

... Heere dwelt a man of Samos Ile, who for the hate he had To Lordynesse and Tyranny, though unconstraynd was glad To make himself a barmisht man. And though this persone werre Farre distant Gom the Goddes by site of heaven: yit came he neere To them in mynd. And he by syght of soule and reason cleere Behild the things which nature dooth to fleshly eyes denye. And when with care most vigilant he had assuredly Imprinted all things in his hart, he set Mem openly Abroade for oMer G)lk to leme. He taught hG silent sort (Which woondred at the heavenly woordes Meyr mayster did repoA) The Grst fbundaGon o f Me world: Me cause o f every thing: What nature was: and what was God: whence snow and lyghtning spring: And whiMer Jove a  eke the wynds in breaking clowdes doo Munder: What shakes the earM: what law Me starres doo keepe Meyr courses under And what soever oMer thing G hid Gom common sence. He ako G Me Grst that did iiqoyne an abstinence To feede o f any lyving thing. He ako Grst o f all Spake Mus: alMough ryght lemedly, yit to efkct hut small: Yee mortall men, fbrbeare to Gank your Gesh wiM wicked Gxxle. Yee have boM come and Guites o f trees and grapes and herbes nghf good. And Mough Giat sum bee harsh and hard: yit ^ re  may make Mem weU BoM soG and sweete. Yee may have m ilk, and honny uhich dooM smell O f Gowres o f tyme. The lavish earM dooM yeeld you plenGously Most genüe Gxxle, and nches to contait boMe mynd and eye. There needes no slaughter nor no blood to get your living by.
The beasts do break theyr fast with flesh: and yit not all beasts neyther.
For horses, sheepe, and Rotherbeastes to live by grasse had lever.
The nature of the beast that dooth delght in bloody foode.
Is cruell and unmercifiul. As Lyons feerce of moode,
Armenian Tigers, Beares, and Woolves. Oh, what a wickednesse
It is to cram the mawe with mawe, and frank up flesh with flesh,
And for one living thing to live by killing of another:
As whoo should say, that of so great abundance which our moother
The earth doth yeeld most bountuously, none other myght delght
Thy cruelle teeth to chawe uppon, than grisly wounds, that myght
Expresse the Cyclops guyse? or else as if thou could not stawneche
The hunger of thy greedye gut and evill manerden pawnche,
Onlesse thou stroyd sum other wyght. But that same auncient age
Which wee have naamd the golden world, cleene voyd of all such rage,
Livd blessedly by frute of trees and herbes that grow on ground,
And stayned not their mouthes with blood. Then birds might safe and sound
Fly where they listed in the ayre. The hare unscaard of hound
Went pricking over all the feldes. No angling hooke with bayt
Did hang the seely fish that bote mistrusting no deceyt.
All things were voyd of guylnesse: no treason was in trust:
But all was freendshippe, love and peace. But after that the lust
Of one (what God so ere he was) disdeyrung Myrmer fare.
To cram that cruel croppe of his with fleshmeate did not qrare.
He made a way for wickednesse. And first of all the knyfe
Was staynd with blood of savage beastes in ridding them of lyfe.
And that had nothing beene amisse, if there had beene the stay.
For why wee graunt, without the breach of godlynesse wee may
By death confound the things that seeke to take our lyves away.
But as to kill them reason was: even so agein theyr was
No reason why to eate theyr flesh. This leawndnesse thence did passe
On further still. Wheras there was no sacrifyse beforne,
The Swyne (bycause with hoked groyne he rooted up the corne,
And did deceyve the tillmen of theyr hope next yeere thereby)
Was deemed woorthy by desert in sacrifyse to dye.
The Goate for byghting vynes was slayne at Bacchus altar whoo
Wreakes such misdeedes. Theyr owne offence was hurtful to theis two.
But what have you poore sheqre misdoone, a caUmeU meeke and meeld.
Created Myr to maynteine man, %boose Godsomme duggs doo yeeld
Sweete Nectar, whoo dooM cloMe us wiM your wooU in soA aray?
Whoose lyM dooM more us beneGte than dooM your deaM Mrreway?
What trespasse have Me Oxen doone, a beast wiMout aU g iyle
In fayM he G unmyndAiH and unwoorMy o f increace
Of come, that in hG hart can fynd hG til man to releace
From plough, to cut his throte: that in his hart can fynde (I say)
Those neckes with hatchets off to strike, whose skinne is wonne away
With labring ay for him: whoo turmd so oft his land most tough,
Whoo brought so many harvestes home. Yit is it not ynough
That such a great outrageousenesse committed is. They fathir
Theyr wickednesse uppon the Goddes. And falsy they doo gather
That in the death of paynfull Ox the Hyghest dooth delght.
A sacrifyse unblemished and fayrest unio syght,
(For bewtwee woorketh them theyr bane) adorn with garlonds, and
With glittring gold, is eyed at the altar for to stand.
There heeres he woordes (he wotes not what) the which the preest dooth pray,
And on his forehead suffereth him betweene his hornes to lay

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The eares of comne that he himself hath wroght for in the clay,
And stayneth with his blood the knyfe that he himself perchaunce
Hath in the watter sheere ere then behid by soodein glauce.
Immediatly they haling out his hartstrings still alive,
And poring on them, seeke therein Goddes secrets to retrvy.
Whence commes so greedy appetyte in men, of wicked meate?
And dare yee, O yee mortall men, adventure thus to eate?
Nay doo not (I beseeeche yee) so. But give good eare and heede
To that that I shall warne you of, and trust it as your creede,
That whencesover you doo eate your Oxen, you devowre
Your husbandmen. And forasmuch as God this instant howre
Dooth move my toong to speake, I will obey his heavenly powre.
My God Apollos temple I will set you open, and
Disclose the woondrous heavens themselves, and make you understand
The Oracles and secrets of the Godly majestye.
Greate things, and such as wit of man could never yit espype,
And such as have beene hidden long, I purpose to descrye.
I mynd to leave the earth, and up among the starres to sty.
I mynd to leave this grosser place, and in the clowdes to flye,
And on stowt Atlas shoulders strong to rest my self on hye,
And looking downe from heaven on men that wander heere and there
In dreadfull feare of death as though they voyd of reason were,
To give them exhoration thus: and playnely to unwynd
The whole discours of destynie as nature hath assignd.
O men amazd wiM dread of death, why fear eee Limbo Styx,
And other names of vanitye, which are but Poets tricks?
And perrills of another world, all false surmysed geere?
For whether fyre or length of tyme consume the bodiyes heere,
Yee well may thinke that further harmes they cannot suffer more.
For soules are free from death. Howbe’t, they leaving evermore
Theyr former dwellings, are receyvd and live ageine in new.
For I myself (ryght well in mynd I heare it to be trew)
Was in the tyme of Trojan warre Euphorbus, Penthewes sonne,
Quyght throug whoose hart the deathfull speare of Menelay did ronne.
I late ago in Junos Church at Argos did behold
And knew the target which I in my left hand there did hold.
All things doo chaunge. But nothing sure dooth perrish. This same spright
Dooth flete, and fisking heere and there dooth swiftly take his flyght
From one place to another place, and entrth every wyght,
Removing out of man to beast, and out of beast to man.
But yet it never perrisheth nor never perrish can.
And even as supple wax wiM ease receyveth fygures straunge,
And keeps not ay one shape, ne hydes assured ay from chaunge,
And yit continueth awayes wax in substaunce: so I say
The soule is ay the selfsame thing it was and yit astray
It fleteth into sundry shapes. Therfore lest Godlynesse
Bee vanquisht by outragious lust of belly beastlynesse,
Forbeare (I speake by prophesie) your kinsfolkes ghostes to chace
By slaythen: neyther nourish blood with blood in any case.
And sith on open sea the wynds doo blow my sayles apace,
In all the world there is not that that standeth at a stay.
Things eb and flow: and every shape is made to passe away.
The tyme itself continually is fleeting like a brooke.
For neyther brooke nor lyghtsome tyme can tarrye still. But looke
As every wave dryves other foorth, and that that commes behidy
Both thrusteth and is thrust itself: even so the tymes by kynd

338
Doo fly and follow bothe at once, and evermore renew.
For that that was before is left, and streyght there doth ensew
Anoother that was never erst. Eche twincing of an eye
Dooth change. Wee see that after day commes nyght and darks the sky,
And after nyght the lyghtsum Sunne succeedeth orderly.
Like colour is not in the heaven when all things wearye lye
At midnyght sound asleepe, as when the daystarre cleere and bryght
Comes forth uppon his milkwhyght steede. Ageine in other plyght
The Morning, Pallants daughter fayre, the messenger of lyght
Delivereth into Phebus handes the world of cleerer hew.
The circle also of the sonne what tyme it ryseth new
And when it setteth, looketh red, but when it mounts most hye,
Then lokkes it whyght, bycause that there the nature of the skye
Is better, and from rifthyte drosse of earth dooth further flye.
The image also of the Moone that shyneth ay by nyght,
Is never of one quantitie. For that that giveth lyght
Today, is lesser than the next that followeth, till the full.
And then contrarywyse eche day her lyght away dooth pull.
What? Seest thou not how that the yeere as representing playne
The age of man, departhes itself in quarters four? First bayne
And tender in the spring it is, even like a sucking babe.
Then greene, and voyd of strength, and lush, and foggye, is the blade,
And cheers the husbandman with hope. Then all things florish gay.
The earth with flowres of sundry hew then seemeth for to play,
And vertue small or none to herbes there dooth as yit belong.
The yeere from springtyde passing forth to sommer, wexeth strong,
Becommeth lyke a lusty youth. For in our lyfe through out
There is no tyme more plentifull, more lusty, hote and stout.
Then followeth Harvest when the heate of youth growes sumwhat cold,
Rype, meold, disposed meane betwixt a yongman and an old,
And sumwhat sprent with grayish heare. Then ugly winter last
Like age steales on with trembling steppes, all bald, or overcast
With shirle thinne heare as whyght as snowe. Our bodies also ay
Doo aller still from tyme to tyme, and never stand at stay.
Wee shall not bee the same wee were today or yesterday.
The day hath beene wee were but seede and only hope of men,
And in our mootheris womb wee had our dwelling place as then:
Dame Nature put to conning hand and suffred not that wee
Within our mootheris streyned womb should ay distressed bee,
But brought us out to aire, and from our prison set us free.
The chyld newborne lyes voyd of strength. Within a season tho
He wexing fowerfooted lernes like savage beasts to go.
Then sumwhat foltring, and as yit not firme of foote, he standes
By getting sumwhat for to helpe his sinewes in his handes.
From that tyme growing strong and swift, he passeth forth the space
Of youth: and also wearing out his middle age space,
Through drooping ages steepye path he runneth out his race.
This age dooth undermine the strength of former yeares, and throwes
It downe. Which thing old Milo by example playnely showes.
For when he sawe those armes of his (which hearretofore had beene
As strong as ever Hercules in woorking deadly teene
Of biggest beastes) hang flapping downe, and nought but empty skin,
He wept. And Helen when shee saw her aged wrinkles in
A glasse wept also: musing in herself what men had scene,
That by two noble princes sonnes shee twyce had ravished bee.
Thou tyme the eeter up of things, and age of spyghtfull teene,
Destroy all things. And when that long continuance hath them bit,
You leasurely by lirng death consume them every whit.
And thes that wee call Elements doo never stand at stay.
The enterchaunging course of them I will before yee lay.
Give heede therito. This endlessse world conteynes therin I say
Fowre substances of which all things are gendred. Of theis fower
The Earth and Water for theyr masse and weyght are sunken lower.
The other cowple Aire and Fyre, the purer of the twayne,
Mount up, and nought can keepe Mem downe. And though there doo remayne
A space betweene eche one of them: yit every thing is made
Of them same fowre, and into them at length ageine doo fade.
The earth resolving leysurely dooth melt to water sheere.
The water fyned tumes to aire. The aire eke purged cleere
From grossenesse, spyreM aloft, and there becommeth fyre.
From thence in order contrary theye backe ageine retyre.
Fyre thickening passeth into Aire, and Ayer wexing grosse,
Returns to water: Water eke congealing into drosse,
Becommeth earth. No kind of thing keepes ay his shape and hew.
For nature loving ever chaunge repayres one shape anew
Uppon another. Neyther dooth there perrish aught (trust mee)
In all the world, but altring takes new shape. For that which wee
Doo terme by name of being borne, is for to gin to bee
Another thing than that it was: and likewise for to dye,
To cease to bee the thing it was. And though that varyably
Things passe perchaunce from place to place: yit all from whence they came
Returning, do unperrissed continew still the same.
But as for in one shape, bee sure that nothing long can last.
Even so the ages of the world from gold to iron past.
Even so have places oftentyymes exchaunged theyr estate.
For I have seene it sea which was substanciall ground alate,
Ageine where sea was, I have seene the same become dry lond,
And shelles and scales of Seaish farre have lyen from any strond,
And in the toppes of mountaynes hygh old Anchors have beene found.
Depee valleyes have by watershotte beene made of levell ground,
And hilles by force of guling oft have into sea beene worne.
Hard gravell ground is sumtyme seene where marrG was befome,
And that that erst did suher drowght, becommeth standing lakes.
Heere nature sendeth new springs out, and there the old in takes.
Full many rivers in the world through earthquakes heretofore
Have eyther chaundgd theyr former course, or dryde and ronne no more.
Soo Lycus beeing swallowed up by gaping of the ground,
A greatway off fro thence is in another channell found.
Even so the river Erasine among the feeldes of Arge
Sinkes one whyle, and another whyle ronnes greate ageine at large.
Caucus also of the land of Mysia (as men say)
Misliking of his former head, ronnes now another way.
In Sicill also Amasene ronnes sumtyme full and hye,
And sumtyme stopping up his spring, he makes his chanell drye.
Men drank the waters of the brooke Anigrus heretofofe,
Which now is such that men abhorre to towche them any more.
Which commes to passe, (onlesse wee will discredit Poets quyght)
Bycause the Centaures vanquisshed by Hercules in fyght
Did wash theyr wounds in that same brooke. But dooth not Hypanis
That springeth in the Scythian hilles, which at his fountaine is
Ryght pleasant, afterward becommes of brackish bitter taste?
Antissa, and Phenycian Tyre, and Pharos in tyme past

340

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Were compast all about with waves: but none of all theis three
Is now an Ile. Ageine the towne of Llewes once was free
From sea, and in the auncient tyme was joyned to the land.
But now environd round about with water it dooth stand.
Men say that Sicily hath beene joynd to Italy
Unhill the sea consumde the bounds betweene, and did simply
The roome with water. If ye go to seeke for Helicee
And Burye which were Cities of Achaia, you shall see
Them hidden under water, and shamen yet doo showe
The walles and steeples of the townes drown under as they rowe.
Not farre from Pitthe Troyes is a certeine high ground found
All voyd of trees, which heretofore was playne and levell ground,
But now a mountayne. For the wyndes (a woondrous thing to say)
Inclosed in the hollow caves of ground, and seeking way
To passe therefor, in struggling long to get the open skye
In vayne, (bycause in all the cave there was no vent wherby)
To issue out,) did stretch the ground and make it swell on hye,
As dooth a bladder that is blewne by mouth, or as the skinne
Of horned Goute in bottleweise when wynd is gotten in.
The swelling of the foresayd place remaynes at this day still,
And by continuance waxing hard is grown a pretie hill.
Of many things that come to mynd by heasay, and by skill
Of good experience, I a fewe will utter to you mo.
What? Dooth not water in his shapes change straungely to and fro?
The well of horned Hammon is at noonetyde passing cold.
At morn and even it wexeth warme. At midnyght none can hold
His hand therin for passing heathe. The well of Athamane,
Is sayd to kindle woode what tyme the moone is in the wane.
The Cicons have a certeine streame which being droonk dooth bring
Mennes bowwelles into Marble hard: and whatsoever thing
Is towchther with, it turnes to stone. And by your bounds behold
The rivers Crathe and Sybaris make yellow heare like gold
And Amber. There are also springs (which thing is farre more straung
Which not the bodye only, but the mynd doo also chaunge.
Whoo hath not heard of Salmacis, that fowle and filthye sink?
Or of the lake of Aethyop, which if a man doo drink,
He eyther rooneth mad, or else with woondrous drowzinesse
Forgothe quyth his memorie? Whoo ever dooth represse
His thirst with draught of Clitor well, hates wyne, and dooth delught
In only water: eyther for bycause there is a myght
Contrary unto warming wyne by nature in the well,
Or else bycause (for so the folk of Arcadye doo tell)
Melampus, Amythaons sonne (when he delivered had
King Praetus daughters by his charmes and herbes from being mad),
Cast into that same water all the baggage wherewithall
He purgd the madnesse of theyr mynds. And so it did befall,
That lothsomnesse of wyne did in those waters ay remayne.
Ageine in Lyncse contrarie effect to this dooth reigne.
For whoo so drinks too much thereof, he reoleth heree and there
As if by quaffing wyne no whyt alayd he droonken were.
There is a Lake in Arcadye which Pheney men did name
In auncient tyme, whose dowtfullnesse deserveth justly blame.
A myght tymes take thou heede of it, for if thou taste the same
A nyghtymes, it will hurt. But if thou drink it in the day
It hurtes not. Thus lakes and streames (as well perceyve yee may)
Have divers powres and diversly. Even so the tyme hathe beene
That Delos which stands stedfast now, on waves was floting scene.
And Galyes have beene sore afraied of frusshing by the Iles
Symplegads which together dasht upon the sea erewhyles,
But now doo stand unmovable against bothe wynde and tyde.
Mount Aetna with his burning Ovens of brimstone shall not byde
Ay fyrye: neyther was it so for ever erst. For whither
The earth a living creature bee, and that to breathe out hither
And thither flame, great store of vents it have in sundry places,
And that it have the powre to shift those vents in divers caces,
Now damning theis, now opening those, in moving to and fro:
Or that the whisking wnyds restreynd within the earth bylowe,
Doo beate the stones ageinst the stones, and other kynd of stuffe
Of fyrye nature, which doo fall on fyre with every puffe:
Assoone as those same wnyds doo cease, the caves shall straighe bee cold.
Or if it bee a Rozen mowld that soone of fyre takes hold,
Or brimstone mixt with clayish soyle on fyre dooth lyghtly fall:
Undowtledly assoone as that same soyle consumed shall
No longer yeeld the fatty foode to feede the fyre withall,
And ravening nature shall forgo her woonted nourishment,
Then being able to abyde no longer famishment,
For want of sustenance it shall cease his burning. I doo fynd
By fame, that under Charlsis wayne in Pallene are a kynd
Of people which by dyving thryce three tymes in Triton lake
Becomme all fethred, and the shape of birds uppon them take.
The Scythian witches also are reported for to doo
The selfsame thing (but hardly I give credit therunto)
By smearing poysen over all theyr bodyes. But (and if
A man to matters tryde by proof may sauffly give beleef.)
Wee see how flesh by lying still a whyle and ketching heate
Dooth tume to little living beasts. And yit a further feate,
Go kill an Ox and burye him,(the thing by proof man sees)
And of his rotten flesh will breede the flower-gathering Bees,
Which as theyr father did before, love feeldes exceedingly,
And unto woork in hope of gayne theyr busye limbs apply.
The Hornet is engendred of a lustye burued Steede.
Go pull away the cleas Aom Crabbes that in the sea doo breede,
And burye all the rest in mowld, and of the same will spring
A Scorpion which with writhen tayle will threaten for to sting.
The Caterpillers of the feelde the which are woont to weave
Hore flimes upon the leaves of trees, theyr former nature leave,
(Which thing is knownen to husbandmen) and tume to Butterfylies.
The mud hath in it certeine seede wherof greene frosshes ryse.
And first it brings them footelesse foorth. Then after, it dooth frame
Legges apt to swim: and furthermore of purpose that the same
May serve them for to leape afarre, theyr hinder part is mych
More longer than theyr forepart is. The Bearwhelp also which
The Beare hath newly litted, is no whelp immediatly.
But like an evill favored lump of flesh alyve dooth lye.
The dam by licking shapeth out his members orderly
Of such a syse, as such a peece is able to conceyve.
Or marke yee not the Bees of whom our hony wee receyve,
How that theyr yoong ones which doo lye within the sixsquare wax
Are limbless bodyes at the first, and after as they wex
In processes take boihe feete and wings? What man would think it trew
That Ladye Venus simple birds, the Dooves of silver hew,
Or Junos bird that in his tayle beares starres, or Joves stowt knyght

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The Earne, and every other fowle of whatsoever flyght,  
Could all bee hatched out of egges, onlesse he did it knowe?  
Sum folk doo hold opinion when the backebone which dooth growe  
In man, is rotten in the grave, the pith becommes a snake.  
Howbeet of other things all theis theyr first beginning take.  
One bird there is that dooth renew itself and as it were  
Beget it self continually. The Syrians name it there  
A Phoenix. Neyther corne nor herbes this Phoenix liveth by,  
But by the jewce of frankincence and gum of Amomye.  
And when that of his lyfe well full fyve hundred yeeres are past,  
Uppon a Holmetree or uppon a Date tree at the last  
He makes him with his talants and his hardened bill a nest.  
Which when that he with Casia sweete and Nardus soft hath the drest,  
And strowed it with cymmannon and Myrrha of the best,  
He rucketh downe uppon the same, and in the spycyes dyes.  
Soone after, of the fathers corce men say there dooth arysc  
Another little Phoenix which as many yeeres must live  
As did his father. He (assoone as age dooth strength him give  
To beare the burthen) from the tree the weghty nest dooth lift,  
And godlyly his cradle thence and fathers herce dooth shift.  
And flying through the suttle aire he gettis to Phebus towne,  
And there before the temple doore dooth lay his burthen downe.  
But if that any noveltye woorth woondering bee in theis,  
Much rather may we woonder at the Hyen if we please.  
To see how interchaungeably it one whyle dooth remayne  
A female, and another whyle becommeth male againe.  
The creature also which dooth live by only aire and wynd,  
All colours that it leaneth to dooth counterfet by kynd.  
The Grapegod Bacchus, when he had subdued the land of Inde,  
Did fynd a spotted beast cald Lynx, whose urine (by report)  
By touching of the open aire congealeth in such sort,  
As that it dooth becomme a stone. So Corall (which as long  
As water hydes it is a shrub and soft) becommeth strong  
And hard assoone as it dooth towch the ayre. The day would end,  
And Phebus panting steedes should in the Ocean deepe descend,  
Before all alterations I in wordes could comprehend.  
So see wee all things chaungeable. One nation gathereth strength:  
Another wexeth weake: and bothe doo make exchaungge at length.  
So Troy which once was great and strong as well in welth as men,  
And able tenne yeeres space to spare such store of blood as then,  
Now beeing bace haM nothing leA o f all her welth to showe.  
Save mines o f the auncient woorkes which grasse dooth overg Rowe,  
And tumbes wherin theyr auncetours lye buryed on a rowe.  
Once Sparta was a famous towne: Great Mycene florisht trim:  
Bothe Athens andAmphions towres in honor once did swim.  
A pelting plot is Sparta now: great Mycene lyes on ground.  
Of Theab the towne o f Oedipus what have we more than sound?  
Of Athens, king Pandions towne, what restieth more than name?  
Now also of the race of Troy is yising (so sayth fame)  
The Citie Rome, which at the bank of Tyber that dooth ronne  
Downe from the hill of Appennyne) already hath begonne  
With great advysement for to lay foundation of her state.  
This towne then chaungeith by increase the forme it had alate,  
And of the universall world in tyme to comme shall hold  
The sovereynte, so prophesies and lotts (men say) have told.  
And as (I doo remember mee) what tyme that Troy decayd,
The prophet Helen, Priam's sonne, thes woordes ensuing sayd Before Aenaeas dowing of his lyfe in weeping plught:
O Goddesse sonne, beleeve mee (if thou think I have foresyght
Of things to comme) Troy shalnot quyght decay whyle thou doost live.
Bothe fyre and sword shall unto thee thy passage freely give.
Thou must from hence: and Troy with thee convey away in haste,
Untill that bothe thyself and Troy in forreine land bee plaast
More frendly than thy native soyle. Moreover I foresee,
A Cite by the offsping of the Trojans byult shall bee,
So great as never in the world the lyke was seene before
Nor is this present, nether shall be scene for evermore.
A number of most noble peeres for manye yeeres afor
Shall make it strong and puysant: but hee that shall it make
The sovereine Ladye of the world, by ryght descent shall take
His first beginning from thy sonne the little Jule. And when
The earth hathe had her tyme of him, the sky and welkin then
Shall have him up for evermore, and heaven shall bee his end.
Thus farre (I well remember mee) did Helens woordes extend
To good Aenaeas. And it is a pleasure unto mee
The Cite of my countrymen increasing thus to see:
And that the Grecians victorie becommes the Trojans weale.
But lest forgetting quyght themselves our horses happe to steale
Beyond the mark: the heaven and all that under heaven is found,
Dooth alter shape. So dooth the ground and all that is in ground.
And wee that of the world are part (considering how wee bee
Not only flesh, but also sowles, which may with passage free
Remove them into every kynd of beast both tame and wyld)
Let live in saufely honestly with slaughter undefyld,
The bodys which perchaunce may have the spirits of our brothers,
Our sisters, or our parents, or the spirits of sum others
Alyed to us eyther by sum freendshippe or sum kin,
Or at the least the soules of men abyding them within.
And let us not Thyesteslyke thus furnish up our boordes
With bloodye bowells. Oh how leawd example he nfoordes.
How wickedly prepareth he himself to mutther man
That with a cruell knyfe dooth cut the throte of Calf, and can
Unmovably give heering to the lowing of the dam
Or sticke the kid that wayleth lyke the little babe, or eate
The fowlie that he himself before had often fed with meate.
What wants of utter wickednesse in woorking such a feate?
What may he after passe to doo? weU eyther let your steeres
Weare out themselves with woork, or else impute theyr death to yeeres.
Ageinst the wynd and weather cold let Wethers yeeld yee cotes,
And udders full of batling milk receyve yee of the Goates.
Away with sprindges, snares, and grinnes, away with Risp and net.
Away with guylefulle feastes: for fowles no lymetwigges see yee set.
No feared fethers pitche yee up to keepe the Red deere in,
Ne with decayfull bayted hooke seeks fishes for to win.
If aught doo harme, destroy it, but destroy't and doo no more.
Forbeare the flesh: and feede your mounthes with fitter foode therafore.

3. Folly

a) Desiderius Erasmus, *Moriae Encomium* (1509)
REA (1919 [xi]): “The suggestion for the play as a whole came, not from Petronius or Lucian, but from Erasmus’ satire, Praise of Folly. The notes to the play in the present ed. will show some of the specific passages borrowed from this, often almost verbatim; and these borrowings, it will be noted, are not merely from the satire itself, but from the notes ordinarily published with it and even from Erasmus’ EpistolApol, written in defense of his work, to which J owes almost as much as the satire itself. The Epistle Dedicatory, usually considered J’s finest piece of prose, is little more than a paraphrase of parts of this.”

KERNAN (1962 [229–30]): “Rea’s case is overstated, but the notes to his ed. which point out the parallels provide a most useful insight into J’s use of other literary works.”

Desiderius Erasmus, Moriae Encomium 63

Ecclesiastes wrote in his first chapter “The number of fools is infinite,” and in making the number infinite doesn’t he appear to embrace all mankind, apart from a handful of individuals whom I doubt if anyone has ever met? Jeremiah is even more explicit in his Chapter 10, when he says that “Every man is made a fool by his own wisdom.” To God alone he allowed wisdom, leaving folly to all mankind. A little earlier he says: “Man should not glory in his own wisdom.” Now why don’t you want man to glory in his own wisdom, my dear Jeremiah? The answer’s simple: because man has no wisdom. But to return to Ecclesiastes. When he cries “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity,” what else do you suppose he means except what I’ve said, that the life of man is nothing but a sport of folly? And thereby he casts his vote for Cicero’s tribute, in which the words I quoted above are rightly celebrated: “The fool changes as the moon, but the wise man is steadfast like the sun,” what he was suggesting was surely that the entire mortal race is foolish and the epithet of wise applies to God alone. By moon is understood human nature, by the sun the source of all light, that is, God. This is confirmed by what Christ himself says in the gospel, that no one is to be called good save one, that is, God. Then if whoever is good is wise, as the Stoics say, and anyone who is not wise is a fool, it must follow that all men are fools. Again, Solomon says in Proverbs Chapter 15 “Folly is joy to the fool,” which is clearly an admission that nothing in life is enjoyable without folly. (Radice, trans., 187–88)

Desiderius Erasmus, Moriae Encomium 35–36

Heavens above, doesn’t the happiest group of people compromise those popularly called idiots, fools, nitwits, simpletons, all splendid names according to my way of thinking? Perhaps what I’m saying seems foolish and absurd at first sight, but really it’s a profound truth. To begin with, these people have no fear of death, and that surely frees them from no small evil. They’re also free from pangs of conscience. Tales of the dead hold no terrors for them, and they’ve no fear of ghosts and spectres. They’re not tortured by dread of impending disaster nor under the strain of hopes of future bliss. In short, they are untroubled by the thousand cares to which our life is subject. They don’t feel shame, fear, ambition, envy nor love. Finally, if they come still closer to dumb animals in their lack of reasoning power, the theologians assure us they can’t even sin. Now, foolish sage, please count up for me all the nights and days when your soul is tortured by anxieties—heap all your life’s troubles on one pile, and then at last you’ll realize what the evils are from which I’ve saved my fools. Add the fact that they’re always cheerful, playing, singing and laughing themselves, and also wherever they go they bring pleasure and merriment, fun and laughter to everyone else, as if the gods had granted them the gift of relieving the sadness of human life. Consequently, though other folk may be at odds, they are always accepted, sought out, fed, tended, embraced, helped at time of need, and allowed to say or do anything with impunity. No one would dream of hurting them—even wild beasts have some natural perception of their innocence and do them no harm. They are indeed under the protection of the gods, and most of all, under mine; and for this reason they are rightly held in honour by all. They are moreover the favourites of kings, so much so that many great rulers can’t eat a mouthful or take a step or last an hour without them, and they value their fools a long way above the crabbed wiseacres they continue to maintain for appearance’s sake. The reason for their preference is obvious, I think, and shouldn’t cause surprise. Wise men have nothing but misery to offer their prince, they are confident in their learning and sometimes aren’t afraid to speak harsh truths which will grate on his delicate ear, whereas

345
clowns can provide the very thing a prince is looking for, jokes, laughter, merriment and fun. And, let me tell you, fools have another gift which is not to be despised. They’re the only ones who speak frankly and tell the truth, and what is more praiseworthy than truth? For although Plato makes Alcibiades quote the proverb which says that truth belongs to wine and children, the credit really should be mine; witness Euripides and that famous line of his about me: ‘for the fool speaks folly.’ Whatever the fool has in his mind shows in his face and comes out in his speech, but the wise man has two tongues, as Euripides also says, one to speak the truth with, the other for saying what he thinks fits the occasion. He makes a habit of changing black into white and blowing hot and cold in the same breath, and there’s all the difference between the thoughts he keeps to himself and what he puts into words. And so for all their good fortune princes seem to me to be particularly unfortunate in having no one to tell them the truth and being obliged to have flatterers for friends. It might be said that the ears of princes shun the truth, and that they steer clear of wise men for the simple reason that they fear there may be someone outspoken enough to risk saying what is true rather than pleasant to hear. The fact is, kings do dislike the truth, but the outcome of this is extraordinary for my fools. They can speak truth and even open insults and be heard with positive pleasure; indeed, the words which would cost a wise man his life are surprisingly enjoyable when uttered by a clown. For truth has a genuine power to please if it manages not to give offence, but this is something the gods have granted only to fools. It is also the reason why these people give so much pleasure to women, who are naturally more inclined to amusement and frivolity. Besides, however much women carry on with fools even when things take a serious turn, as they often do, it can always be passed off as joking and fun. The feminine sex is artful, especially at covering up its own doings. (Radice, trans., 116-19)

Desiderius Erasmus, Moriae Encomium 29

Now, what else is the whole life of man but a sort of play? Actors come on wearing their different masks and all play their parts until the producer orders them off the stage, and he can often tell the same man to appear in different costume, so that now he plays a king in purple and now a humble slave in rags. It’s all a sort of pretence, but it’s the only way to act out this farce. (Radice, trans., 104)

Desiderius Erasmus, Moriae Encomium 48

Heavens, what a farce it is, what a motley crowd of fools! I often join them myself and sit amongst the poets’ gods. Here’s a man who has lost his heart to a young woman, the more hopelessly in love the less he’s loved in return. Another marries a dowry, not a wife, and while one man prostitutes his bride, another is watching his as jealous-eyed as Argus. Here’s one in mourning, and dear me, what foolish things he says and does, hiring mourners like actors to play a comedy of grief. There’s another shedding tears at his stepmother’s tomb. This one gives everything he can serve together to his belly, but soon he’ll go hungry again, and that one finds his happiness in idleness and sleep. There are men who spend their time bustling about on other people’s affairs to the neglect of their own. One thinks himself rich on loans and credit though he’ll soon be bankrupt, and another enjoys nothing so much as living like a pauper in order to enrich his heir. This one scours the seas for a meagre and uncertain profit, entrusting to wind and wave his life which no money can replace, while that one prefers to seek his fortune in war to living in peace and safety at home. Others fancy they’ve found an easy road to wealth by cultivating childless old men, and there are plenty of people too who court the affections of rich old women with the same end in view. Both groups provide special entertainment to the audience of gods when they end by being duped by the guile of the very people they set out to ensnare. (Radice, trans., 141-42)

4. Animal Lore
The animal names J assigned to the d.p. of Volp and the bestial qualities he bestowed upon his characters have been traced to a variety of corresponding folk and literary sources. HARP (2001 [367; 367n]): “Underlying all the machinations of Volpone upon the foolish dupes seeking his wealth is the ancient fable of Aesop (ca. 6th c. BCE).” See the commentary printed in the footnotes of this edition for occasional references to these materials, as well as app. Genre, s.v. “Beast Fable.”

a) Anonymous, Natura Wulpis, or “The Fox’s Nature” (ca. 1100–1400)

HARP (2001 [367n]), who prints a translated version of this bestiary description of the fox (367–69), notes that its “application to Volpone is clear.”

Anonymous, Natura Wulpis

A wilde der is
ðat is ful of fele wiles,
fox is hire to name,
for hire quebsipe;
husebondes hire haten,
for hire harm dedes:
de coc and te capun
ge feccheð ofte in ðe tun,
and te gandre and te gos,
bi ðe necke and bi ðe nos,
haleð is to hire hole;
for–ði man hire hattieð,
hatien and hulien
boðe men and fules.
Listned nu a wunder,
ðat tia der doð for hunger:
goð o felde to a furg,
and falled ðar–inne,
In eried lond er in erchine.
forto bilirten fugeles;
Ne stered ge nogt of ðe stede
a god stund deies,
oc dareð so ge ded were,
Ne drageð ge non onde:
de rauen is swiðe redi,
wened ðat ge rotieð,
and ðore fules hire fallen bi
For to winnen fode,
derlike wiðuten dred;
he wenen ðat ge ded beð,
he wullen on ðis foxes fel;
and ge it wel feleð,
liiglike ge lepeð up
and letteð hem sone,
gelt hem here billing
raðe wið illing,
tetoggeð and tetireð hem
mid hire teð surpe,
Fret hire fille,
and goð ðan ðer ge wille.
Significacio.
Twifold forbisane in ðís der
to frame we mugen finden her,
wasripe and wisedom
wið deuel and wið iuel man;
ðe deuel dereð dermelike,
he lat he ne wîle us nogt biswike,
he lat he ne wîle us ðon non loð,
and bringenð us in a sinne and ter he us sloð,
he bit us ðon ure bukes wîle,
eten and drinken wið unskil,
and in ure skemting
he dóð ræðe a foxing,
hé billeð one ðe foxes fel
wo so telleð idel spel,
and he tereð on his ket
wo so him wið sinne fet,
and deuel geld swilk billing
wið same and wið sending,
and for his sinfule werk
leded man to helle merk.

Significacio.
De deuel is tus ðe fox ilik
mið iuele breides and wið swik;
and man al so ðe foxes name
arn wurði to hauen same;
for wo so seieð ðeir god,
and ðenkeð iuel on his mod,
fóx he is and fënd iwis,
ðe boc ne legeð nopt of ðís;
So was herodes fox and fërd,
ðo crist kam in-to ðís middel-erd,
he seide he wulde him leuen on,
and ðogte he wulde him fordon.
(Rf. Morris [1872].)

b) Marie de France, Del Cok e del Gupil, or “The Cock and the Fox” (ca. 1190)

A Cock our story tells of, who
High on a dunghill stood and crew.
A Fox, attracted, straight drew nigh,
And spake soft words of flattery.
“Dear Sir!” said he, “Your look’s divine;
I never saw a bird so fine!
I never heard a voice so clear
Except your father’s — ah! poor dear!
His voice rang clearly, loudly — but
Most clearly, when his eyes were shut!”
“The same with me!” the Cock replies,
And flaps his wings, and shuts his eyes.
Each note rings clearer than the last
The Fox starts up, and holds him fast;
Towards the wood he hies space.
But as he crossed an open space,
The shepherds spy him; off they fly;
The dogs give chase with hue and cry.
The Fox still holds the Cock, though fear
Suggests his case is growing queer. —
“Tush!” cries the Cock, “cry out, to grieve ’em,
’Tis mine! I’ll never leave him!”
The Fox attempts, in scorn, to shout.
And opens his mouth; the Cock slips out,
And, in a trice, has gained a tree.
Too late the Fox begins to see
How well the Cock his game has play’d;
For once his tricks have been repaid.
In angry language, uncontrolled,
He ‘gins to curse the mouth that’s bold
To speak, when it should silent be.
“Well,” says the Cock, “the same with me;
I curse the eyes that go to sleep
Just when they ought sharp watch to keep
Lest evil to their lord befall.”
Thus fools contrariwise do ah:
They chatter when they should be dumb.
And when they ought to speak are mum.

(Skeat, trans., 3:434-35)

c) Anonymous, *Roman de Renart* (ca. 1175–1250)

Anonymous, “How Reynard Captured Chanticleer”

Reynard comes to a farm house with many cocks and many hens; Constant Desnoes, a rich peasant,
owns them all. His house is well stocked with all kinds of food, and he has many fruit trees. His yard
is well-fenced with oak sticks and thorn bushes, and in it are his hens. The fox tries to get in it, but the thorns
stop him. So he sits on the path, thinking that he will not jump on the hens, or he will frighten them. He
finds a broken pail, and he hides there where cabbages have been planted. He climbs up and falls inside in a
heap, which makes the hens fly away. Chanticleer the cock comes in from the wood and asks why his hens
fly away. Pinte, the best egg layer, says “We are afraid of a savage beast that might hurt us. I saw him, and
I saw the cabbage leaf where he hid tremble.” “Hold your tongue, silly,” says the Cock; “our fencing is not
so old that a martin or ox can get in.” But still the Cock does not feel comfortable; he keeps one eye open,
and one leg straight, and he props himself against a roof where he liked to crow, and he fell asleep. Then he
dreams (don’t think I lie about the dream; this is the truth; you can find it in the history) that he sees a thing
in the yard with a red-furred cloak, with a collar of bones, which he forces on the Cock’s back. Chanticleer
is greatly troubled about his dream and the cloak and the collar. He wakes with fright and says “Holy Ghost
protect me!” Then he runs off to his hens under the hedge; he calls Pinte aside and tells her is frightened of
being carried off by a bird or a beast. She comforts him and says “Avoy, dear sweet sir, you should not say
that! You are like the dog that howls before the stone hits it. What is the matter?” “Why,” says the Cock, “I
have had a dream and seen a vision that has turned me pale. I have seen a strange beast in a red-furred
cloak with a collar of bones, and the hair turned inside out, into which I got for a little while. Then I awoke,
trembling. What can it mean?” Pinte answers, “The thing you saw with the red fur is the Fox. The collar of
bones is his teeth, with which he will put you inside. This is the throat of the beast, with which he will
squeeze your head. The fox will catch you by the neck; that is what your dream means. And it will all
happen before noon. The fox is hidden in the hedges ready to deceive you.” The Cock says, “Pinte, this is
foolish! This is all nonsense. I do not believe that any harm will come from this dream.” He goes back into
the yard and begins to close his eyes, not fearing the Fox of which he dreamed, and he drops off to sleep.
The fox makes ready for him and creeps up and hopes to snatch him away. The fox springs, but the Cock
springs too, and the Fox misses him. Then the Fox thinks how he might deceive the Cock. “Chanticleer,” he
says, “don’t fly away; I am your cousin!” Chanticleer sings with joy at his escape, but the Fox says.
“Don’t you remember your good father Chanteclin? No cock can crow like him. He shut both his eyes and
crowed to that you heard him a league away.” Said Chanticleer, “Cousin Reynard, you want to trick me.”
“Certainly not,” said Reynard. “Just shut your eyes and sing. We are one flesh and blood. I would sooner
lose a foot than hurt you, who are so closely related to me.” The Cock tells the Fox to draw off a little and
he will sing. Then the Cock begins to sing, with one eye open and one shut. Then said Reynard, “Oh, that is
nothing compared to Chanteclin; he sang with both eyes shut, and one could hear him well beyond the
hedge.” Chanticleer thought that he spoke the truth, and he shuts both eyes and sings, and the Fox seizes
him by the neck and runs off. Pinte saw Reynard carrying him off, and said “Lord, I told you the truth and
you thought me a fool! Your pride has betrayed you. Reynard has carried you away. Alas! Would I were
dead! I have lost my lord! I have lost my love!” The good woman of the house opened the door of the
yard and called her hens—Pinte, Bisse, and Rousete. But none came. She calls her cock and sees the Fox
carrying him off. She tries to catch him and shouts “Harou!” and tells the workers nearby. Constant, the
farmer, shouts “You dirty old whore, why didn’t you catch the Fox?” “Because he wouldn’t stop,” she says.
The workers run shouting, and Constant calls his mastiff Mal-voisin too. And all run after the Fox. Now is
Reynard in great peril, and so is the Cock, except that he thought of a trick. “Sir Reynard,” he says, “don’t
you hear how these peasants abuse you? Why don’t you insult them saying ‘Reynard is taking him the
Cock away, despite all you can do.’" There is no wise man who does not sometime act the fool. The Fox,
deceived, cries in a loud voice, “Despite all you can do I am carrying him away!” When the Cock feels the
Fox’s mouth open, he flaps his wings and flies up into an apple tree. Chanticleer laughs and says, “Reynard,
how do you feel now?” The Fox, trembling, says “Confound the mouth that speaks when it should be
silent.” Said Chanticleer, “May that eye go blind that closes when it ought to be awake! Cousin Reynard,
curses on your cousinship! Be off at once, or you will suffer!” Reynard would say no more, and he goes off,
sorrowing over the Cock’s escape. (Rf. Furnivall [1875].)

HARP (2001 [369n]) identifies this OF Roman as the source of Caxton’s later Reynard: “Recounting
the adventures of the wily fox Renart, who
unfailingly outwits his fellow animals, the poems written before
1205 offer lighthearted satire of feudal society, while the later poems take on a darker quality, with Renart
personifying evil and hypocrisy.”

d) William Caxton, Reynard the Fox (1481)

Caxton, “How Corbant the Rook Complained on the Fox for the Death of His Wife”

Ryght as the cony had made and ende of his complayne / cam in corbant the roek flown in the place
to fore the kynge and sayde / dere lorde, here me / I bryngye hier hier a pietsous complaint / I wente to day by
the morrow wyth sharpebek my wife for to playe vpon the heath And there laye reynart the foxe doun on
the grunde lyke a dede kytyf / hys eyen stared and his tonge henge longe oute of his mouth / lyke an
hounde ben deede / we tasted and felte his bely / but we fonde theron no lyf / tho wente my wyf and
herkeyne and leyde her ere to fore his mouth for to wite yf he drewe his breeth / whiche mysfylle her eyyl / 
nor the false fille foxe awayted wel his tyme whan he sawe her so nygh hym / he caught her by the heed
and boote it oQ / tho was I in grete sorowe and cryde lowde / Alas alas what is there helped / thenne
stode he hatelsy vp / and raught so couetously after me that for feere o f deth / I trembled and flewh vpon a
tree thereby and sawe fro ferre how the false kytyf ete and slonked her in so hungerly that he lefte neyther
flesh ne bone / normore but a fewe fethers / the smal fethers he slange them in with the flesh / he was so
hungry / he wolde wel haue eten tweyne / Tho wente he his street / tho flewe I doun wyth grete sorow and
gadred vp the fetheris for to shewe them to you here / I wolde not be agayn in suche peryl and ferre as I was
there for a thousand marke / o f the fynest gold that euer cam out of arabye / M y lord the kynge see hier this
pyteous werke / Thise ben die fetheris o f shaipbecke my wyf / my lord yf ye wyl haue worship ye muste do
herfore lustyce and auenge you in suche wise as men may ferre and holde o f yow / for yf ye su&ete thus
youre saufconduyt to be broken / ye your self shal not goo peasibly in the hye way / for tho lordes that do
not lustyce and suf&e that the lawe be not executed vpon the theeuis / morderars and diem that mysdoo /
they be parteners to fore god o f alle theyr mysdeds and trespaces / and eueryche thenne / wylle be a lord
hym self / dere lorde see wel to for to kepe your self. (Rf. CAXTON (1481 [55—56].)
PARKER (1999 [16ff.]): "The full complexity of J’s debt to medieval animal lore cannot be realized, however, until the relation to Volp to the beast epic of Reynard the Fox is examined. [...] The development of the Reynard epic is very complicated, but the incidents which were most popular with both writers and visual artists are precisely those which seem relevant to Volp: the two trials of the fox, accused of attempted rape and of feigning death to catch predators; the fox as false doctor and preacher; the fox as seducing musician; the fox’s fatal insolence and tendency to jeer; and his final escape from punishment by a venal court."

Other writers who comment upon Caxton as a source of Volp include SCHEVE (1950).

e) Geoffrey Chaucer, The Nun’s Priest’s Tale (ca. 1387–1399)

The Folger Shakespeare Library currently holds J’s annotated copy of Chaucer. Consult the text of this popular ME text in any number of modern editions.

f) Sir Thomas Wilson, The Arte of Rhetorique (1553)

Themistocles persuaded the Athenians not to change their officers, by rehearsing the fable of a scabbed foxe. For (quoth he) when many flies stood feeding upon his rawe flesh, and had well fed themselves, he was contented at an others persuasian, to have them slapt awaye: whereupon there ensued such hungrie flies afterwards, that the sorie foxe being all alone, was eaten vp almost to the hard bone, and therefore cursed the time, that ever he greed to any such evil counsaile. (Ref. PARKER [1999 (317)].)

g) Conrad Gesner, Historia Animalium (1557)

When she [the fox] sees the flocks of birds flying about, she lies prone on the ground and at the same time shuts her eyes, and places her snout on the ground, and holds her breath, and at once assumes the appearance and likeness of one sleeping or rather dead. But when the birds see her thus stretched out upon the ground, thinking her dead, they glide down in flocks, and sitting on her, they mock her, as it were. But the fox devours them with her gaping and threatening mouth as they approach her snout.... Sometimes in a period of famine she lies on her back deceitfully simulating death, holding her breath and thrusting out her tongue. When she has been seen, the birds approach as to a carcass and being off their guard are seized.... Michael Herr writes the same but adds that the fox before she thus lies on her back rolls about in red clay and dirties herself so that she appears wounded and stained with blood. When ravens, crows, and other birds that are particularly ravenous see her lying thus, rejoicing as it were over a dead enemy, they fly near and are seized, at least on of them. (Scheve, trans., 242)

SCHEVE (1950 [242–43]): "Among the various source studies for J’s Volp there is found little or no discussion of animal lore, though J clearly was indebted to a very specific tradition about the fox, namely, the attributed ability of that animal to catch birds by feigning death. This traditional notion J interweaves with the theme of legacy-hunting drawn from Petronius or Lucian. J saw the device of the fox feigning death as an emblem or allegory of the deception of legacy-hunters, and he worked it into the play in such wise as to draw out the parallels between it and the legacy-hunting theme. That J expected his audience to recognize this fox device and therefore to see its parallels to legacy-hunting will, I think, be evident from a view of the frequent occurrences of it throughout the Middle Ages and the Ren. The episode of the fox
feigning death is set forth in detail in a book J had in his own library, Conrad Gesner’s *Historia Animalium* <see excerpt above>. Scheve also briefly identifies and comments upon 571–76, 580–82, 2975–79.

Also see app. *Genre*, s.v. “Beast Fable.”

h) Oppianus, *Halieutica* (ca. 180), et al.

A like device, I have heard, the cunning fox contrives. When she sees a dense flight of birds, she lies down on her side and stretches out her swift limbs and closes her eyes and shuts fast her mouth. Seeing her you would say that she was deep asleep or even lying quite dead: so breathless she lies stretched out, contriving guile. The birds, beholding, rush straightaway upon her in a crowd and tear her fur with their feet, as if in mockery. But when they come nigh her teeth, she opens the doors of her guile and cunningly seizes them, and with wide gape cunningly catches her prey, even all that she takes at a swoop. (Rf. Scheve [1950 (243)])

*Scheve* (1950 [243–44]), re: *Gesner* (1555), notes that “This piece of fox lore seems first to have entered the literature of western Europe in the 1st c. A.D. through Oppianus, a Roman writer of Gr. works on hunting and fishing. [See excerpt above.] After 1st c. A.D. this description of the fox and birds seems to have rooted itself firmly in the animal literature of western Europe.

[244n] “The tradition does not begin with Oppianus, however, but goes back to earlier Gr. writers and probably beyond them to writers of India and Egypt. But its entrance into western Europe seems to have been through Oppianus and the Physiologus.”

[244] Leading up to J at the outset of the 17th c., the literary tradition of fox lore begins in the 1st c. and “occurs, among others, in these writers and works: Oppianus, Aelianus, the Gr. and Lat. Physiologus, Isidore of Seville, Rhabanus Maurus, Hildebert of Mans, Hugh of St. Victor, Phillipe de Thaon, Alexander of Neckam, Odo of Ceritona, Albertus Magnus, Guillaume le Clerc, Vincent of Beauvais, Jacques de Vitry, the Middle English Bestiary, Bartholomaeus Anglicus (trans. by Stephen Bateman in 1582), William Caxton, Pierre Gilles, George Agricola, Conrad Gesner, and John Maplet. After the publication of *Volp* in 1608, the tradition continued with Edward Topsell and John Swan to the first third of the century.”

Also see app. *Genre*, s.v. “Beast Fable.”

i) Medieval Iconography

*Scheve* (1950 [244]), re: the fox lore tradition of Western Europe during the Middle Ages: “In medieval iconography two occurrences of it are to be found in miniatures of 13th-c. Fr. bestiaries. One of these miniatures pictures the fox lying on his back with his tongue hanging out while these birds resembling crows or ravens fly down upon him. The other shows three foxes, one of which is lying on his back with five or six birds descending upon him. These occurrences in literature and medieval art are sufficient to indicate how thoroughly well known was this anecdote throughout western Europe during the Middle Ages and the Ren. There can be no reason to doubt that both J and his audience were familiar with it.

Also see app. *Genre*, s.v. “Beast Fable.”

5. Venetian Background
a) Mountebanks and Venetian Street-Life

SMITH (1912 [188n]): “Although J knew Coryat well he could not have built this scene on the description in the Crudities, for Volp was played in 1605 and Coryat was not in Venice till 1608. Italian mountebanks probably performed in London as early as this, though the only specific reference I have found is that in CHALMERS (1799 [209n]), a quotation from a warrant granted in 1630 to F. Nicolin and his company, ‘to dance on the ropes, to use interludes and masques, and to sell his powders and balsams.’ Evidently the ‘masques’ belong to the ‘interludes,’ which latter must have been commedie dell’arte.”

[192n] “J’s local color is as usual exact; a gazette [1291] is a small Venetian coin, mentioned by Garzoni as the object of the charlatans’ efforts. This correspondence between J and Garzoni, like several others, makes the hypothesis that the scene and Volp was suggested by the Piazza Universale (1587), not improbable. Garzoni had not been translated into English, but J of course read Italian.”

REA (1919 [xxix–xxx]): “The question has sometimes been asked whether J acquired his knowledge of Venice from travels in Italy. [xxx] But there is no record of such a trip. Drummond, in ConvDrum, speaks of him as not being familiar with Italian. There is nothing in the present play, I am convinced, that shows any personal acquaintance with Venetian life. The local color is largely of a superficial kind—references to the Grand Canal, the Rialto, and St. Mark’s, and allusions to Venetian coins and titles. These were familiar to any well-read Englishman, and needed no trip to Italy to become acquainted with them. Holt assumes that much information had come from that eccentric traveler, Tom Coryat. But Coryat did not leave England until May 1608 and so could not have furnished any information at the time Volp was written. It is much more likely that Florio was the chief source of such material about Venice as was needed; in fact, this is rendered more probable from the fact that the author presented him with a copy of the first ed. of the play, now in the BM....”

[xliv] “It is not hard to imagine J seeing here a chance <in the mountebank scene> for the introduction of some local color in his play of It. life, and turning to Florio ... in such matters. Florio could, of course, have given a vivid account of these famous Venetian mountebanks and the commedie dell’arte as performed by them; the whole scene is a typical one in such extempore performances.”

Also see app. Sources, s.v. “The Mountebank Scene.”

b) Commedia dell’arte

Flaminio Scala, Fortuna di Flavio

Outline: “Arlecchino the charlatan (he is really the companion to Gratiano, chief charlatan) has the bench arranged for mounting to sell his wares; then the servants put on it a seat and a valise, then call the companions; Gratiano and Turchetto (the latter a girl disguised as a page) come out of the Inn, all mount the bench and Turchetto begins to sing and play; Flaminia stands at the window to see the charlatans; Burrattino comes to listen; then Franceschina comes, stops to look on; then Pantalone arrives, salutes Orazio and all stay to watch. Gratiano praises his goods, Arlecchino does the same; Turchetto plays and sings. The Captain seeing Flaminia at the window suddenly salutes her, Franceschina salutes the slave-boy. The Captain observes Arlecchino, recognizes him as the man who holds in governance his lady, and pulls him down off the bench. Pantalone tells Orazio that the Captain is his enemy; Gratiano raises his hand
against the Captain, the Captain the same to him; Arlecchino flees, Captain follows, and in the bustle the
bench is overturned and everyone runs into his own home." (Rf. SMITH (1912 [194-95]).)

SMITH (1912 [193-95]): "If it were not for the concluding hurly-burly one [194] could rest content in
the assumption that J was only describing from life a street performance he had witnessed, or perhaps that
he vivified a traveler’s tale to add color to his comedy. But the closing action, the lady in the balcony, the
lover disguised, the jealous husband, the beatings, above all the names—Pantalone de’Bisognosi, Flaminio,
Franceschina—suggest that J had heard and was here reproducing part of an improvised farce. A scene
from the first act of Flaminio Scala’s Fortuna di Flavio furnishes a somewhat similar outline and might
easily have been given in London by some of the Italians who were there in J’s lifetime; it was certainly
acted in Paris by the Gelosi, whose character names J puts in Corvino’s mouth. […] [195] […] The parallel
is not close enough to press very far. The scene in the scenario is merely one of a kind extremely common
in the commedia dell’arte, a kind that J must have seen if he knew any improvised plays—and he could
hardly escape at least a few in the theatrical world of his day. It is natural to him to minimize the rough-
and-tumble action, which was the chief attraction of Scala’s farce, and to increase the satirical color by
Volpone’s monologues and the comments of the bystanders."

B. Influences

1. Classical Literature

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:149–50]): “In this drama <i.e., Volp> the learned reader will find himself for
ever treading upon classic ground; the foot of the poet is so fitted and familiarized to the Grecian sock, that
he wears it not with the awkwardness of an imitator, but with all the easy confidence and authoritative air
of a privileged Athenian: Exclusive of Aristophanes, in whose volume he is perfect, it is plain that even the
gleanings and broken fragments of the Greek stage had not escaped him; in the very first speech of
Volpone’s, which opens the co- […] -medy, and in which he rapturously addresses himself to his treasure,
he is to be traced most decidedly in the fragments of Menander, Sophocles and Euripides, in Theognis and
in Hesiod, not to mention Horace. To follow him through every one would be tedious….”

a) Aristophanes

For extensive references to Volp’s relation to Aristophanic comedy, see GUM (1969 [psss.]).

b) Lucian

DUNCAN (1970 [23]): “It seems likely that J, in the course of composition, concentrated rather less on
expressing his vision than on working his way into the minds of his public, using that highly deliberate art
on which (following Quintilian) he staked his reputation as an ‘artificer’: [quotes Disc 786–93].”

[25] “Understanding of J’s approach to his audience in this play depends on recognition of the main
factor which distinguishes its satiric method from that of the earlier Comical Satyres: namely, the
application to stage-comedy of the kind of satire associated by renaissance humanists with Lucian.” Also
cf. app. Influences, s.v. “Lucian.”
RIGGS (1989 [135]): “J turned to Lucian at a moment when he was rethinking his entire approach to comedy. [...] Lucian does not censure anyone; his protagonists condemn themselves. Erasmus praised him for ‘reviving the sharpness of old comedy while stopping short of its abusiveness’ and concluded that he knew ‘of no stage comedy or satire which can be compared with this man’s dialogues.’ J had tried to achieve this effect of sharpness in his comical satires, EMO, CynRev, and Poet, but all three plays were fraught with personal animosity, and all struck contemporaries as unduly strident. When J adopted the Lucianic method and discarded the persona of the comical satirist, the problem disappeared.”

Also see DUNCAN (1979 [144ff; pass.]).

c) Plautus, et al.

LANGBAINE (1691 [297–98]): “This play is writ in Imitation of the Comedy of the Ancients, and the Argument is form’d into an Acrostick, like those of Plautus....”

2. Medieval Literature

a) Medieval English Morality Plays

BRADBROOK (1955 [119]): “J’s art lay in his manipulation of popular devices and classical traditions, to his own purposes. He knew and valued the old moral plays—so clearly, that it has been suggested that when he proposed to model himself upon AEpist Cbmedkr, he meant the moralities rather than Aristophanes.”

[235]: “The structure of the old moral play is most closely reflected in the later comedies, especially DevAss and MagLad; but it is most powerfully and successfully present in the characterization of Volp.”

DESSEN (1986 [36]): “... [T]he Vice is a jester and entertainer; he can function as a tempter. [...] In particular, the Vice can epitomize what is wrong with an entire society.... The Vice’s fate can therefore serve as a major signal for the audience, especially is at first we enjoy his antics (like those of Richard III or Volpone).”

b) Dante, Commedia

BAKER & HARF (2004) argue that Volp shares the significant themes of fraud, disguise, and the punishment of vice with Dante’s Inferno, which may have supplied a source of inspiration to J’s play. See app. Major Scenes, s.v. “The Conclusion.”

3. Renaissance and Early Modern Literature

General Comments

PARKER (1999 [63n]) provides an entire appendix in his edition devoted to the Epistle’s “techniques of self-defence,” which are indebted to the EpistApol, “and had been deployed earlier in the suppressed ‘Apologetical Dialogue’ to Poet. Many of these same points are repeated in the Prologue.”
a) Antonio Sebastiano Mintumo, *De Poeta* (1559)

*Quid sit Comedia?* ... quid ipso Comedia sit, quem ego instituo poetam, is facile perspexerit, sive Ciceronem secuti definimus illam esse imitationem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis ... non gravem, sed certe iucundam, atque ridiculum, et quidem ad correctionem vitae accommodatam. (rf. MINTUMO (1559 [280–81]); as quoted in Snuggs (1950 [543]).)

[J provides a perhaps indirect near-translation of this passage via Cordatus in EMO 3.6.202–9: “You say well, but I would have heard one of these autumnne-judgements define once, *Quid sit Comedia?* if he cannot, let him content himselfe with Cicerons definition (till hee haue strength to propose to himselfe a better) who would have a *Comedia* to be *Imitatio vitae, Speculum consuetudinis, Imago veritatis*; a thing throughout pleasant, and ridiculous, and accommodated to the correction of manners.”]

REA (1919 [140]), following CASTELAIN (1906 [155–56]) and HOLT (1905), credits Mintumo’s *De Poeta* (1559) as the direct source of the Epist. Also see SPINGARN (1908 [1:221]).

Snuggs (1950 [543–44]): “The Fourth book of Mintumo’s *De Poeta* is devoted to comedy; to it J turned to find his definition. [...] Alone, the definition attributed to Cicero by Donatus need not come from Mintumo. [...] But J not only took the Ciceronian definition but also translated literally part of Mintumo’s context and paraphrased another part. [...] [544] J, then, read the *De Poeta* early in his dramatic career, about eight years before he borrowed from it in the Epistle prefacing Volp, and derived from it one of his important critical statements.”

Also see app. Extra-Dramatic Texts, s.v. “The Epistle.”

b) John Florio, *Second Frutes* (1591), *Worlde of Wordes* (1598)

Florio’s English-Italian grammar and dictionary have been frequently identified as potentially valuable resources for the Venetian details J infuses throughout Volp. Critics and commentators have in turn relied upon Florio’s works to gloss the Italian words and phrases J used in his characterizations and descriptions, a practice which extends to the footnotes of this variorum. Claims of mutual friendships and familiarity with one another’s works are doubly strengthen by the evidence of J’s presentation of an inscribed copy of Volp to Florio, which survives in the British Museum and serves as the copy-text of the current edition. Also see n. 285 for attribution of the commendatory verses signed by I. F. to Florio.

Gifford (1816 [1:cxiiii]) counters the speculative charge that J pointed at Samuel Daniel in Volp in the aftermath of the Poets’ War: “That J’s conduct towards Daniel had always been perfectly honourable, may be collected from many quarters. The celebrated Florio ... was brother-in-law to Daniel, and apparently much attached to his interests; yet he always lived on terms of great friendship with our author. In his Majesty’s Library is a very beautiful copy of The Fox, which once belonged to Florio, with the following autograph of the poet: ‘To his loving Father and worthy friend, master John Florio, Ben Jonson seals this testimony of his friendship and love.”

c) John Donne, “The Sunne Rising” (ca. 1603–4)

Bradbrook (1957 [146–47]): “... the opening speech ... may have been written with John Donne’s “The Sunne Rising” in mind. If this is true, the intention of the dramatist was to provide a sardonic contrast
between the sterile love of wealth of the Fox and the human passion celebrated in Donne's poem."
Bradbrook also locates similarities between Volp and Donne's "The Good Morrow," "The Dream," and "Satire III."

4. Other Sources, Analogues, and Influences

a) Second-hand Sources and Influences: Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Erasmus

Rea (1919 [xxv-xxvi]): "Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus were the sources of numerous passages in Volp.... Of course, Erasmus, Paracelsus, and Cornelius Agrippa are not the writers from whom J is usually said to have borrowed; they all belong to the 16th c. and the north of Europe, not to the classical civilization of Greece and Rome. Many, if not most, of the frequent classical quotations in Volp were taken at second hand, through the medium of these writers of the transalpine Ren. I have been continually surprised to find that most of J's poetical theory, as well as such a large proportion of his [xxvi] knowledge of the classics, comes in this second-hand fashion."

a) Analogues: The Old Testament (1 Kings 1:1-4) [1510-11]

Now king David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he got no heat. Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. And damsel was very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not. (King James Version)

This biblical episode has been commonly identified as the primary source to the play's deceptive "cure" device; however other possible sources have been proposed. Adams (1904 [298]) credits Holthausen (1889) with first identifying the correlation between Volp and this potential biblical analogue.

Holt (1905b [168]): "Commentators have passed this with a reference to 1 Kings 1:1ff., but a sentence in Hazlitt (1858-60 [2:557]), is so striking as to suggest that perhaps J took this incident in his plot from It. history of a comparatively recent date: 'It is scarcely desirable to lift the curtain from the scenes portrayed in official papers, and by writers of a reliable character, as occurring in the Venetian capitol, and even within the precincts of the ducal palace, not many years after the time of Francesco Foscari (1422-1457); for there is even a story of a Doge who in his old age felt the same chill which crept over holy King David, and thought of the same antidote.'"

Rea (1919 [xiii]) counters Holthausen: "neither he nor any other writer seems to have noted that it is really from Cornelius Agrippa's reference that J obtained this incident, rather than from the Old Testament."

Hotine (1991 [80]), after reading Thomas Sutton's household records among the Charterhouse Papers, notes that "[']here are also payments to the landlord for rent and faggots, a boy, and 'to Margrett, at my
master’s gift.’ A ‘Doll Tearsheet’ perhaps? When Mosca tells Corvino [quotes 1509–11] the cure may not be J’s invention.”

5. Historical Figures and Allusions: Longer Notes

a) Scoto of Mantua [1143ff.]

Gifford (1816 [3:209n]): “I know not whether J had any contemporary quack in view here. The name he has taken from an It. juggler who was in England about this time, and exhibited petty feats of legerdemain. See Epig 115”—verses Gifford (1816 [8:227n]) commends as “an excellent piece, full of strong sense, and just satire. It will serve for all times.” Gifford identifies the Italian of “Doth play more / Parts than the Italian could do, with his door” as an “allusion to an Italian, then well known for his performances and tricks of art: the person meant, I believe, is taken notice of in King James’ Daemonology (1597 [1:105]), and is there called Scoto: ‘The devil will learn them many juglary tricks at cards, dice, and such like, to deceive mens senses thereby, and such innumerable false practices [sic], which are proved by over many in this age; as they who are acquainted with that Italian called Scoto, yet living, can report.’”

“Our poet was a great reader and admirer of the facetious fopperies of a former age; and I am strongly inclined to think that he intended to imitate Andrew Borde, a physician of reputation in Henry VIII’s time, who used to frequent fairs and markets, and there address himself to the people. Here is an evident imitation of his language. ‘He would make,’ <Thomas> Hearne says, ‘humorous speeches, couched in such language as caused mirth, and wonderfully propagated his fame.’ But Borde was a man of learning, and knew how to deal with the vulgar. He travelled much, to perfect himself in physic. WOOD (1691–92), 5.1.74, says that Borde was esteemed ‘a noted poet, a witty and ingeniose person, and an excellent physician of his time.’ Having a rambling head and an inconstant mind, he travelled over a great part of Christendom, and finally concluded his vagaries and his life, as many other ‘ingeniose persons’ have done, in the Fleet, in 1549.”

Cunningham (1875 [3:501]): “I suspect Gifford is wrong in identifying Scoto of Mantua with the Italian mentioned in Epig 115. See his n. to MagLady (1816 [6:32a]), where J mentions ‘another juggler, with a long name,’ Travianto Tudesco, and the reader is referred to the same Epig. Scoto, however, has a special notice in King James’s Daemonologie.”

Cunningham (1875 [3:501]), per Dyce: “In this place, Mr. Dyce has the following MS. note: ‘It is surely to Scoto, not to Borde, that J alludes in this scene. Jeronimo Scoto called himself a count, and wandered over the world as a conjuror. I have somewhere read that while in Germany he cheated a man of high rank, then debauched his wife, robbed her, and finally abandoned her to the fury of her husband. That he was in England in Elizabeth’s time we learn from Nash’s Unfortunate Traveller (1594 [43; sig. F3]): ‘Scoto that did the juggling trickes here before the Queene, never came neere him [i.e., Cornelius Agrippa] one quarter in magicke reputation.”

Rea (1919 [179–80]): “Gifford thinks this name was suggested by that of an Italian juggler who was in England at about this time; and that the characteristics of the mountebank are imitated from Andrew Borde,
‘a physician of reputation in Henry VIII’s time, who used to frequent fairs and markets, and there address himself to the people.’”

SMITH (1929 [376–77]): “Another actor certainly in London during Sh.’s lifetime, and more obscure one.... Scoto, however, was not a mere juggler and mountebank but an actor and leader of a company, whose real name was Dionisio and who was licensed by the Duke of Mantua, like many of his fellows.” On the authority of Kathleen M. Lea, SMITH reproduces a letter regarding Dionisio d°. to Scoto Mantovano in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence from P. Vinta, Visale, to Belisario Vinta, Secretary of the Grand Duke of Tuscany (MS. Magliabech. 2.3.454–56, in Filza 908. c. 103).

H&S (1950 [9:704]): rf. LEA (1934 [2:360–61]): “a professional actor and the leader of the It. company licensed by the Duke of Mantua; his real name was Dionisio.” Also, “In England he was known as a juggler; in the Foreign State Papers of Elizabeth’s reign (cxxxvii.596), Valentyne Dale writes to Lord Burghley from Paris on 25 Mar 1576: ‘There is one Scotto an Italian that playeth such knocks as feates doth vpon the Cardes who commeth to shewe the Quenes Mâie sum of his toyes, he hath ben made made of in this Court, and hath ben in the Emperors court, and maketh him self a joyful fellow.’ Also, “McKerrow, Works of Thomas Nashe (1904–10 [5:378]), quotes Henry Howard, Earl of Southampton, Defensive Against Supposed Prophecies (1583 [Y3’–4]): ‘I was present my selfe when divers Gentlemen & noble men, which vndertooke to descry the finest sleights, that Scotto the Italian was able to play by Leiger du Main before the Queene: were notwithstanding no less beguiled then the rest’; and John Harvey, A Discoursue Probleme Concerning Prophecies (1588 [50]): ‘If there be any wonders ... wrought now adaies are they not performed either by incantations, such as the sorcerers of Pharao vsed ... or else contrived by the deceitfull leigerdemaine, and Craftye conuince of shifting juglers, and cogging impostors, such as amongst infinite other of the same fisteing crew, namely Scoto and Feates vsed, seeming likewise in appearance to have done, and vndone that, which in very truth they could neuer doo, or vndoo, but made semblance thereof by the diuels sophistry, and their owne counterfeit sleights.’ King James, in his Demonologie (Workes, 1616 [1:105]), says of the things Satan will do for his magicians: ‘As in like maner he wil learme them many luglarie trickes at Cardes, dice, and such-like, to deceiue mens senses thereby, and such innumerable false practiques, which are proued by ouer-many in this age; as they who are acquainted with that Italian called Scoto yet liuing can report.’”

CORRIGAN (1961 [29n]): “an Italian juggler.”

KERNAN (1962 [214]): “A sixteenth-century Italian actor and leader of a troupe of players licensed by the Duke of Mantua. Scoto was a renowned juggler and sleight-of-hand artist who appeared in England about 1576 and performed before the Queen and her court. By the time Volp was written Scoto’s name had become, in England, synonymous with the skillful deceiver.”

ADAMS (1979 [27n]): “a real person, a juggler, magician, and performer at legerdemain; he actually visited England and performed before Queen Elizabeth, about a quarter of a century before Volp had its first performance”; rpt. HARP (2001 [30n]).

DONALDSON (1985 [621]): “Leader of a group of Mantuan actors; known in England as a ‘juggler.’”

359

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b) "stale Tabarine, the Fabulist" [1188]

Gifford (1816 [3:21n]): "This Tabarin, who is mentioned by Nicolas Boileau Despréaux, Art of Poetry (1683): 'Apollon travesti devint un Tabarin,' and, again, in his celebrated jack-pudding in the service of one Mondor: 'Ce Mondor étoit un charlatan, ou vendeur du beaume, qui établissoit son théâtre dans la Place Dauphine, vers le commencement du xvii siècle. Il roulait aussi dans les autres villes du royaume avec Tabarin, le bouffon de sa troupe. Les plaisanteries de Tabarin ont été imprimées plusieurs fois à Paris et à Paris et à Lyons.—Elles ne peuvent plaire qu' à la canaille.'"

Holt (1905b [167–68]): "Tabarin's name here deserves somewhat more attention than commentators have devoted to it. J mentions him (1605/6) as 'stale Tabarine,' and yet, if he be the same farceur of Mondor, all authorities agree that no trace of him has ever been discovered before the end of the year 1618 at Paris, and that he did not reach popularity until about 1622, sixteen years after this play appeared. Two solutions are possible: first, that possibly in the unknown years of Tabarin's life before 1618, he had wearied It. cities with his buffoonery, and his name and reputation had come thence to the ears of J. The only support for this argument is the persistent tradition that he was an Italian by birth, but so uncertain is the authority that no two commentators agree upon the same city. The designation of fabulist may readily be understood to mean this Tabarin, for in his published works many of his answers take the form of a fable. The second solution to be suggested is that J refers to an entirely different character, from whom, perhaps, this 'Jack-pudding' (as Gifford terms him) borrowed his name. For this theory no tangible support has been found, but we can point to the numerous It. companies sojourning in France during the last years of the 16th and the first of the 17th c., and the possibility that one of them contained such a character. Perhaps the name derived from the traditional 'tabarrino' carried by all the Zani or Corvielles of that period. J shows elsewhere in this [768] play an astonishingly thorough acquaintance with some of the works then occupying the Fr. stage, and if a 'Tabarine' had been among these companies he might have known of it."

Smith (1912 [190n]): "Gifford assumes this Tabarin to have been the Fr. charlatan of the Pont-Neuf who flourished at Paris some time between 1619–26, playing in farces which were accessory to selling his wares. Cf. Edouard Fournier, ed., Le Théâtre Français au XVIe et XVIIe Siècles... (1871 [1:498f.]). As Volp was acted in 1605 this identification of Gifford's seems improbable. I rather think that the man alluded to in the text was that other and earlier actor, Giovanni Tabarin, who had certainly been known to Eng. troupes in Vienna and Paris, ca. 1572. Cf. Rasi (1897–1905 [2:555f.])."

[165] "Giovanni Tabarin, Antonio Soldino and others whom we meet often in France, were in Vienna in 1568 and after—some of them got as far as Dresden in 1600...."

Rea (1919 [180–81]): "Gifford supposes this is the Tabarin of Paris, who was a famous comedian of the Place Dauphine in the 17th c. Holt points out that this Tabarin made his reputation later than the date of Volp, and so can hardly be the person meant here; he did not, however, succeed in finding any other Tabarin. There was an earlier It. strolling player called Tabarin, who is quite certainly the one referred to by J; see History of the Harlequinate (1915 [1:34]): 'But the It. comedy theatre was not seen in Paris until
1570, when it was established there by one Ganassus or Jean Ganasse.... In this company were included Harlequin, Pantaloon, the Doctor, Pagliaccio, Burattino, and Tabarino, whose homonym enjoyed later on so great a vogue in the Place Dauphine in Paris. It is perhaps significant that there was included in this same troupe a famous leading lady known as Celia. See Dudevant, 2:134: "The Confidenti troupe, which went to France in 1572, had for leading lady an actress of great beauty and endowed with great literary talents. This was Celia, whose real name was Maria Malloni."

H&S (1950 [9:705]): "a zany troop of It. comedians, headed by Zan Ganassa, who visited France in 1572. M. Jal, in the Dictionnaire Critique d'Histoire et de Biographie, notices him as 'Italien de Venise,' who lived at Paris in the 16th c., King Charles IX standing godfather to his son according to the lost records of the parish of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The name means 'short cloak'; cf. English 'tabard.'"

CORRIGAN (1961 [30n]): "a popular Fr. storyteller."

KERNAN (1962 [79n]): "a famous zany in an It. traveling company of comedians—the name means 'short cloak.'"

HAN (1970 [5]): "Originally ... thought to refer to Antoine Girard who, under the name of Tabarin, presented improvised farces in open air theaters of the Place Dauphine and the Pont-Neuf in Paris between 1619 and 1625. [...] The standard interpretation is that Tabarin was a zany in a troupe of It. players who visited France in 1572. [...] We know specifically of one Giovanni Tabarin, the director of an It. group of players, who gave performances in Italy, Austria, and France. But, the word 'Tabarin' is more probably a kind of 'nom de parade' for the improvisations undertaken by numerous traveling companies which set up temporary quarters in various European cities. Hence, J's reason, voiced by Volpone, for criticizing the repetitive, hackneyed nature of the material which is, undoubtedly linked to a very old tradition of the commedia dell'arte in which Tabarino was one of the names applied to the servant in the production. [...] It is most likely that, when alluding to Tabarin, J had in mind not an individual but a whole tradition of improvised buffoonery that characterized the It. commedia dell'arte whose influences were, of course, felt in France."

ADAMS (1979 [28n]): "Like Scoto, Tabarine was an actual It. comedian of the time who performed in France (not, so far as we know, in England) during the 1570s"; rpt. HARP (2001 [32n]).

DONALDSON (1985 [621]): "a zany of this name (= 'short cloak') visited France in 1572."

c) Hugh Broughton: "Broughtons booke" [1236]

WHALLEY (1756 [2:312n]): "We shall have occasion to give some account of this Broughton in a note on Alch." [Whalley's notes in his ed. of the Alch were reprinted in Gifford (1816 [4:73]) as: "Mr. Hugh Broughton, a celebrated rabin in queen Elizabeth's days, and a great publisher."]

GIFFORD (1816 [3:213n]): "Broughton was a man of very considerable learning, particularly in the Hebrew; but disputatious, scurrilous, extravagant, and incomprehensible. He was engaged in controversy during the greatest part of his life. So common a circumstance scarcely deserved notice; yet there was this
peculiarity in Broughton’s case, namely, that he should find people to contest what must have been equally unintelligible to all parties.”

Gifford (1816 [4:73–74n]), in his notes to Alch, adds: “Broughton was an English divine, and a considerable proficient ... in the Hebrew. His attainments, however, in this language only served to make him ridiculous, for he fell upon a mode of explaining it perfectly incomprehensible to himself as well as to others. He was of a very pugnacious humour, and wasted many years of his life, in a most violent dispute with the archbishop of Canterbury, and a Jew rabbi, about the sense of sheol and hades. This rabbi, Howell (1619 [1:20]) says, was of the tribe of Aaron, and of such repute for sanctity at Amsterdam (where he saw him) that 'when the other Jews met him, they fell down and kissed his foot.' This did not, however, secure him from the coarse revilings of Broughton, whose insolence and pride were beyond all bounds. The reader may be amused with a specimen or two of his opinion of himself. ‘The Jews desired to have me sent to all the synagogues in Constantinople, if it wer but to see my angelical countenance.’ ‘French, Dutch, Papist, Protestant, call for me, being a man approved over the world.’ ‘If the queen (Elizabeth) will not preferre me for my pains, I will leave the land,’ &c. All this, with much more, is to be found in an ‘answer to Master Broughton’s letters to the lord archbishop of Canterbury’; in which he is constantly spoken of as one grown mad with unprofitable study, and self-conceit. At all events, the study of him was well calculated to make others mad.”

Rea (1919 [182]): “Hugh Broughton was a divine, living at the time J was writing. After attending Magdalen College, Cambridge, he went to London, and became well-known as a preacher. His first published work, A Concert of Scripture (1588), brought him into lasting and disastrous conflict with John Rainolds. Apparently as the result of complaint against his lectures by some of the bishops, he left England for Germany, remaining abroad a large part of the time until the death of Elizabeth. He long cherished the project of assisting in a better version of the Bible; to his great disappointment, when James appointed a commission for this purpose, Broughton was not included; nor did he obtain a pension for which he applied in 1604. His works were collected in 1662 under the strange title: The Works of the Great Albionean Divine, renowned in many Nations for Rare Skill in Salens and Athins Tongues, and Familiar Acquaintance with all Rabbinical Learning, Mr. Hugh Broughton. I refers to him again in Alch. Broughton’s strong Puritan tendencies were probably the cause of J’s inclination to ridicule him.”

H&S (1950 [9:705–6]): “[Broughton’s] collected works were published by John Lightfoot in 1662. J satirized him in Alch 2.3.237–38: ‘... a most rare schollar; / And is gone mad, with studying BRAUGHTONS werkes.’”

Corrigan (1961 [32n]): “an English theologian and dabbler in the occult.”

Kernan (1962 [217]): “Hugh Broughton (1549–1617) was a Puritan minister and scholar who wrote a number of strange books in religious subjects. J’s intense dislike of the Puritans regularly finds expression in his plays.”

Adams (1979 [30n]): “I had no use for the books of Hugh Broughton, a Puritan divine and rabbinical scholar”; rpt. Harp (2001 [33n]).
DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “Hugh Broughton (1549–1612), Puritan divine and rabbinical scholar; see Alch 2.3.237–38.”

d) Raymond Lully: “Raymund Lullies greate Elixir” [1247]

GIFFORD (1816 [3:214n]): “Lully was a celebrated character of the 14th c. He was born in Majorca, and studied what was then termed natural philosophy, i.e., the transmutation of metals, &c. In this he was very successful; having, as every one knows, discovered the philosopher’s stone, and above all, the great elixir, or drink of immortality. Thus secured against poverty and death, he turned beggar, hermit, missionary, and, finally, lost his life by an unlucky blow, while preaching to the inhabitants of Mount Atlas. In a credulous age, and while men obstinately shut their eyes to conviction, Lully enjoyed an extraordinary degree of reputation. He is now deservedly forgotten. The following distich on him, is as old as Zan Fritada’s song: ‘Qui Lulli lapidem querit, quem querere nulli / Profuit; haud Lullus, sed mihi Nullus erit.”

REA (1919 [184]): “Raimond Lull, known as ‘Doctor Illuminatissimus,’ was born in Majorca in 1235. He became a religious mystic and alchemist. As missionary he twice traveled to Africa, and was killed there in 1315. He was famous for his studies in medicine and alchemy, being reputed to have found the philosopher’s stone and the elixir connected with it.”

H&S (1950 [9:706]): “Raymond Lull or Luly (1235–1315), a native of Majorca.”

[10:86]: Alch 2.5.8, “A Lullianist? a Ripley?”: “a follower of Raymond Lully. Sir George Ripley, canon of Bridlington (d. 1490?), popularized the works of Lully. His own chief works are The Compound of Alchemie (1471), dedicated to Edward IV, but not printed till 1591, and Medulla Alchemiae (1476).

[9:706]: “Bacon, Of the Advancement of Learning, 2.17.14, criticized [Lully] as one of those who ‘deliver knowledges in such manner, as men may speedily come to make a show of learning who have it not.’”

CORRIGAN (1961 [32n]): “a Sp. philosopher of the 15th c.”

KERNAN (1962 [82n]): “renowned medieval alchemist supposed to have discovered the elixir.”

ADAMS (1979 [30n]): “Raymond Lully or Lull was a Spanish mystic philosopher of the 13th c. who claimed to have discovered the elixir”; rpt. HARP (2001 [34n]).

DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “Or Lull, ca. 1235–1315, Catalan philosopher, linguist, mystic, missionary; but not (contrary to later popular belief) an alchemist. Cf. Alch 2.5.8.”

e) “the danish Gonswart” [1248]

A number of eds. and commentators have followed WHALLEY (1756 [2:312n]), who admitted to “having no acquaintance with the Danish Gonswart” and being unable to identify this figure or to “give the reader his history”; rf. KERNAN (1962 [217]), ADAMS (1979 [30n]), HARP (2001 [34n]).

GIFFORD (1816 [3:214n]) likewise adds: “I regret to say, that I am equally unable to assist him: though my researches have been pretty extensive.”
HOLT (1905b [168]): “Both Whalley and Gifford put themselves on record as unable to discover who ‘the Danish Gonswart’ was. I am indebted to Professor Palmer of Yale for the suggestion that it was John Wessel, a noted predecessor of Luther, who gained in addition to his theological fame, the reputation of being a great physician. For his career, consult C. Ullmann, Johann Wessel, ein Vorgänger Luthers (Hamburg, 1834). For the appellation Gansfort (‘Gonswart’ J writes) compare Brockhaus, Brockhaus Konversations-Lexikon: Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyklopädie, 17 vols. (Leipzig, 1882–87), s.v. “Wessel”: ‘Johannes Wessel, auch Gansfort genannt;’ also Encycl. Brit.: ‘Wessels Gansfortius (the surname is from Gansfort or Gösewort, a Westphalian village from which his family came).’”

REA (1919 [184]): “Both Whalley and Gifford confess entire ignorance as to who is meant. HOLT (1905b [168]) identifies him as Johannes Wessel, also called Gansfort, probably from the village of Gansfort or Gösewort, in Westphalia. He was born at Groningen early in the 15th c., traveled widely, and gained a reputation as scholar, religious reformer, and medical practitioner.”

H&S (1950 [9:706]): “Not satisfactorily identified. Two names have been suggested. (1) By HOLT (1905b [168]): the Dutch theologian, a precursor of Luther, Johan Wessel (ca. 1420–89); the surname is from Gansfort or Gösewort, the Westphalian village from which his family came. But he is a theologian, not a chemist. (2) By Mr. B. H. Newdigate: Berthold Schwarz, a monk of Fribourg, who invented guns; his real name was Konstantin Anklitzer. The Eng. trans. of Pancirolli Rerum Mirabilium Libri Duo (1785 [384]) says: ‘’Tis said he was a Chymist, who sometimes for Medecines kept Powder of Sulphur in a Mortar, which he covered with a Stone. But it happened one Day as he was striking Fire, that a Spark accidentally falling in to it, brake out into a Flame, and heav’d up the Stone. The Man being instructed by this Contingency, and having made an Iron Pipe or Tube together with Powder, is said to have invented this Engine.’ Sebastian Munster calls Schwarz a dane.”

BAMBOROUGH (1963 [136]): “may be J’s invention, or may be a German monk named Schwartz, who is alleged to have invented fire-arms.”

HUTSON (1998 [501]): “probably Cornelius Hamsfort, chief physician at the Danish court whence James’s new queen, Anne, had recently arrived.”

f) Paracelsus: “Paracelsus, with his long-sword” [1249]

Whalley (1756 [2:312n]): “Paracelsus is well known.”

Gifford (1816 [3:214n]): “I cannot account for the introduction of the long sword, which yet must have been popular; for it is mentioned also by Fletcher, Fair Maiden of the Inn: ‘Were Paracelsus the German now living, he (Forobosco) would take up his single rapier against his horrible long sword.’ Perhaps the allusion is to some print of Paracelsus, who, as he was certainly present at many sieges and battles, might choose to be represented with this formidable appendage to his physician’s cloak. It must not be forgotten, that Paracelsus always carried a familiar or demon in the hilt of this celebrated long sword; so that it was not without its use.”

Gifford (1816 [4:71–73n]), in his notes to Alch, adds: “Philippus Aureolus Paracelsus Theophrastus Bumbastus de Hohenheim (I love, as the good vicar of Wakefield says, to give the whole name) was born,
in 1493, at Einfiden, a little town near Zurich. His father, who was a physician, taught him the rudiments of his art, and would, perhaps, have taught him more, had not the incurable passion of his son for rambling prevented it. Before he was twenty, he had over-run a great part of Germany, conversing indifferently with barbers, old women, conjurers, chemists, quacks, &c. and eagerly adopting, from each, whatever he imagined conducive to the system of imposture which he had already planned. From Germany he proceeded to Russia, where he fell into the hands of the Tartars, and was carried to the Cham, who sent him to Constantinople, to preside over the education of his son! Here, as all the world knows, he learned the grand secret, and returned to Germany with the philosopher’s stone. At Basle, he set up for a physician, and having by accident, or mistake, cured Frobenius (the noted printer) he acquired considerable practice. In 1527, he was appointed professor of physic, and gave lectures. As he had far more cunning than knowledge, he wrapped up all that he delivered in a kind of mystical jargon (like the alchemists) which was perfectly unintelligible, and procured him a vast number of scholars. Emboldened by success, he now pretended to magic, and held conference with a familiar, or demon, whom, for the convenience of consulting, he constantly carried about with him in the hilt of his sword. He was also a warm stickler for reformation in ecclesiastical matters, which, as he had no religion, sets off his patriotism to great advantage. His language was rude, and his manner gross and offensive in the highest degree; he was arrogant, assuming, and full of the most extravagant promises and pretensions. He offered to teach the secret of making gold ad libitum, and lived on alms. He undertook readily to protract the existence of his patients to any period; and, while debating in his own mind how many centuries he himself would live, died of a common fever in the hospital of Saltsburg, in the 48th year of his age. The rest of his character is easily settled. He was of a lively fancy, and of an active and restless disposition: in our times he would have been a quack and a puppet-show man; in his own, this was not sufficient for his ambition, and he became a professed necromancer. From what I have read of his works, which are written in a mean, uncouth, and barbarous style, I should suppose that such a man might be compounded of a Darwin and a Cagliostro. Paracelsus seems to have first fallen upon that ridiculous species of quackery which was received not long ago with such parade, under the name of animal magnetism. His elixir of life was assisted in its operation by a process very similar to what the modern professors of the art call treating: the patient was wearied by some contemptible mummery into a state of somnolency, from which he was to awake with a renovated constitution. It is not a little mortifying to observe, that the boasted discoveries of this prodigious period, which has been proudly termed the ‘age of reason,’ but which would be more aptly denominated the age of impudence, had been made long since. There is not one of the miraculous inventions, which for a short time immortalized the philosopher Godwin, that had not been the object of sovereign contempt and ridicule many centuries before he was born.” Also, rf. Dyce, ed., Beaumont and Fletcher, 10:69.

CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:502]): “In Samuel Butler, Hudibras 2.3.627, mention is made of the sword of Paracelsus [‘Bombastus kept a devil’s bird / Shut in the pummel of his sword’], and Zachary Grey, in a note, cites a remark of Nandseus, that ‘it were more rational to believe that, if there was anything in the
sword, it was certainly two or three doses of his laudanum, which he never went without, because he did strange things with it, and used it as a medicine to cure almost all diseases.”

REA (1919 [184]): “Philippus Theophrastus Aureolus Paracelsus Bombast von Hohenheim was probably born in 1493. His father was a physician, and Paracelsus began his education at Basel, and was one of the pupils of Johannes Trihenius. After wide travels in Spain, Portugal, Prussia, Denmark, the Orient, Egypt, and Tartary, he returned to Germany, and soon became famous as a physician. In 1527 he became a professor at Basel, and there caused a sensation by his radical views and the fact that he delivered his lectures in German instead of Latin. He was soon forced to leave Basel on account of the enmity of his colleagues. After residing in Essingen and numerous other places, he met his death in Salzburg in 1521. He was charged by his enemies with drunkenness and boastfulness; the latter is very evident in his various works on medicine and philosophy. His medical theories and his philosophies are closely connected and contain much of Neo-platonism, magic, alchemy, and cabalism.”

REA (1919 [184–85]): “This was a famous weapon; Melchior Adam in his life of Paracelsus, Vitae Germanorum Medicorum gives an account of it....


H&S (1950 [10:84]): “Theophrastus of Hohenheim, better known as Paracelsus (1493–1541), is important as being the first to unite chemistry with medicine. Assuming, as the science of the day held, that sulphur, mercury, and salt were the universal constituents of matter, he first included animal and vegetable bodies in the same classification, believing health to depend on a just proportion of these elements in the organism and disease to be the result of disturbing this. This is the minerall physicke of line 231. Wild legends gathered round his name (see Volp 2.2.132, MercVind 146–48: ‘does not looke for Paracelsus man among ‘hem, that he promised you out of wise bread, and dele-wine, for hee never came to light’), and he was supposed to have learnt the secret of the Stone at Constantinople. On the strength of this Gifford, in a note on the present passage, ranks him on a level with ‘a quack and a puppet-showman’; it was reserved for Robert Browning to do justice to his memory.”

H&S (1950 [9:706–7]), regarding his long sword: “Famous both in fact and legend. [...] H. Peacham, The Truth of Our Times (1638 [43]): ‘Wherfore Paracelsus (that glory of Germany, for his depth of knowledge in the nature of Minerals) to shew his true happinesse therin, when he traveled by the way, and came to his inne at night, the first thing hee did, he would lay his sword upon the Table, professing hee would not give the same to the Emperour of Germany: it was a long broad sword, and had engraven upon the blade this: Alterius non fit qui suus esse potest. As being the Embleme of his Liberty: In the Pommel (which was hollow, and to be opened with a skrew) were all his chiefe Quintessences, and spirits of Metalls and Hearbs, wherewith hee cured the most desperate Diseases, gaining hereby infinite treasure and summes of money.’ Browning, who quotes the first two of these passages in a note on his poem of Paracelsus, says the ‘Azoth’ was simply laudanum.”

CORRIGAN (1961 [32n]): “a Swiss physician and alchemist of the 16th c.”
KERNAN (1962 [217]): “Paracelsus was one of the strangest and most noted of the early Renaissance physician-magicians. Alchemy and physic were for him but part of one subject. He was supposed to have kept his secret ‘essences’ in the handle of his sword.”

ADAMS ([1979] 30n): “the famous German doctor of the 16th c., had a famous sword in the handle of which he kept, according to legend, familiar spirits, and according to history, medications and herbs”; rpt. HARP (2001 [34n]).

DONALDSON (1985 [622]): “Theophrastus of Hohenheim (1490–1541); said to have kept his medical secrets in the pommele of his sword.”

**g) Flaminio [1343]; Franciscina [1344]; Pantalone di Besogniosi [1348]**

HOLT (1905b [168]): “The allusion is probably to the Flaminio and the Francischina of the Fr. stage at the end of the 16th c. Flaminio was at the head of the most famous troupe of actors of the *commedia dell’arte* in Italy, and was summoned with his company in 1576 by Henri III of France to Blois just as les *Etats généraux* were to assemble. The greatest success was achieved by Silvia Roncagli in the role of ‘servante (fantesca) ou, comme on dit plus tard en France, de Soubrette.... Son nom de guerre était Franceschina’ (Moland, *Molière et la Comédie Italienne*).”

REA (1919 [187]): “The reference is probably, as Holt noted, to Flaminio Scala, leader of one of the best known companies of It. actors. Corvino addresses Volpone as if he were this actor playing one of the scenes characteristic of his comedy, with Celia taking a part. It must be remembered that these actors acted for the most part extemporaneously.”

KERNAN (1962 [217–18]) considered together with *Franciscina* and *Pantalone*: “These are the names connected with the *commedia dell’arte*, the popular It. street comedy of the 16th and 17th c. The plays, put on by traveling troupes playing on stages like those used by Scoto, were improvisations in which each actor played a stock role and put his part together out of memorized lines, speeches, and stages actions called lazzi. The plot was also improvised as the play proceeded. There have been references to the *commedia* throughout the mountebank’s speech—‘Zany,’ ‘Tabarin,’ ‘Zan Fritada’—and the names which Corvino rolls off show that he recognizes the similarity of the scene here with one of the stock comic situations. Flaminio was a noted actor in the *commedia*, Franciscina was a standard name for the amorous and witty servant girl, and Pantalone was the name for the old Venetian merchant who is inevitably cuckolded. In the mountebank scene J has combined three separate but related forms of showmanship designed to gull fools: the mountebank crying his wares, the alchemist promising the elixir which will prolong life and beauty, and the street comedian.”

ADAMS (1979 [33n]): “Signor Flaminio Scala, a Venetian comic actor of the day”; rpt. HARP (2001 [37n]).

6. Imitations, Translations, and Parallel Passages

*General Comments*
Critics and commentators have sustained the tradition of identifying the incredibly vast assortment of classical materials Jon wove into the text of Volp for the better part of four centuries. The following appendix provides a complementary catalogue of the various literary materials that have been identified by editors and commentators as direct sources or possible points of inspiration for discrete passages in the play’s text. Following in the order in which they appear in the play, each excerpt and translation corresponds to the bracketed TLNs established for the copy-text.

**Dryden** (1668 [17:21]): Critics says to Eugenius that “the greatest man of the last age (Ben. Johnson) was willing to give place to them [i.e., the ancients] in all things: He was not only a professed Imitator of Horace, but a learned Plagiary of all the others; you track him every where in their Snow: If Horace, Lucan, Petronius Arbiter, Seneca, and Juvenal, had their own from him, there are few serious thoughts which are new to him; you will pardon me therefore if I presume he loved their fashion when he wore their clothes. But since I have otherwise a great veneration for him, and you, Eugenius, prefer him above all other Poets, I will use no farther argument to you then his example: I will produce before you Father Ben. dressed in all the ornaments and colors of the Ancients, you will need no other guide to our Party if you follow him....”

**Cumberland** (1788 [4:150–51]): “Cicero made a selection of passages from the Greek dramatic authors, which he turned into Lat. verse for the purpose of applying them, as occasion should offer, either in his writings or pleadings, and our learned countryman [i.e., J] seems on his part to have made the whole circle of Greek [151] and Roman poets his own and naturalized them to the stage. If any learned man would employ his leisure in following his allusions through this comedy only [i.e., Volp], I should think it would be no unentertaining task.”

**Coleridge** (1836 [1:100]): “In all his works, in verse and prose, there is an extraordinary opulence of thought; but it is the produce of an amassing power in the author, and not of a growth from within. Indeed a large proportion of Ben Jonson’s thoughts may be traced to classic or obscure modern writers, by those who are learned and curious enough to follow the steps of this robust, surly, and observing dramatist.”

**Symonds** (1886 [59; 59n]): “Like a mole, as it has been well put, he burrowed into his material, and threw up the soil upon the surface. If, then, he chanced on rich and generous veins, his readers had the benefit; no substance is more marrowy or charged with mental stuff. If not, he still performed the deliver’s toil, turning the last clod of a clayey earth with satisfaction.” [59n] “For example, the interlude of the parasites, and the scene of the mountebank, in Volp.”

**Rea** (1919 [xxv–xxvi]): “I have been continually surprised to find that most of J’s poetical theory, as well as such a large proportion of his [xxvii] knowledge of the classics, comes in this second-hand fashion. The passages embodied in the play which were not thus obtained are largely quotations from such common Lat. authors as any schoolboy at Westminster under Camden might have known by heart—for the post part well-known passages of Horace, Seneca, Juvenal, Quintilian, and the Lat. comedians. Surprisingly seldom does J show a knowledge of Gr. writers obtained from the Gr. itself. [...] It is not surprising that with all his references to the classics, J seldom, if ever, attains the real flavor of the classics; nor, with such reading, is it to be wondered at that he is often better as a satirist than as a writer of comedy.”

368

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H&S (1925 [2:680]): “The Lat. notes on \textit{Hym}, \textit{MasQuees}, and \textit{MasAug} should prove, even to the ill-informed, J’s command of Lat. [...] The notes on the Masques will show whether J could quote Gr. at first hand....”

KERNAN (1962 [4–6]): “J’s awareness of the persistence of folly in human history is woven into \textit{Volp} by means of a vast number of references to the literature of the past. Most immediately the play is a brilliant picture of Venice and the whole of Renaissance Europe: its richness, voluptuousness, energy, toughness, zest for life, greed, cunning, and self-assurance. But just below this layer of contemporary accents, ideas, and activities lies another layer composed of names, verbal [5] echoes, scenes, events and historical conditions which are drawn from the literature of the past. \textit{The Satyr} of Petronius, Erasmus’ \textit{MorEnc}, The Bible, Juvenal’s satires, Seneca’s essay \textit{On the Brevity of Life}, Aristophanes’ plays, \textit{The Loquacious Woman} of Libanius of Antioch, Horace’s satire on legacy hunting, the songs of Catullus, and various works of Tacitus, Pliny, Theophrastus, Martial, Plautus, Lampridius, Lucian, and many more—all these provide J with instances of greed, lust, stupidity, and animal cunning from the past. These parallels, which are introduced into his plot by such indirect methods as metaphor, function first as images which help define the characters and actions before us by evoking contexts, scenes, and persons already known and morally identified. But they also serve, as do the similar echoes in Pope’s \textit{Dunciad} and Eliot’s \textit{Wasteland}, to remind us forcefully that the here-and-now is much like the past, that the materialism and gullibility is nothing new or unique.”

DUNCAN (1970 [26–27]): “... classical allusions are ubiquitous in \textit{Volp}.... [...] But literary allusion as the noun implies, was a witty game for Ren. authors, and its didactic function should not be made to sound too solemn. J’s practice of it was thoroughly Lucianic. [...] [27] Among themselves the humanists enjoyed it as \textit{lusus ingenti}, but directed to a wider public in their satires it became a form of teasing.”

\textit{The Title-Page}

[6] Horace, \textit{ArsPoet} 334

“[Poets aim] ... to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life” (Fairclough, trans., 470).

\textit{The Epistle}

[34] Cf. Erasmus, \textit{MorEnc} I

“Ut cumque de me vulgo mortales loquuntur, neque enim sum nescia, quam male audiat \textit{STULTITIA} etiam apud stultissimos.”

[“Whatever is generally said of me by mortal men, and I’m quite well aware that Folly is in poor repute even amongst the greatest fools” (Radice, trans., 63)].

[70–71] Cf. Erasmus, \textit{EpistApol} 24

“Quosdam autores sic legunt ut quantumuis manifestum inciderit erratum, vel frivolo praetextu defendant; in quosdam adeo sunt iniqui, ut nihil tam circumspecte dici possit, quod non aliqua ratione calumnientur.”

369
"In some of the authors they read they can find a trivial pretext for defending even the grossest of errors which come to their notice, while against others they are so prejudiced that nothing can be said with sufficient circumspection to escape their trumped-up accusations" (Radice, trans., 239).

[368] Cf. Erasmus, EpistApol 10

"Obsecutus sum, et in hoc negocii septem plus minus dies impendi; qui sane sumptus mihi pro argumenti pondere nimius etiam idebatur."

["I did as they asked, and spent a week, more or less, on the job: too long, I'm sure, for such a light-weight subject" (Radice, trans., 218)].

[383] The Lawes of Time, Place, Persons he observeth

Cf. Mayne (1638), lines 79–82: "The Scene was free from Monsters, no hard Plot / Call'd downe a God t'unite th'unlikely knot. / The Stage was still a Stage, two entrances / Were not two parts o' th' World, disjoyn'd by Seas."

Cf. Disc 2735—50: "What is the utmost bounds of a fable. Now, in every Action it behooves the Poet to know which is his utmost bound, how farre with fitnesse, and a necessary proportion, he may produce, and determine it. That is, till either good fortune change into the worse, or the worse into the better. For, as a body without proportion cannot be goodly, no more can the Action, either in Comedy, or Tragedy, without his fit bounds. And every bound, for the nature of the Subject, is esteem'd the best that is largest, till it can increase no more: so it behooves the Action in Tragedy, or Comedy, to be let grow, till the necessity aske a Conclusion: wherein two things are to be considered; First, that it exceed not the compassé of one Day: Next, that there be place left for digression, and Art. For the Episodes, and digressions in a Fable, are the same that houshold stuffe, and other furniture are in a house. And so farre for the measure, and extent of a Fable Dramaticke."


[399] Cf. Pindar, Olympian Ode, 1.1–2

"Best is water, while gold, like fire blazing / in the night, shines preeminent amid lordly wealth" (Race, trans., 47)].

[399] Cf. Lucian, The Dream, or the Cock

Micylus. I saw a lot of gold, Pythagoras, a lot; you can’t think how beautiful it was, and with what brilliance it shone. What is it that Pindar says in praising it? Remind me, if you know. It is where he says water is best then extols gold (as well he may), right in the beginning of the most beautiful of all his odes.

Cock. Is this what you are after? 'Water is best, but gold / Like blazing fire at night / Stands out amid proud riches.'" (Harmon, trans., 2:187).

370
CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:147–56]) observes how “the foot of the poet is so fitted and familiarized to the Grecian sock, that he wears it not with the awkwardness of an imitator, but with all the easy confidence and authoritative air of a privileged Athenian.” Moreover, “it is plain that even the gleanings and broken fragments of the Greek stage had not escaped him.” “Let the curious reader compare this with the following fragment of Euripides’ Bellerophon and he will find it almost a translation.” Cumberland reproduces the following Gr. passage from the Fragmenta of Euripides (324): [“O gold, most wonderful gift to mankind, a mother does not have such pleasures, nor are children or a dear father such pleasure to mankind; and if Aphrodite sees a thing like that in the eyes, it is no wonder that she creates thousands of loves” (Craig, trans., 571)]. Cumberland also suggests a more immediate literary source for these lines: “Cicero made a selection of passages from the Greek dramatic authors, which he turned into Latin verse for the purpose of applying them, as occasion should offer, either in his writings or pleadings, and our learned countryman <i.e., J> seems on his part to have made the whole circle of Greek and Roman poets his own and naturalized them to the stage.”

GIFFORD (1816 [3:170–71n]) notes, with reference to Volpone’s allusion to Pindar’s OlymOde above, that “Upton had reason to say that the diction of this piece rose to a tragic sublimity; since J has had recourse for it to the tragic poets. This most learned man, who has ‘stalked for two centuries,’ as Mr. Malone takes upon himself to assure us, ‘on the stilts of an artificial reputation,’ was not only familiar with the complete dramas of the Athenian stage, but even with the minutest fragments of them, which have come down to us. The beautiful lines above, are from Bellerophon, a lost play of Euripides.” Gifford reproduces the full six lines of the above passage.

REa (1919 [152–53]) offers a more complex account of J’s potential sources and subsequent imitations: “It seems clear that J was reminded by Erasmus’ comments on aurea Venus and on the golden age, in his MorEnc, of a passage in Seneca, Epist 115, which he borrows.” Rea reproduces the following text from Seneca, Epist 15.12, 13: “Accedunt deinde carmina poetarum, quae affectibus nostris facem subdant, quibus diversae velut unicum vitae decus ornamentumque laudantur. [...] Denique quod optimum videri voluit saeculum, aurem appellant” [“Verses of poets also are added to the account—verses which lend fuel to our passions, verses in which wealth is praised as if it were the only credit and glory of mortal man. [...] And finally, when they would praise an epoch as the best, they call it the ‘Golden Age’” (Gummere, trans., 3:326/327)]. Though Rea adds that “[a] few lines below [J] found the following lines from the Danae of Euripides,” the editor instead reproduces a faulty Latin translation (a tendency noted by H&S [1950:9:679 pass.]) of Euripides’ Danae as it appears in Seneca, Epist 15.14: “Pecunia, ingens generis humani bonum, / Cui non voluptas matris aut blandae potest / Par esse prolis, non sacer meritis parent; / Tam dulce si quid Veneris in vultu micat, / Merito illa amores caelitum atque hominum movet” [“Money, that blessing to the race of man, / Cannot be matched by mother’s love, or lisp / Of children, or the honour due one’s sire. / And if the sweetness of the lover’s glance / Be half so charming, Love will
rightly stir / The hearts of gods and men to adoration“ (Gummere, trans., 3:329]). Rea concludes that “this
[Seneca’s translation of Euripides] is obviously the source of the following lines,” at which point he
challenges Gifford’s previous identification, which itself may have derived from Cumberland. “Gifford,
noting that the lines are from a fragment of a lost drama, takes occasion to praise J’s scholarship ... [b]ut
the defense of J’s learning is hardly in place here; Gifford’s enthusiastic partisanship has, as often, carried
him too far. It took very little scholarship to find this fragment in the text of an author, Seneca, familiar to
every schoolboy.” But as Rea himself notes, “J, however, did not use the quotation exactly as he found it
here; a note in Lipsius’ edition of Seneca must have caught his eye; this was, of course, the standard edition
at that time: ‘Verit liberius, sed elegantissime, et puto, ipse. Moneo, Graecos etiam in iv. libro Athenaei
legi, et versus auctores: sed quem Seneca hic neglexit.’ This reference to the better version of the lines to be
found in Athenaeus evidently interested J, and he turned to the passage referred to, Athenaeus 4.159B–C.”
Rea reproduces the following six lines from Athenaeus, Deip 4:159: “O aurum pulcherrimum
acceptissimumque mortalibus, / Non tantum voluptads mater affert, / Non tantum in aedibus filii, non
charus pater, / Quantum illis tu, domi qui possident / Veneris profecto si tarn blandus conspectus est, /
Cupidines numeros illam comitari nil mirandum” [“O Gold, fairest gift welcomed by mortals! For neither
a mother, nor children in the house, nor loved father can bring such delights as thou and they that own thee
in their halls. If the glance which shines from Kypris’ eyes [i.e., Venus] is like thine, no wonder that
countless loves attend her” (Gulick, trans., 2:225).] Rea adds: “That J was using this version <i.e.,
Athenaeus> rather than that found in Seneca is clear from the last line, which is not found in Seneca, but
which is the basis of lines 19–20 [410-411 (see note below)]. It has been noted earlier that J found in
Athenaeus a great deal of material on the subject of muscae.”

H&S (1950 [9:689]), following Rea, reprint the quotation from Seneca, Epist 115.12, 13 and attribute
the source of this passage to “a fragment of the Damos of Euripides, preserved by Athenaeus, Deip 4.159.”
The editors add that “Seneca translates the passages in Epist 115.14 and tells the story [115.15] that when
the play was acted the audience rose in anger at this passage and clamoured for the play to be suppressed,
but Euripides came forward and begged them to wait till they saw the fate in store for the character to
whom these views were attributed.” Here follows a translation of the full original passage from Seneca,
Epist 14–15: “Even among the Greek tragic poets there are some who regard pelf as better than purity,
soundness, or good report: ‘Call me a scoundrel, only call me rich! / All ask how great my riches are, but
none whether my soul is good. / None asks the means or source of your estate, but merely how it totals. / All
men are worth as much as what they own. / What is most shameful for us to possess? Nothing! / If
riches bless me, I should love to live; yet I would rather die, if poor. / A man dies nobly in pursuit of
wealth. / Money, that blessing to the race of man, / Cannot be matched by mother’s love, or lisp / Of
children, or the honour due one’s sire. / And if the sweetness of the lover’s glance / Be half so charming,
Love will rightly stir / The hearts of gods and men to adoration’ When these last-quoted lines were spoken
at a performance of one of the tragedies of Euripides, the whole audience rose with one accord to hiss the
actor and the play off the stage. But Euripides jumped to his feet, claimed a hearing, and asked them to wait

372

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for the conclusion and see the destiny that was in store for this man who gaped after gold. Bellerophon, in that particular drama, was to pay the penalty which is exacted of all men in the drama of life. For one must pay the penalty for all greedy acts; although the greed is enough of a penalty in itself.” (Gummere, trans., 3:327–29).

PARKER (1999 [89–90n]) follows H&S, et al., but observes how Seneca’s description of Euripides’ personal reassurance to his audience that his dramatic character would meet with an appropriate fate by play’s end “gives a certain foreshadowing irony to Volpone’s use of the passage.”

[407–8; 410–12] Cf. Euripides, Bellerophon, Danae

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:150]): “Let the curious reader compare this <i.e., Volpone’s address to his gold> with the following fragment of Euripides’ Bellerophon [Fragmenta 324] and he will find it almost a translation: ‘O gold, most wonderful gift to mankind, a mother does not have such pleasures, nor are children or a dear father such pleasure to mankind; and if Aphrodite sees a thing like that in the eyes, it is no wonder that she creates thousands of loves’ (Craig, trans., 571)].”

[410–12] “Thy lookes when they to Venus did ascribe, / They should haue giu’n her twenty thousand Cupids; / Such are thy beauties, and our loues”

Cf. Erasmus, MorEnc 15

“Why is Cupid always a boy? Simply because he’s a joker and never shows ‘sound sense’ in word or thought. Why does the beauty of golden Venus never lose its bloom of youth? Surely because she’s related to me [i.e., Folly] and gets the colour of her complexion from my father. That’s why Homer calls her ‘golden Aphrodite.’ And besides she’s always smiling, if we are to believe the poets and sculptors who copy them” (Radice, trans., 84).

REA (1919 [153]), regarding the source of J’s allusion to “golden Venus,” notes that “Bruchmann and Carter, in their supplements to Roscher’s Lexikon, give instances of these epithets from Homer, Hesiod, Callimachus, Mimnermus, Vergil, Ovid, Statius, Ausonius, and others, showing that they were common. But it was not from any of these poets that J took the thought, but from Erasmus, MorEnc 15.” Though Rea determined above that J derived his allusion to Venus from Athenaeus by way of Seneca’s trans. of Euripides’ Danae (see n. above) the ed. also notices parallel passage for J’s reference to “twenty thousand Cupids” in Horace, particularly the expression “Mater saeva Cupidinum” from Odes 1.19.1 (“The Cupid’s cruel mother” [Bennet, trans., 59]) and 4.1.5 (“O cruel mother of sweet Cupids”” [Bennet, trans., 283]), which also survives in Tennyson, Princess 2.400 and 4.401.

Cf. Erasmus, MorEnc 7

“I [i.e., Folly] didn’t have Chaos, Orcus, Saturn nor Japetus, nor any other of those out-of-date mouldy old gods for a father, but ‘Plutus,’ god of riches himself, the sole ‘father of gods and men’ whatever Homer and Hesiod and even Jupiter may say. He has only to nod his head, today as ever before, for everything to be thrown topsy-turvy whether sacred or profane. War, peace, governments, councils, law-courts, assemblies, marriage-ties, contracts, treaties, laws, arts, gaieties, gravities (I’m out of breath)—in a word,
the affairs of men, public and private, are all managed according to [i.e., Phutus'] will." (Rf. Radice, trans., 69–70)

PARKER (1999 [89–90n; 314]) observes this allusion's common line of descent from Homer to Ovid and Virgil, but follows Rea's attribution to Erasmus' MorEnc and quotes another section of the work.

[492] Cf. Lucian, The Dream 16

COCK. "How my soul originally left Apollo, flew down to earth and entered into a human body and what sin it was condemned to expiate in that way would make a long story ..." (trans. Harmon, 2:203).


"Meantime from the ship the chiefs had sent Aethalides the swift herald, to whose care they entrusted their messages and the wand of Hermes, his sire, who had granted him a memory of all things, that never grew dim; and not even now, though he has entered the unspeakable whirlpools of Acheron, has forgetfulness swept over his soul, but its fixed doom is to be ever changing its abode ..." (Seaton, trans., 47).


"This is what Heraclides of Pontus tells us he [i.e., Pythagoras] used to say about himself: that he had once been Aethalides and was accounted to be Hermes’ son, and Hermes told him he might choose any gift he liked except immortality; so he asked to retain through life and through death a memory of his experiences. Hence in life he could recall everything, and when he died he still kept the same memories. Afterwards in course of time his soul entered into Euphorbus and he was wounded by Menelaus. Now Euphorbus used to say that he had once been Aethalides and obtained this gift from Hermes, and that he told of the wanderings of his soul, how it migrated hither and thither, into how many plants and animals it had come, and all that it underwent in Hades, and all that the other souls there have to endure. When Euphorbus died, his soul passed into Hermotimus, and he also, wishing to authenticate the story, went up to the temple of Apollo at Branchidae, where he identified the shield which Menelaus, on his voyage home from Troy, had dedicated to Apollo, so he said: the shield now being so rotten through and through that the ivory facing only was left. When Hermotimus died, he became Pyrrhus, a fisherman of Delos, and again he remembered everything, how he was first Aethalides, then Euphorbus, then Hermotimus, and then Pyrrhus. But when Pyrrhus died, he became Pythagoras, and still remembered all the facts mentioned" (Hicks, trans., 323, 324).

[496] Cf. Lucian, The Dream 13

"MICYLLUS. ... when you were Euphorbus, sallied forth to fight the Achaeans with your curls tricked out in gold and silver, and even in war, where it would have been better to iron, you thought fit to face danger with your hair caught up with gold" (Harmon, trans., 2:197).

[496–497] Cf. Homer, Iliad 17.51–52

"his hair, lovely as the Graces, was spattered with blood, those / braided locks caught waspwise in gold and silver" (Lattimore, trans., 355).


"When Euphorbus died, his soul passed into Hermotius ..." (Hicks, trans., 2:323–25).

[501] Cf. Lucian, Dream 3
Cock. Have you ever heard of a man named Pythagoras, the son of Mnesarchus, of Samos? / Micilyus. You mean the sophist, who made laws against tasting meat and eating beans, banishing from the table the food that I for my part like best of all, and then trying to persuade people that before he became Pythagoras he was Euphorbus (Well-fed)?” (Harmon, trans., 2:179-81).

“But when Pyrrhus died, he became Pythagoras” (Hicks, trans., 2:325).

[501] Cf. Lucian, Dream 18
Micilyus. ... and now tell me the story of Pythagoras. / Cock. In brief, Micilyus, I was a sophist, for I must tell the truth, I suppose” (Harmon, trans., 2:207).

[1139ff. (The Mountebank Scene)] Cf. Erasmus, MorEnc 54
“In fact their entire performance might have been learned from the cheapjacks in the market squares, who are a long way their superiors, though the two types are so alike that they must have learned their rhetoric from each other. Even so, thanks to me, they find people who’ll listen to them and believe they hear a genuine Demosthenes or Cicero, especially among merchants and silly women, whose ears they are particularly anxious to please. For the merchants have a habit a habit of doling out small shares of their ill-gotten gains is they’re suitably flattered, and the friars find favour with women for many reasons, the main one being that a priest can provide a bosom where a woman can pour out her troubles whenever she quarrels with her husband” (Radice, trans., 173).

REA (1919 [xliii-xliv]): “The suggestion for the incident <i.e., the mountebank scene> comes from Erasmus, MorEnc 54.... The use of Sir Pol and Peregrine as spectators, and Sir Pol’s admiring comment on Volpone’s bombastic harangue, are suggested very definitely.... [xlv] The appearance of Celia, too, and perhaps even the name of Peregrine (suggested by mercatorae), are to be found in this further account of the kind of listeners attracted.”

[1139ff. (The Mountebank Scene)] Cf. Paracelsus, De Generatione Stultorum (1567)
REA (1919 [xliv]): “For suitable language for his mountebank, I went to Paracelsus. It is significant that the scene contains a quotation from the preface of Paracelsus’ De Generatione Stultorum, a work naturally suggesting itself in connection with Erasmus’ satire on fools. Paracelsus’ language was just the type to fit such a mountebank as Volpone pretends to be, and J imitates it throughout the scene, especially in the slurs upon rival physicians, including Hippocrates and Galen—a boast very common in the mouth of Paracelsus, and even embodied in his name, which he chose for himself as having gone beyond Celsus.”

[1608-31 (Mosca’s Monologue of the Parasite)] Cf. Eupolis, The Flatterers
Cumberland (1786 [3:132-33]) compares the following passage from Eupolis with Mosca’s speech in praise of parasites: “Mark now, and learn of me the thriving arts, / By which we parasites contrive to live: / Fine rogues we are, my friend (of that be sure) / And daintily we gull mankind.—Observe! / First I provide myself a nimble thing / To be my page, a varlet of all crafts; / Next two new suits for feasts and
gala-days, / Which I promote by turns, when I walk forth / To sun myself upon the public square: / There if perchance I spy some rich dull knave, / Strait I accost him, do him reverence, / And, saunt’ring up and down, with idle chat / Hold him awhile in play; at every word, / Which his wise worship utters, I stop short / And bless myself for wonder; if he ventures / On some vile joke, I blow it to the skies, / And hold my sides for laughter—Then to supper / With others of our brotherhood to mess / In some night-cellar on our barley cakes, / And club inventions for the next day’s shift.”

[2090–2108; 2161–64 (Volpone’s Song to Celia)] Catullus, Odes 5, 7

First presented in the dramatic text of Volp and later reprinted in For 5 and 6, the two parts of Volpone’s song (2090–2108; 2161–64) have been regularly identified as obvious adaptations/translations of Catullus, Ode 5 and Ode 7 (lines 9–12) respectively. Owing to the poem’s popularity apart from its original dramatic setting, variant versions of uncertain authorship appear in the commonplace-book collections and poetry manuscripts housed by the British Museum and the Bodleian Library; see H&S (1947 [8:102n]), (1950 [9:8; 9:718–19], and (1952 [11:37]). Due to its classical source and its diverse settings, among other aspects, the poem has garnered a wealth of independent critical commentary. Ode 5 reads:

Vivamus, mea Lesbia, atque amemus,
rumoresque senum severiorum
omnes unius aestimemus assis,
soles occidere et redire possunt:
nobis cum semel occidit brevis lux,
nox est perpetua una dormienda.
da mi basia mille, deinde centum,
dein usque altera, dein secunda centum,
dein, cum milia multa fecerimus,
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
ae nequius malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

[“Let us live, my Lesbia, and love, and value at one farthing all the talk of crabbed old men. Suns may set and rise again. For us, when the short light has once set, remains to be slept the sleep of one unbroken night. Give me a thousand kisses, then a hundred, then another thousand, then a second hundred, then yet another thousand, then a hundred. Then, when we have made up many thousands, we will confuse our counting, that we may not know the reckoning, nor any malicious person blight them with evil eye, when he knows that our kisses are so many” (Cornish, trans., 7–9).]

The relevant verses from Ode 7 read:

tam te basia multa basiare
vesano satis et super Catullost,
quae nec numerare curiosi
possint nec mala fas cinare lingua.

[“... to kiss you with so many kisses, Lesbia, is enough and more than enough for your mad Catullus; kisses, which neither curious eyes shall count up nor an evil tongue bewitch” (Cornish, trans., 11)].
Regarding the identification of these songs’ Catullan sources, see UPTON (1749 [44]), WHALLEY (1756 [2:347n]), GIFFORD (1816 [3:254–55n]), NEILSON (1911 [306a]), RIA (1919 [205; 207–8]), H&S (1950 [9:718–19, 721]), et al. Many of the following critical remarks and historical comments bear directly upon the poem as it has since been reprinted and removed from its original dramatic context. DONALDSON (1985 [624]) notes that Alphonso Ferrabosco printed his musical setting for this song in Airs (1609); also cf. Epig 130. Verses of these popular songs were later printed in part or whole in the works of BURTON (1621–52 [3:280]), 1.2.5.5 and COTGRAVE (1655b [141]). Also see app. Major Scenes.

GIFFORD (1816 [8:263–64n]), in his notes on these poems, adds: “Translations, they certainly are not; but very elegant and happy imitations of particular passages in that poet”; ibid., re: 2161–64: “there is nothing similar to the concluding lines of this beautiful little poem, which seem to bear an ingenious reference to the well-known Institutes of Sparta respecting theft.” Regarding the four closing verses, GIFFORD (1816 [3:259n]) remarks that “These lines form an elegant imitation of the concluding hendecasyllables from Catullus.”

SYMONDS (1886 [134–35]): “Coming into competition with a flawless masterpiece of poetry, [J] mistook his powers, and too often debased gold into inferior metal. This I feel to be the case with the free version of ‘Vivamus, me Lesbia,’ part of which occurs in Volp and the rest in For. Still, some excellent touches may even here be pointed out. For the incomparable lines of Catullus [Ode 5, lines 4–6], J has found these very passable equivalents [quotes 2096–98]. The enumeration of the kisses leads him away into a pretty ad libitum improvisation: [quotes For 6, lines 11–22].”

FLEAY (1891 [1:374]): “The verses to Celia, 3.6., seem to me to indicate personal reference. They are reproduced in For 5, and Celia was a real person.” On this matter, also see DE LUNA (1967 [156ff.])

[1:327–28]: “ca. 1604, Und 28, “A Sonnet, To the Noble Lady Mary Wroth; cf. Epig 103, 105; For 5, 6.” J “introduced her in The May Lord and dedicated Alch to her (3 Oct 1610), alluding to her as ‘worthy’ of her name (Wroth). The allusion to J’s having been ‘a lover’ in this Sonnet, his exscribing the lady’s MS. sonnets, the juxtaposition of the Celia and Wroth poems, with many other little indications too numerous to give here, induce me to think that Lady Mary was Celia, and that J meant her at Penshurst in 1604. Her husband may have been jealous of the translations from Catullus, &c., made for her, and interpreted them as expressions of J’s own feelings. But certainly J intended no unlawful suit in this instance.”

H&S (1950 [9:719]), re: 2161–64 and Gifford’s note, provide relevant parallel passages: “Dryden, The Kind Keeper, or, Mr. Limberham (1680), 5.1: ‘WOOD. I have been taken upon suspicion here with Mrs. Tricksy. ALDO. To be taken, to be seen! Before George, that’s a point next the worst, Son Woodall.’ Fletcher and Massinger, Lover’s Progress (1647), 4.1.: ‘CLAR. But I have sworn unto my Lady never / To sinne again. / LEON. To be surpriz’d—the sinne / Is in it self excusable; to be taken / Is a crime, as the Poet writes.”

377

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PARFITT (1975 [510]) qualifies Jonson's debt to Catullus by noting that this classical poem "is translated, in whole or in part, by a number of Eng. poets of this period (see, for example, Campion's 'My Sweetest Lesbia,' Raleigh's 'The Sun May Set and Rise,' Crashaw's 'Come and Let Us Live My Dear').

DONALDSON (1985 [x]) notes that "The song is a translation of Catullus' famous invitation to the woman he chose to call 'Lesbia,' whom scholars reckon to be Clodia, wife of Quintus Metellus Celer."

7. Comparative Analyses

Scholars and critics frequently interpret and comment upon Volp in light of J's other works, as well as those of his dramatic contemporaries. For comparative analyses which pair Volp with Sej, see HERFORD (1893–95 [xxviff.]); with Devass, see YAMADA (1981).
III. CRITICISM

A. GENERAL COMMENTS AND ALLUSIONS

This chronological collection of excerpted comments and allusions mainly concerns the early reception of Volp during the play’s first three centuries. Many of these random anecdotes, casual opinions, and barely surviving records may have no practical bearing upon a larger, more formal critical evaluation of Volp; however, when regarded as a whole, this well-sustained and wide-ranging body of documents instead registers other, perhaps unexpected, aspects of the play’s long, rich critical tradition. Critical comments of this type, with their colorful personal emphases, taper off near the end of the 19th c. as the scholarly discipline of literary criticism settled into more serious and specialized approaches to the play. The greater body of modern literary criticism, with its particular set of analytical approaches and interpretive objectives, instead forms the organizational structure of this fuller appendix. Parenthetical dates printed alongside the author of each entry represent the earliest known composition or publication dates; consult the Bibliography for full publishing and source information.

1. Contemporary Records and Reports (1604–1659)

1604 MARSTON (1604) dedicated The Malcontent to J, and this play’s epil. (13–18) alludes possibly to the imminent appearance of Volp; rf. BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [38]); HUNTER (1975 [162]). The relevant lines read: “Then till another’s happier Muse appears, / Till his Thalia feast your learned ears, / To whose desertful lamps pleased Fates impart / Art above Nature, Judgement above Art, / Receive this piece, which hope nor fear yet daunteth; / He that knows most knows most how much he wanteth.” Unmindful of explicit references to the “happier Muse” or “Thalia,” the Muse of Comedy, GIFFORD (1816 [1:xxii]) reckons that Marston here “advert[s] to [J’s] ... meditated tragedy” <i.e., Sej>.

1606 Anon., Mucedorus. SMALL (1899 [116–17n]), who follows Fleay, notes that “it is apparently to this play <i.e., EastHo> and Volp that the 1606 epilogue to the anon. play Mucedorus refers: ‘Envy. From my foul study will I hoist a wretch, / A lean and hungry meager cannibal, / Whose jaws swell to his eyes with chawing malice, / And him I’ll make a poet. / This scrambling raven with his needy beard / Will I whet on to write a comedy, / Wherein shall be compos’d dark sentences, / Pleasing to factious brains. / And every other where place me a jest, / Whose high abuse shall more torment than blows.’ This is clearly a hit at J and his reflection on Scotch dignitaries and probably on the king himself.” Rf. app. Dates, s.v. “Secondary Evidence.”

1607 A series of nine poems in praise of J and Volp appeared in the 1607 quarto printing; or a total of ten sets of commendatory verses when allowing for the late addition of N.F.’s [Nathan Field] “To the worthiest Maister Ionson,” which appears on an inserted leaf in the British Library copies C.12.c.17
("Florio's copy") and Ashley 956 ("Wise" copy in H&S). Commentary related to both this collection and its individual poems appears in app. Extra-Dramatic Texts.

1610 SR (1610) record Volp's first registration with the transfer of its copyright from Thomas Thorpe to Walter Burre.

3' Octobris
Walter Burre Entred for his Copyes by assignmente from
Thomas Thorpe and with the consente of Th'
Wardens vnder their handes, 2 bookes th
one called SEIANUS his fall, th other,
VULPONE or the foxe.

1607 FLEAY (1891 [2:50-51]) notes possible allusions to J. and Volp in the anon. play Mucedorus, and argues for the earlier date of 1606. See 1606 above, and app. Personal Satire, s.v. "King James I."

1612 ROWLANDSON (1612): "The Fox is earthed now in the ground, / Who living, fear'd not horne nor hound, / That kept the Huntsmen at a bay, / Before their faces ceaz'd his prey. / Of whose successful thriving wit, / Bookes have beene made, and playes beene writ, / That prey'd on Mallard, Plover, Ducke, / And ever Sczqr'd by crab or hicke: / Yet now hee's gone: what Aough behinde, / Are Cubbes too many of his kinde? / Who whilst by death hee's kept away, / Will make a purchase of his prey. / And when the old he left is gone, / Will finde out more to worke upon. / In Skinners shqrs, Aough some appeare, / Tis long before the last comes there." For further commentary on this poem's significance relation to Volp, esp. possible relations to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, ref. app. Genre, s.v. "Personal Satire."

1619 DEKKER (1619), per CHETWOOD (1756 [13; 13n; 14]), who offers that "the following lines were wrote in ridicule of our Author <i.e., J>, on that Account of his Courage," namely the circumstances under which J "In his servuice in the Low Countries he had in the face of both the Campes Killed ane Enimie & taken opima fpolia from him" (ConvDrum 244–46). "Our Fox of a Poet brags much of his Valour: / 'Tis well known he beat an old Gaoler; Stole the Keys from his Side, and committed a Rape / On the Door, and valiantly made his Escape. In his Youth, we are told, he follow'd the Camp, / And, throuded by Night, (with the help of a Lamp) / He secretly stole to the Ten of a Butler, / And robb'd, in his Sleep, a drunken old Butler."

1619 BUC (1619): "This title ['The Fox'] has been canceled in a list of plays on a scrap of waste paper from the Revels Office, probably dating about 1619 or 1620. It was been plausibly suggested that the plays of the list were being considered for court performance."

1621 BURTON (1621–52 [3:128]), 3.2.2.4, in his discussion of love melancholy, alludes to the manner in which the "old Vulpone courted Celia in the Comedy" as an example of how "[m]any men to fetch over a young woman, widdowes, or whom they love, will not sticke to cracke, forge and faine any thing comes next." He illustrates this practice by quoting Vulpone's exotic and extravagant pledges to Celia [2127–28; 2138–40]. BURTON [3:253], 3.3.5.5, again alludes to Vulpone's song [2096–98] to Celia, via J's trans. of Catullus' original Lat. verses.

380

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MARIOT (1622): “I entreated him [i.e., Wither] to explain his meaning in certain obscure passages; but he told me how that were to take away the employment of his interpreters. Whereas, he would purposely leave somewhat remaining doubtful, to see what Sir Politic Would-be and his companions could pick out of it.”

HERBERT (1624 [52]): 27 Dec 1624, Volp performed by the King’s Men at Whitehall for the Prince.

HOWELL (1629 [267]): “Father Ben. Nullam fit magnum ingenium sine mixture dementio, there’s no great Wit without some mixture of madness; so saith the Philosopher: Now was he a fool who answer’d, nec parvum sine mixtura stulticie, nor small wit without some allay of foolishness. Touching the first, it is verify’d in you, for I find that you have been oftentimes mad; you were mad when you writ your Fox, and madder when you writ your Alchymist … Westm., 27 June 1629.”

RANDOLPH (1630): “… yea the spring of the Muses is the fountaine of Sack, for to think Helicon a barrel of Beere, is as great a sin as to call Pegasus a Brewers Horse.” “The divine Ben, the immortal Johnson knew this very well when he placed his oracle of Apollo at the Taverne of St. Dunstan and perhaps there he wrought his vulpone, the learned fox.”

COMPANY BILL (1630): “Playses for the Kinge this present yeare of our Lord God. 1630. … The 19 of Nov. The Fox.”

BRATHWAITE (1631 [29–30]): “He [the decoy] has his varietie of Led suittes: and can (if neede require) counterfeit the habit of Grazier, Gallant, or Citizen all in one day. With which habits he playes the cunning Impostor, and deludes those whose condition hee represents: He had neede bee one of Vulpone’s true-bred Cubbes that shall smell him out.”

DIGGES (1635): “… And though the Fox and subtill Alchimist, / Long intermittet could not quite be mist, / Though these have sham’d all the Ancients, and might raise, / Their Authours merit with crowne of Bayes. / Yet these sometimes, even at a friends desire / Acted, have scarce defrai’d the Seacole fire / And doore-keepers…”

SR (1635) records the transfer of Volp’s copyright transfer from Walter Burre to William Stansby.

SR 4° lu A. 1635
Entred for his Copies by verture of a noate
under the hand of Walter Burre and master
Matthew Lowndes warden bearing date the 10th of June 1621 as thereby appeareth
these Copies following (viz.) by order of a
Court

<…>

The fioxe….

SUCKLING (ca. 1637): “The first that broke silence was good old Ben, / Prepar’d before the Canary wine, / And he told them plainly he deserv’d the Bayes, / For his were called Works where others
were but Plays / And / Bid them remember how he had purg’d the Stage / Of errors, that had lasted many
an Age, / And he hopes they did think the silent Woman, / The Fox and the Alchymist outdone by no man.”

1638 MILDMA (1638): “To see the foxe play with fra: Wortley....00-04-06....faye & Cleere all this day I wente to Westmi: dined att Whitehall & after dynner to the fox playe = att bl: fryers with my Cozen fra: Wortley & my Brother Anth; & Came Jn Peace to Supper & bedd, I bles god.”

MAYNE (1638), 65-68: “... He that writes well, writes quick, since the rule’s true, / Nothing is slowly done, that’s always new. / So when thy FOXE had ten times acted beene, / Each day was first, but that ’twas cheaper scene.”

ACTORS’ BILL (1638): “[Plays acted] before the king & queene this [present] yeare of our lord 1638. [...] At the Cocpit the 8^th of November...The fox.”

1640 C. G. (1640): “... Therefore repaire to him, and praise each line / Of his Vulpone, Sejanus, Catelina. / But stay, and let me tell you where he is; / He sojournes in his Brome’s Antipodes.”

DOWNEY (1640), lines 17-20: “... His humorists in thy Alphonso ly; / Sejanus, Catiline’s damn’d treachery / Lives in Vrsini’s treasons, there is not / BEN’S Fox can scape the policy o’th plot.”

HALL (1640): “... Poore fools! I pity them; how would they looke, / If at the barre BEN JOHNSON were their booke? / His Fox would on those geese revenge thee so, / We should no hissing but i’th Common know....”

ANON (1640-90), ca. 1640: “The first that breake silence was good ould Ben / prepared before the Cannary Wynne / And he tould them playnly he deserved the Bayes / for his were cal’d workes whereas others were cald plays / And bid them Remember how he had purg’d the stage / Of Errors that had lasted many an age / And he hoped they did think the Silent woman / The Fox and the Alchymist out done by noe-man.”


1644 PRUJEAN (1644): “Here lyes the FOX: then what neede wee / Fear ’t in a glass of sack? Be free; / Drink ’t off. By Jesus, Ben doth sweare, / Vulpone ne’ere shall hurt us here.”

1647 MAYNE (1647 [21–22]): “Here, Sir, methinks, being a Poet, I see a piece of Ben Johnson’s best Comedy, the Fox, presented to me; that is, you, a Politique Would-be the second, sheltering your self under a capacious Tortoise-shell.”

1648 BRADFORD (1648): “Here is a Chimist which from a rude masse / Extracts Elixar that death may well surpass / Spencer’s ninth Canto in the fairy Queene, / Or Ben’s Vulpone, oh had he but seene / Thy pregnant fancy, how could he bare / To rend his Cat’line and by Jove to sweare / Thy’ns the better.”

1654 GAYTON (1654 [11]): “How snakelike he gathers, and incircles himselfe, under the covert of his Target, which was so pell’d with stones, and rung as loud, that the Don was not much unlike a rattle snake, that Politick Sir under the Tortoise shell, nor he that was shewn for the Fish.”


382

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COTGRAVE (1655b) reprints both J’s “Come my Celia let us prove...” from Volp and Epig 62, “To Fine Lady Would-Bee.”

1657 POOLE (1657 [240]): “Crafty, / The subtle fox, / Hyena, Crocodile, and all beasts of craft, / Have been distil’d to make one nature up, / Volpone.”

1658 FLECKNOE (1658 [10]): “He is on, who now the stage is down Acts the Parasites part at Table; and since Tailors death, none can play Mosca’s part so well as he.”

SMITH (1658): “I grudge thee not; for if I met / Volpone’s potion, or could get / Nectar, or else dissolv’d to dew / Th’Elixir, which the gods n’ere knew: / ’Twere thine....”

2. Post-Restoration (1660–1700)

1661 BROME (1661 [95]): “Those politick would-bees do but shew themselves asses, / That other mens calling invade, / We only converse with pots and with glasses; / Let the Rulers alone with their trade.”

HOLYDAY (1661), 9.103: “Paul the Third and Morone (they so compact) / At Rome and Trent, Volpone and Mosca act.”

1662 WILSON (1662): “We’ve no sententious sir, no grave Sir Poll, / No little pug nor devil,—bless us all!”

CAVENDISH (1662a): “… I believe none of my Playes are so long as J’s Fox, or Alchymist, which in truth, are somewhat too long....”

CAVENDISH (1662b): “Noble Spectators, do not think to see / Such Playes, that’s like Ben. Johnsons Alchymie, / Nor Fox, nor Silent Woman: for those Playes / Did Crown the Author with exceeding praise; / They were his Master-pieces, and were wrought / By Wits Invention, and his laboring thought, / And his Experience brought Materials store, / His reading several Authors brought much more....”

EVELYN (1662 [2:153]): “[Oct] 16th [1662], I saw ‘Volpone’ acted at Court before their Majesties.”

FULLER (1662 [2:425]): ‘J was paramount in the dramatic part of poetry, and taught the stage an exact conformity to the laws of comedians. His comedies were above the volge (which are only tickled with downright obscenity) and took not so well at the first stroke as at the rebound, when beheld the second time; yea, they will endure reading, and that with due commendation, so long as either ingenuity or learning are fashionable in our nation. If his later be not so spritful and vigorous as his first pieces, all that are old will, and all that desire to be old should, excuse him therein.”

1662–64. BROWNE(?) (1662–64): “At the New Theatre in Lincolnes Jne fields. […] The Fox 2<s.>6<d.>.”

1663 DOWNES (1663 [3–9]) includes Volp among the first fifteen “Principal Old Stock Plays” to be revived at the New Theatre in Drury Lane, which opened 8 Apr 1663.

1664 WOOD (1663/64): “Jan.—I, Th., given to see Volpone acted at the town hall by prentices and tradesmen, 6d.... <Jan.> 6, T., given to see Volpone acted againe, 6d.”

1665 PEPSY (1665), 14 Jan: “Home to dinner, thence with my wife to the King’s house, there to see Volpone, a most excellent play—the best I think I ever saw, and well acted.”

383

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WILSON (1665 [58]): “Go—go down into the Country and awe your poor neighbours with my Lord's nod, or his whisper in your ear at parting—Studie Longitude and the Philosophers Stone; The North-West Passage, and the Square of the Circle—So brave a Sir Poll, trouble himself with trifles!—By no means—no—no—Embark for the Indies in a Cock-boat, or to France on a Mil-Stone; Plant a Colonie in Terra Incognita, or settle an Intelligence with the Emperor of Yaptoia—these were fit for Sir Gudgeon!”


1672 MARVELL (1672 [238]): “They are the Politick would-be’s of the Clergy. Not Bishops, but men that have a mind to be Bishops, and that will do any thing in the World to compass it.”

1673 SHADWELL (1673), 3.1: “BEV. Pray forbear, Sir, you are not to see her; she recovers. / MRS. WOOD. Give her more air, quoth a’? how he frightened me? / WOOD. Good, Sir Pol, make a secret on’t no longer; she may as well unmask, she and I are no strangers to one another.”

HICKERINGILL (1673 [37–38]): “Is’t not a marvel who this same Gregory Father-Greybeard is? The thing should be female by the Billings-gate Oratory of scolding; But then—whoop Holla; Holla whoop; some ridiculous common Hunt; by fears and jealousies, by his apology for I. O. and the brethren, it should be some R. B. or sniveling whining Black-cap underlay’d with white; by its busie intermeddling with State-affairs, some Sir politick would be; by its half Jests, quarter Jests, and half-quarter Jests, it would be thought to be some little Droll, and by its pleas for Corporations, some candidate against the next vacation for a Burgess place in Parliament.”

HICKERINGILL (1673 [173]): “I can scarce forbear smiling to my self to see how prettily he sets his face, and makes up his mouth, with such caution and gravity before he begins to read to Princes his Politick would-bees.”

LEIGH (1673 [22–23]): “Some therefore there were that spoke of the unhoopable Tun of Heidelberg, some of Sir Politick’s comprehensive Tortoise, and some of Sir John Falstaff’s more capacious Buckbasket.”

LEIGH (1673 [121]): “Well, I see it now all along this can be no less a man than Sir Politique Would-Bee himself, his Reasonings, his Debates, and his Projects are the same, both for Possibility and use. And what does more abundantly confirm it, his Diary proclaims him right Sir Pol. There is nothing so low or trivial that escapes a Place either in his Memory or Table-book. Avery Action of his Life is quoted.”

LEIGH (1673 [124–25]): “… the Answer is easie, if they cannot write their Names, they may set their Mark, (this I conceive was the first Essay towards the Art of Writing, as that in single Characters upon Iron, was towards that other of Printing) and to authenticate this, I remember Sir Politick Would-bee (that worthy Predecessor of this Gentle-man) tells us of a Letter he receiv’d from a High and Mighty Cheese-Monger, one of the Lords of the States General, who could not Write his Name (at least at length, and with all his Titles) and therefore had set his Mark to it. Not but that he had Secretaries under him (Latin or no, I know not) that could not it. But this was the greater Majesty.”
1675 PHILLIPS (1675 [19–20]): “In three of his Comedies, namely the Fox, Alchymist, and Silent Woman he may be compared, in the Judgement of Learned Men, for Decorum, Language, and well Humouring of the parts, as well with the chief of the Ancient Greek and Latin Comedians as the prime of the modern Italians, who have been judg’d the best of Europe for a happy vein in Comedies....”

SPEED (1675) “... Hard by this famous Dame, with well-grown Locks, / Behold an ancient well-experience’d Fox, / Plac’d as a grave adviser, who with care / Cryes out, O rare Ben Johnson lieth there....”

FANE (1675): “... Those Blades indeed are Cripples in their Art / Mimmick his Foot, but not his speaking part. / Let them the Traitor or Volpone try....”

1676 LC (1675/76) represents a 16 Feb 1675/76 warrant for plays performed between 19 June 1675 and 29 Jan 1676, including the date, play, and payment for “[Jan:] 17 The fox........<£>10.”

DUPORT (1676 [8–9]): “Tu captatores, locupleti hamata senique, / Munera mittentes, Vulpino decipis astu / Callidus incautos, & fraudem fraude retextis: / Atque haeredipetas corvos deludis hiantes, / Vana spe lactans, cera nec scribis in ima. / Per te nec leno aut meretrix impune per urbem / Grassatur, stolidae & tendit sua retia publi. / Nec moechus, nec fur, incastigatus oberrat, / Illaesusve, tuae prudenti verbere scenae.”

1677 DRYDEN (1677): “Your Ben and Fletcher, in their first young flight, / Did no Volpone, no Arbaces write; / But hopped about, and short excursions made / From bough to bough, as if they were afraid, / And each was guilty of some Slighted Maid....”

1678 BEHN (1678): “Witt. Good morrow to the day, and next the Gold, open the Shrine, that I may see my Saint—hail the Worlds Soul—.”

RAWLINS (1678): “Vain. I apprehended the Gentleman’s very quarrelsome. / Ow. The veriest Wasp in Europe; he beat a modish Fop for discharging a Volley of critical nonsense upon Ben Johnsons Fox, and kickt a Vallet de Chambre in the pride of his Lords cast Suit, disputing precedence with a Ballad-maker.” As cited in BENTLEY (1945 [2:172]).

1681 OLDHAM (1681 [140]): “… Volpone and Morose will not admit / Of Catiline’s high strains, nor is it fit / To make Sejiamus on the stage appear / In the low Dress which Comick Persons wear. / Whate’er the Subject be on which you write, / Give each thing its due Place and Time aright.”

1683 ANON (1683 [13]): “He takes great Advantage from the different accompts which Oates and Dugdale give of the various Discourses they heard of the management of the Design. We understand him, — he would have had all the several Gangs and Clubbs of Plotters have all just jumpt in one and the same sense and opinion, like the Translators of the Septuagint. As if he could be such a Nicodemus, so blockishly ignorant of the world, not to know that where several people are engag’d, there will be several Sir Politic Woodbe’s, that will be putting their Oar i’th Boat where they are concern’d; one will be proposing this, another that, and many a Fool’s Bolt will be shot, and this Discourse, though never so simple is Treason, and fit to be known by way of circumstance.”
DRYDEN & SOAMES (1683): “Observe the town, and study well the court; / For thither various characters resort. / Thus 'twas great Jonson purchased his renown, / And in his art had borne away the crown, / If, less desirous of the people's praise, / He had not with low farce debased his plays; / Mixing dull buffoonery with wit refined, / And Harlequin with noble Terence joined. / When in the Fox I see the tortoise hist, / I lose the author of the Alchemist.”

1684 WINSTANLEY (1684): “I have conversed with some of the Wits, who credibly informed me, that Ben Jonson's Play of the Fox under the name of Vulpone, had some allusion to Mr. <Thomas> Sutton's manner of treating of his kindred.”

WINSTANLEY (1684): “… In three of his Comedies, namely the Fox, Alch and SilWom, he may be compared in the Judgment of Learned Men, for Decorum, Language and well humouring the Parts, as well with the chief of the Ancient Greek and Latine Comedians, as the prime of Modern Italians, who have been judged the best of Europe for a happy vein in Comedies…”

1688 LANGBAINE (1688 [12-13]) includes J’s “Fox” together with the abbreviations “C.” and “Fol.” (i.e., “Comedy” and “Folio”) among his list of J plays.

1691 MOUNTFORT (1691): “... The honest thinking Heathen shew'd the way, / And handed Down the Moral call'd a Play: / Old Ben. and Shakespear copied what they writ, / The Downright Satyr was accounted wit; / The Fox and Alchymist expos'd the Times, / The Persons then was loaded with their Crimes....”

DE LUNA (1967 [39]): “/[Vulp] is still in vogue at the Theatre in Dorset-Garden....”

LANGBAINE (1691 [298]): “[Volp] is still in vogue at the Theatre in Dorset-Garden....”

WALSH (1691 [63]): “You would think it very hard, that Alexander and Caesar should quit the Arts of War, because some Thrasoes and bragging Bullies pretended to it as well as they; and Virgil and Horace would take it very ill, that you shou'd damn all sorts of Poetry, because of the Bavius's and Maevius's, who set up for it; and whatever reason you wou'd give against the being a Minister of State, I dare say Sir Politick Woudbee's aiming at it, wou'd be none.”

1692 ANON. (1692? [2:42]): “Clients, Precarious Titles may Debate; / The Lawyer only thrives, grows Rich and Great: / The Golden Fee alone is his Delight; / Gold makes y^ Dubious Cause go wrong or Right. / Nay; rather than his Modesty he'll hide, / He' ll take a Private Dawb o' t'other side: / Heraldry ne'er Devis'd a fitter Crest, / Than Sly Volpone so demurely drcsb / Lawyers by subbe querks, their Clients fleece, / So when old Reynard Preaches, 'ware y^ Geese.”

HIGDEN (1693): “I may well say [the play was] Vnadorn'd, for there was nothing done for the advantage or decoration of this Play: not a farthing expended. When I had given them leave to Act it, I was told it was theirs, and they would Cooke it according to their own humour. Some of the Politick would be of the Coffee-house had given it an ill Name and Caracter <sic> and were glad to see it succeed accordingly.”

1694 BLOUNT (1694 [106-12]): “[Winstanley] likewise tells us, That Johnson's Plays were above the Vulgar Capacity, and took not so well at the first stroke, as at the rebound, when beheld the second time; yea, that they will endure Reading, and that with due Commendation, so long as either Ingenuity or
Learning are fashionable in our Nation. And altho’ all his Plays may endure the Test, yet in Three of his Comedies, namely, The Fox, Alchemist, and Silent Woman, he may be compar’d, in the Judgment of Learned Men, for Decorum, Language, and Humour, as well with the Chief of the Ancient Greek and Latin Comedians, as the Prime of Modern Italians, who have been judg’d the best of Europe for a happy Vein in Comedies...."

**1698** COLLIER (1698 [151–53]): “Ben Johnson’s Fox is clearly against Mr. Dryden. And here I have his own Confession for proof. He declares the Poets end in this Play was the Punishment of Vice, and the Reward of Virtue. Ben was forced to strain for this piece of Justice, and break through the Unity of Design. This Mr. Dryden remarks upon him: How ever he is pleased to commend the Performance, and calls it an excellent Fifth Act.”

**1698** COLLIER (1698 [157–59]): “Ben Johnson in his Dedicatory Epistle of his Fox has somewhat considerable upon this Argument; And declaims with a great deal of zeal, spirit, and good Sense, against the Licentiousness of the Stage. He lays it down for a principle, ‘That ’tis impossible to be a good Poet without being a good Man. That he (a good Poet) is said to be able to inform Young Men to all good Discipline, and enflame grown Men to all great Virtues &c.—That the general complaint was that the Writers of those days had nothing remaining in them of the Dignity of Poet, but the abused Name. That now, especially in Stage Poetry, nothing but Ribaldry, Profanation, Blasphemy, all Licence of Offence to God and Man, is practised. He confesses a great part of this Charge is over-true, and is sorry he dares not deny it. But then he hopes all are not embark’d in this bold Adventure for Hell. For my part (says he) I can, and from a most clear Conscience affirm; That I have ever trembled to think towards the least Profaneness, and loath’d the Use of such foul, and unwash’d Bawdry, as is now made the Food of the Scene. The encrease of which Lust in Liberty, what Learned or Liberal Soul does not abhor? In whole Enterludes nothing but the Filth of the Time is utter’d—with Brothelry able to violate the Ear of a Pagan, and Blasphemy, to turn the Blood of a Christian to Water. He continues, that the Insolence of these Men had brought the Muses into Disgrace, and made Poetry the lowest scorn of the Age. He appeals to his Patrons the Universities, that his Labour has been heretofore, and mostly in this his latest Work, to reduce not only antient Forms, but Manners of the Scene, the Innocence and the Doctrine, which is the Principal End of Poesy, to inform Men in the best Reason of Living. Lastly he adds, that ‘he has imitated the Conduct of the Antients in this Play. The goings out (or Conclusions) of whose Comedies, were not always joyful but oft-times the Bawds, the Slaves, the Rivals, yea and the Masters are mulfed, and fitly, it being the Office of a Conick Poet (mark that!) to imitate Justice, and Instruct to Life &c.’ Say you so! Why then if Ben Johnson knew any thing of the Matter, Divertisement and Laughing is not as Mr. Dryden affirms, the Chief End of Comedy. This Testimony is so very full and clear, that it needs no explaining, nor any enforcement from Reasoning, and Consequence.”

**1699** COLLIER (1699 [125]): “2ly. He [the Vindicator] mistakes the Nature of Comedy. This we may learn from Ben. Johnson, who acquaints [In margin: Fox Ep. Ded.] the Univer, That he has imitated the Conduct of the Antients: in whose Comedies the Bawds, &c. yea and oft-times the Masters too, are mulfed,
and that fitly, it being the Office of a Comic Poet to imitate Justice, and instruct to Life. It is the Office of a Comic Poet to imitate Justice, &c. then certainly Rewards and Punishment ought to be rightly apply’d: Then a Libertine ought to have some Mark of Disfavour set upon him, and be brought under Discipline and Disgrace.”

GILDON (1699) includes in his list of J’s dramatic pieces “Volpone, or, The Fox, a Comedy, Fol. 1692. Acted by the King’s Majesty’s Servants. This is writ in Imitation of the Comedies of the Ancients.”

1700 ANON (1700) documents information related to a performance of Volpone from “[Dec] 27th [Lady Morley] one [in the Box at] the ffox [4 s.]”

CONGREVE (1700 [415]): “Mirabell. ... I wou’d not tempt my Servant to betray me by trusting him too far. If your Mother, in hopes to ruin me, shou’d consent to marry my pretended Uncle, he might like Mosca in the Fox, stand upon Terms; so I made him sure beforehand.”

3. Eighteenth Century (1701–1800)

1702 ANON (1702 [43–44]), re: the first 18th-c. revivals of Volp by Christopher Rich at DL: “... with that Mr. R--- goes up to the Garret (a pair of Stairs higher than his own Apartment) and taking Ben. Johnson’s Picture with him, he implores—‘Most mighty Ben!...’ [44] ... The Picture seem’d to Nod, which was a token of consent, up he rose, and very devoutly return’d the charitable Image to its place in his own Theatre. Then they fell to task on the Fox, the Alch, and SilWom, who had lain twenty Years in Peace, they drew up these in Battalia against Harry the 4th and Harry the 8th, and then the Fight began.” Also rf. NOYES (1935 [50]) and LS1 (1965 [523]).

1706 CONGREVE (1706 [43]): “The play-houses have undergone another; and <Owen> Swinny, with <Robert> Wilks, Mrs Ol<eld>, <William> P<ckethman, <William> Bullock, and Dicky <i.e., Richard Estcourt, are coming over to the Hay-Market. <Sir John> Vanbrugh resigns his authority to Swinny, which occasioned the revolt. Mr <Christopher> Rich complains and rails like Volpone when counterplotted by Mosca.”

1720 DENNIS (1720 [2:196]): “The Fox, the Alch, the SilWom of Ben Johnson, are incomparably the best of our Comedies; and they are certainly the most regular of them all. If you will not take my word for this; let us see what Ben says himself to the Matter, in his Prologue to the Fox. ‘Nor made ... he swerveth.’ Now, do you not see by this last Line, that it was the Opinion of the greatest of all our Comic Poets, That the Rules were absolutely necessary to Perfection?”

1722 DENNIS (1722 [2:244]): “If he [i.e., Etheridge] did not design it, what is it to the Purpose, whether ’tis a genteel Comedy or not? Provided that ’tis a good one. The Alch is an admirable Comedy, and yet it is not a genteel one. We may say the same of The Fox, and The SilWom, and of a great many more.”

1733 THEOBALD (1733 [1:xiii–iv]): “[J and Sh.] are the Authors of other Works very unworthy of them: But with this Difference; that in J’s bad Pieces we don’t discover one single Trace of the Author of the Fox and Alch; but in the wild extravagant Notes of Sh., you every now and then encounter Strains that recognize the divine Composer.”

388

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1749 Cotter & Hamilton (1749), “The Preface”: “This play is offer’d to the Publick as correct as the Editor could make it; in the Hopes that Persons who amuse themselves in reading such Performances, may learn from their Attention to, (and frequent Perusal of) this, what a good Play ought to be. 'Tis too late at this Time of Day, to enter into a particular Criticism of a Piece that has in every Age claim’d the Admiration of the Judicious; let it suffice to say, there is no property a good play should have, such as Plot, Characters, Moral, Elegance of Speech, and a true poetick Fancy, that is not brought to its highest Perfection in this Performance, and nothing but a blind unconquerable Ignorance could oppose itself to its numberless Beauties. Had Players by acting such made familiar to Peoples [sic] Minds, such true dramatic Excellencies, they wou’d then have render’d the Stage, what it was first intended to be, an Use and Ornament to human Life. But when such things are daily exhibited, as are neither ingenious in their Composition, nor moral in their Tendency, tis no Wonder People’s Tastes are so far vitiated as to disrelish every Thing that is not of the same low Cast; and by a strange Depravity of Judgment condemn Pieces for those very Excellencies they ought to be the most admir’d. Such has been the fate of Ben Johnson’s Plays hitherto, their unparall’d Merit has been the greatest Bar to their Reception....”

1753 Hurd (1753 [2:101–3]): “Of our own comedies, such of them, I mean as are worthy of criticism, Ben Jonson’s Alch and Volp, bid the Abest A r being written in this genuine unmixed manner. Yet, though their merits are very great, severe Criticism might find something to object even to these.”

[103] “The Volp, is a subject so manifestly fitted for the entertainment of all times, that it stands in need of no vindication. Yet neither, I am afraid, is this Comedy, in all respects, a complete model.”

1756 Chetwood (1756 [20–21]): “This Comedy, like pure Gold, was thrown in the Furnace of the Theatre, and came out refined, without losing a Particle of its Weight. The Mouths of the sharling Criticks were cloied; they durft not even fhw their Teeth, but, self-tormented, swelled within, and almoft burst with Envy, which occasioned thefve Lines, wrote by Chapman: [21] ‘The Fox is grown too cunning for you all! / Beware, ye Geefe, he’ll prey upon your Falt; / All pluck out your Quills, and lace you in Leather, / Or the Fox will not leave you a scrhbling Feather.’”

1764 Baker (1764 [vol. 1, s.v. Volpone]): “This Comedy is joined by the Critics with the Alch and SilWom, as the Chef d’Oeuvres of this celebrated Poet; and indeed, it is scarcely possible to conceive a Piece more highly finished, both in Point of Language and Character, than this Comedy. The Plot is perfectly original, and the Circumstance of Volpone’s taking Advantage of the Viciousness and Depravity of the Human Mind in others, yet being himself made the Dupe to the Subtilty of his Creature Mosca, is admirably conceived, and as inimitably executed. Yet, with all these Perfections, this Piece does and ever will share the same Fate with the other Dramatic Works of its Author, viz., that whatever Delight and Rapture they may give to the true Critic in his Closet, from the Correctness exerted and the Erudition displayed in them; yet, there still runs thro’ them all an unimpassioned Coldness in the Language, a laboured Stiffness in the Conduct, and a Deficiency of Incident and Interest in the Catastrophe, that robs the Auditor in the Representation of those pleasing, those unaccountable Sensations he constantly receives from the Flashes of Nature, Passion and Imagination with which he is frequently struck, not only in his
Writings of the unequall'd Sh., but even in those of Authors, whose Fame, either for Genius or Accuracy, is no Means to be ranked with that of the Bard under or present Consideration. To write to the Judgment is one Thing, to the Feelings of the Heart another; and it will consequently be found, that the Comedies of Cibber, Vanbrugh and Congreve, will, on the Decies repetitae, afford an Increase of Pleasure to the very same Audiences, who would pass over even a second Representation of any one of J's most celebrated Pieces, with Coldness and Indifference.”

1770 GENTLEMAN (1770 [2:461]): “Ben Johnson, though ranked so high in literary fame, does not appear to us deserving of so honourable a station ... three of his comedies have justly received the stamp of general approbation; Volp, SilWom, and EMF; yet even in these nature seems rather caricatur'd, and there are many blamable intrusions upon delicacy of idea and expression....”

1771 An abbreviated version of Volp, prepared by COLMAN (1778), first appeared at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden on 26 Nov 1771. This altered version was staged a sum of ten times between this date and 20 Jan 1773.

1783 Colman’s newly revised version of Volp was revived at the Haymarket on 12 Sept 1783, where it saw seven performances over the next year; rf. NOYES (1935 [98–100]).

1785 Colman’s version was revived on 21 Feb 1785 for three performances at Drury Lane, where it last appeared on 13 Apr 1785. The next revival would not be until Feb 1921, or 136 years later.

1788 CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:149]): “After all it will be confessed that the production of such a drama as The Fox in space of five weeks is a very wonderful performance; for it must on all hands be considered as the master-piece of a very capital artist, a work, that bears the stamp of elaborate design, a strong and frequently a sublime vein of poetry, much sterling wit, comic humour, happy character, moral satire and unrivalled erudition; a work—quod non imber edax, non Aquilo inqrotens / possit diruere aut innumeralis / annorum series et fuga temporum” [Horace, Odes 3.30.3–5: “that no wasting rain, no furious north wind can destroy, or the countless chain of years and ages’ flight” (Bennett, trans., 279)].

[151] “The Fox is indubitably the best production of it’s <sic> author, and in some points of substantial merit yields to nothing, which the English stage can oppose to it; there is a bold and happy spirit in the fable, it is of moral tendency, female chastity an honour are beautifully displayed and punishment is inflicted on the delinquents of the drama with strict and exemplary justice.”

[155] “It does not occur to me that any other remark is left for me to make upon this celebrated drama, that could convey the finest censure; but very many might be made in the highest strain of commendation, if there was need of any more than general testimony to such acknowledged merit. The Fox is a drama of its peculiar a species, that it cannot be dragged into a comparison with the production of any other modern poet whatsoever; it’s [sic] construction is so dissimilar from any thing of Sh.’s writing, that it would be going greatly out of our way, and a very gross abuse of criticism to attempt to settle the relative degrees of merit, where the characters of the writers are so widely opposite.”

[156] “… I will venture an opinion that this drama of The Fox, is, critically speaking, the nearest to perfection of any one drama, comic or tragic, which the English stage is at this day in possession of.”

1800 DIBDIN (1800 [3:293]): "*Volp* ... has been generally considered as J's best production."

4. Nineteenth Century (1801–1900)

1809 SCHLEGEL (1809–11 [465]): "In so far as plot is concerned, the greatest praise is merited by *Volp, Alch*, and *SilWom*. In *Volp J* for once has entered into it. manners, without, however, making an ideal view of them. The leading idea is admirable, and for the most part worked out with masterly skill. Towards the end, however, the whole turns too much on swindling and villany [sic], which necessarily call for the interference of criminal justice, and the piece, from the punishment of the guilty, has everything but a merry conclusion."

1810 CHALMERS (1810 [5:456–57]): "It is certain that [J's] character as a dramatic writer has not descended to us undiminished. Of his fifty dramas, there are not above three which preserve his name on the stage, but those indeed are excellent. It was his misfortune to be obliged to dissipate on court masks and pageants those talents which concentrated might have furnished drama equal to his *Volp, Alch*, and *SilWom*."

1812 JONES (1812 [1:414]) cites *Volp* as a comedy in his entry on J.

ca. 1815 COLERIDGE (1815–1819; 1831). See app. Characters, s.v. "General Comments."

1818 ANON (1818 [193]): "Great, however, as our admiration undoubtedly is, of *Alch*, we still consider *Volp* to be his chef d’œuvre. It is cast in a higher mould, and belongs to a nobler school. The lofty and dignified tone of its morality; the acuteness of its satire, and the richness of its poetry; all conspire to exalt it above the common life, and Dutch painting of its predecessors. Each has gained the summit of its respective class, but one class is far above the other in elevation. The opening address to of Volpone to his gold, and his love scene with Celia, may be cited as unrivalled specimens of copiousness and command of rich expression. There is a prodigality about them which overwhelms; and we know not which excites more astonishment, the inexhaustible variety from which the poet draws his images, or the exquisite dexterity and judgment with which he applies them. [...] Taking *Volp* in all its parts, in design, in execution, in artifice of plot, in the strict nature of its characters, in moral effect, in poetical justness of catastrophe, we pronounce that it may fearlessly challenge competition with the best regular dramas of our own, or any other language, ancient or modern."

1819 HAZLITT (1819 [6:44]): "*The Fox, or Volpone*, is his best play. It is prolix and improbable, but intense and powerful. It is written con amore. It is made up of cheats and dupes, and the author is at home among them. He shews his hatred of the one and contempt for the other, and makes them set one another off to great advantage. There are several striking dramatic contrasts in this play, where the Fox lies perdue to watch his prey, where Mosca is the dextrous [sic] go-between outwitting gulls, his employer, and himself, and where each of the gaping legacy-hunters, the lawyer, the merchant, and the miser, eagerly occupied with the ridiculousness of the other’s pretensions, is blind only to the absurdity of his own: but the
whole is worked up too mechanically, and our credulity overstretched at last revolts into scepticism, and our attention overtasked flags into drowsiness. This play seems formed on the model of Plautus, in unity of plot and interest; and old Ben, in emulating his classic model, appears to have done his best. There is the same caustic unsparing severity in it as in his other works. His patience is tried to the utmost. His words drop gall.”

1827 COLE RIDGE (1836 [14:2.62]) wrote in 1827: “I am inclined to consider The Fox as the greatest of Ben Jonson’s works. But his smaller works are full of poetry.”

1832 GENEST (1832 [8:579]): “The Public is greatly indebted to Gifford for what he has done—but all his labours will hardly revive a taste for Ben Jonson—the excellence of the Fox, Alce, the SilWom and EMI, is universally acknowledged—as to the rest of his dramatic works, they may be perused with delight by particular persons, but the generality of readers would probably derive more pleasure from the plays of Fletcher, Massinger, or Shirley—a Gentleman pretty conversant in the Drama observed, that he never sat down to read J’s inferior plays, except as a task, and because he was ashamed to acknowledge himself ignorant of the works of so eminent a writer—this, Gifford would have called stupidity, but in matters of taste surely every one has a right to judge for himself.”

1838 CORNWALL (1838 [xix–xx]): “Voip and Alce pass, by general assent, as the two best dramas of J. They are full of sharp, weighty, vigorous writing, and may justly be placed,—together, we think, with Sej and EMI (the latter on account of its stage qualifications,) at the head of his dramatic compositions. We do not recollect to have seen it remarked, that Alce and Voip are essentially alike in their constitution;—the whole material and burthen of each play consisting of a tissue of cheats, effected by two confederate sharers, upon various gulls gaping for money; who come successively before them, in order to enable the author to exhibit the wit and rougery of his two principal characters, and the simplicity or greediness of the victims. This is done in a series of scenes, ‘long drawn out.’ Of the two plays, notwithstanding some powerful writing in the early part of Voip, we prefer, we confess, Alce. It has more probability: it is fuller of character: it is better constructed; and it comprises poetry of a higher order. The learning of J unfolds itself very happily in the gorgeous vision of Sir Epicure Manmon,—which are as magnificent and oriental as an Arabian dream.”

1889 SWINBURNE (1889 [35–36]): “In 1605 the singular and magnificent coalition of powers which served to build up the composite genius of J displayed in a single masterpiece the consummate and crowning result of its marvelous energies. No other of even his very greatest works is at once so admirable and so enjoyable. ... [B]ut there is in Voip a touch of something like imagination, a savour of something like romance, which gives a higher tone to the style and a deeper interest to the action. The chief agents are indeed what Mr. Carlyle would have called ‘unspeakably exemplary mortals’: but the serious fervour and passionate intensity of their resolute and resourceful wickedness give somewhat of a lurid and distorted dignity to the display of their doings and sufferings, which is wanting to the less gigantic and heroic villainies of Subtle, Dol, and Face. [...] In Voip the tone of villainy and the tone of virtue are alike higher. Celia is a harmless lady, if a too submissive consort; Bonario is an honourable gentleman, if too dutiful a
son. The Puritan and shopkeeping scoundrels who are swindled by Face and plundered by Lovewit are viler if less villainous figures than the rapacious victims of Volpone."

5. Twentieth Century (1901–2000)

1914 Schelling (1914 [166]): "... for its well-knit and original plot, its vigorous characterization, animated conduct and brilliant dialogue, Volp must be esteemed one of the best of J’s plays. [...] It would be impossible to conceive of comedy interest more happily sustained than in the successive surprises of these admirable comedies [i.e., SilWom and Alch], and we learn without surprise that they captured the stage and held it, with Volp and EMf, for four generations."

1945 Bentley (1945 [1:39–40; 40n]), regarding the number of allusions related to Volp printed during 1601–1610: "nearly a score of the allusions from this decade are concerned with the performance or publication of Sej and Volp. There is no clear evidence that any of the plays of Sh. ever made such an impression on his contemporaries as did these two. (Throughout the century these plays were more frequently referred to than any of Sh.’s [see 1:109ff.]). The significance of the number of references to Sej and Volp in this particular decade becomes the greater when one remembers that Ham, Oth, Lear, and Mac are all products of the same period. Most of the allusions to the two J plays are entire poems praising them in the highest terms, and a number of them are written by poets of renown. (Most of the poems appeared in the 1605 quarto of Sej and the 1607 quarto of Volp. This fact brings up the important consideration that J published his own plays, while Shakespeare did not—a distinction which cannot be overemphasized; it colors all phases of the study of the two poets in their own century, as well as much of the difference in the study of their works since, has been due to this fact.) Certainly, this group of allusions is most suggestive of J’s great distinction in the first decade of the century."

[1:137]: Throughout the full span of the seventeenth century, "[o]f the individual plays, the most frequently mentioned are all by J—Cat, Volp, Alch, SilWom, Sej, BartFair. Each of these plays has more allusions in the century than any product of Shakespeare’s pen."

[1:109]: Bentley counts seventy-three individual allusions to Volp, and notes (1945 [1:112]) that its “distinguished position as the ranking comedy, though it accords better with modern opinion that Cat’s, is not quite so unchallenged.... [O]ther writers, though mentioning Volp more frequently than other comedies, do not praise it so often as they do Cat, Sej, Alch, and SilWom.” According to Bentley’s analysis (1945 [1:65–66]): “the size of the collection in the first decade is largely accounted for by the numerous long passages about J in Dekker’s castigating Satromastix and by the commendatory verses written for the first editions of Sej and Volp. Twenty-six of the thirty passages come from these three sources. One is again reminded of the importance to J’s early reputation of the fact that his caustic tongue inspired articulate enemies and that he supervised careful editions of his plays.” Bentley transforms his tabulations into a conclusion (1945 [1:84]): “But when it came down to specific cases, did these seventeenth-century writers actually prefer Volp and Sej to AYLI and Mac and Lear? The figures indicate that they did, and the later figures on allusions to individual plays exhibit the preference beyond the shadow of a doubt.” Bentley
also tabulates seventeenth-century allusions to individual characters from *Volp*: Sir Politic Would-Be (16); Volpone (10); Mosca (3–4) ([1945 [1:119–20]]); nor does Rymer's *Short View* affect these numbers ([1:124]); the numbers change within the specific timeframe of 1601–1680: Sir Politic Would-Be (13); Volpone (5) ([1:126]).

1949 DUNCAN (1949 [12, 15]): "In my opinion [Volp] is the finest comedy in the English language. I am aware that Sh. also wrote comedies." "His comedies are more successful than his tragedies. And in Volp, the Comedy of Humours is realised. ... [S]uch faults of hyperbole which mar many Elizabethan tragedies become a deliberate comic effect and a virtue in Volp."

1967 DE LUNA (1967 [328]) records the total number of Volp allusions for 1597–1700, as printed in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922) as 40; the total for 1601–1700, as printed in BENTLEY (1945), as 73. In each case, Volp is second only to Cat.

6. The Twenty-First Century (2001–)

WATSON (2003 [ix]): "The sharpest, funniest comedy about money and morals in the 17th c. is still the sharpest and funniest about those things in the 21st."

B. Genre

1. Comedy

DENNIS (1722 [2:244–49]): "For I hope, a Comedy may be a good one, and yet not a genteel one. Alch is an admirable Comedy, and yet it is not a genteel one. We may say the same of The Fox, and SilWom, and of a great many more."

[249] "... Comedy may be qualify'd in a powerful Manner both to instruct and to please, the very Constitution of its Subject ought always to be Ridiculous. [...] Thus Comedy instructs and pleases most powerfully by the Ridicule, because that is the Quality which distinguishes it from every other Poem. [...] It ought to reign both in the Incidents and the Characters, and especially in the principal Characters, which ought to be ridiculous in themselves, or so contriv'd, as to shew and expose the Ridicule of others. In all the masterpieces of Ben Johnson, the principal Character has the Ridicule in himself, as ... Volpone in The Fox.... And the very Ground and Foundation of all these Comedies is ridiculous."

SYMonds (1886 [79–87]) a "misnomered comedy."

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxviii–xxix]): *Volp* is called by its author, with technical accuracy, a 'comedy'; but it is such a comedy as Juvenal might have written. The drastic laughter which rings through *EMI* is yet not without gaiety; but the laughter of *Volp* is the savage scorn of a man burning to make an unanswerable exposure, if not of vice, yet of those who accused the stage of insufficient hostility toward it. It is in truth even more obviously enthusiasm for the dignity of poetry than for that of virtue which pervades both the play itself, and the noble ded. to the sister Universities, composed in the choicest Ciceronian English, with which he ushered it into the world two years later."
H&S (1925 [2:49]): "With *Volpone* J returned, in his own view at least, to comedy. But it was to comedy widely different from all previous work of his own in that kind, and rather hard to accommodate not merely to the elastic Eliz. notions of comic art, but (what J cared much more for) to ‘the strict rigour of’ ancient ‘comick law.’”

CREASER (1978 [37-38]): "Comedy is of course the play’s native genre, yet J has given himself marvelous freedom of manoeuvre by pointedly eluding conventional expectations. [...] Comic tolerance has become malevolence. [...] Liberated from the inevitable happy ending ... [38] J can present with sustained satirical intensity a demonstration of human stupidity, of avarice, and especially of that narcissism which in one form or other unites all the characters.”

DONALDSON (1971 [122]): “I say at once that I share the conventional view that *Volpone* is one of the great comedies of the language, and that it is a comedy of unusual moral force. What seems to me less satisfactory is the way in which that moral force is conventionally described.”

Other critics who have commented on the problems associated with categorizing *Volpone* according rigid generic definitions, or evaluating the play’s overall impact according to its effect upon readers, critics, and audiences, include PARTRIDGE (1958 [70-71]), ROSTON (2003 [pass.]), et al.

a) Humours Comedy

ELIOT (1919 [132-33]): “The Humour, even at the beginning, is not a type, as in Marston’s satire, but a simplified and somewhat distorted individual with a typical mania. In the later work, the Humour definition quite fails to account for the total effect produced. The characters of Sh. are such as might exist in different circumstances than those in which Sh. sets them. The latter appear to be those which extract from the characters the most intense and interesting realization, but that realization has not exhausted their possibilities. Volpone’s life, on the [133] other hand, is bounded by the scene in which it is played; in fact, the life is the life of the scene and is derivatively the life of Volpone; the life of the character is inseparable from the life of the drama. This is not dependence upon background, or upon a substratum of fact. The emotional effect is single and simple. Whereas in Sh. the effect is due to the way in which the characters *act upon* one another; in J it is given by the way in which the characters *fit in* with each other. The artistic result of *Volpone* is not due to any effect that Volpone, Mosca, Corvino, Corbaccio, Voltore have upon each other, but simply to their combination into a whole. And these figures are not personifications of passions; separately, they have not even that reality, they are constituents.”

[136] “… neither Volpone nor Mosca is a humour. No theory of humours could account for J’s best plays or the best characters in them.”

ALEXANDER (1937 [20]): “To-day we talk of ‘complexes’ much in the same way as the 17th c. talked of ‘humours.’ This type of comedy [i.e., comedy of humours] probably reached its highest point in *Volpone*, in which the almost diabolical plotting of Volpone against his sycophantic friends and relations becomes an obsession and brings about consequences which make this rather grim play at times verge closely on tragedy. It gives Ben an opportunity to handle this theme of the misanthrope in a masterly fashion and,
although as in all the comedies of humour, one feels that life has been somewhat distorted to serve the purposes of a dramatic theory, there is undoubted power and force in the action, backed up by exciting situations and realistic dialogue.

b) Farce

DENNIS (1695 [2:385]): “But, then perhaps, *SilWom* may want the very foundation of a good comedy, which the other two *<i.v. Volp and Alch</i>* cannot be said to want. For it seems to me, to be without a moral. Upon which absurdity, I was driven by the singularity of Morose’s character, which is too extravagant for instruction, and fit, in my opinion, only for farce. For this seems to me, to constitute the most essential difference, betwixt farce and comedy, that the follies which are exposed in farce are singular; and those are particular, which are exposed in comedy. These last are those, with which some part of an audience may be supposed infected, and to which all may be supposed obnoxious. But the first are so very odd, that by reason of their monstrous extravagance, they cannot be thought to concern an audience; and cannot be supposed to instruct them. For the rest of the characters in these plays, they are for the most part true, and most of the humourous characters masterpieces.”

CREASER (1978 [36ff.]): “Many passages ... do resemble the simplified world of farce, which differs from comedy in the invulnerability of its schematised and conventional characters, who lack moral life, feelings and, sometimes, even physical sensations. These characters are so touchably resilient and so circumscribed in their consciousness that we are able to laugh without constraint at predicaments which in reality, or even in the fuller life of comedy, would be brutal or mortifying.”

2. Satire

a) Satirical Comedy

NEILSON (1911 [857]): “The comedy is a satire on some of the most sordid aspects of human nature, and the superb skill with which it is constructed barely suffices to counteract the depressing effect of the types of characters it displays.”

SCHELLING (1914 [166]): “*Volp* offers a fitting transition from the personal satire of *Poet* to the more genial humour of *SilWom* and *Alch*. Not that there is anything genial in *Volp*, but that there the satire is generalised into a consummate study in villainy. In point of fact this story of the wicked Venetian grandee, undone by his own subtlety and chicanery, is pervaded by a spirit of absolute mistrust of mankind and there is scarcely a virtuous personage in it. *J’s* philosophy of life, it would seem, was of an extreme simplicity, and presentable in the form of a dilemma. There are two kinds of men in the world for *J*, the knaves and the fools, those that prey and those that are preyed upon. The fools are commonly laughable but contemptible; the knaves deserve the righteous man’s castigation, though often truly admirable in their wit and forgivable for their cleverness. Who would be a fool especially in a world of knaves?”

BRAWLEY (1921 [95]): “*Volp* (1606) is a satirical comedy on the moral depravity of the age. An avaricious Venetian nobleman, in order to receive gifts from his acquaintances, gives it out that he is at the
point of death, and would-be heirs rush to present plate or money or a diamond to him, all being represented as birds of prey. The ‘fox’ (Volpone) is finally betrayed by his servant and accomplice Moscha [sic]. The play shows how in the greed for gold the husband will give up his wife to infamy, the father disinherit his son, and even the gray-haired man become the slave of avarice. The production is characterized by grim humor and there is no goodness of heart in any prominent character.”

BARISH (1960 [188]): “The satire, however, as in the mountebank scene of Volp, is directed less against those who practice the deceit than against those who are seduced by it. By its sheer virtuosity, the knavery of the tongue compels a certain respect, whereas the folly of the ear, the deafness that can filter out the hypocrisy and hear only the siren promises, earns contempt.”

DUTTON (1983 [72–73]): Volp is a comedy of a different order from the early ‘humour’ plays and ‘comical satyres,’ as J himself seems to recognize from the outset; he acknowledges in the Prologue that this play will be a riposte to those who complain that ‘All he writes is railing’ [362], and the focus of the action upon an ambivalent anti-hero rather than a satirist-figure certainly minimizes the suggestion of smug self-satisfaction in the comedy. The likes of Corbaccio and Corvino seem effortlessly to condemn themselves rather than to act as convenient butts for J’s superior wit. [...] J’s satire, in other words, has turned from attacking the fictitious creatures within his plays to the real target—the elements within the audience itself which those creatures represent or mirror. There is, J implies, a piece of Corvino, or Bonario, or Sir Politic Would-be in all of us, and the function of his art is to help us to deal with it. The act of understanding is thus essentially a business of seeing through J’s art, and so being able to sit in judgement upon ourselves.” Dutton applies his interpretation of J’s satire to both Volp’s implicit theme of vice and virtue, and J’s authorial intention on behalf of his play’s “catastrophe.” Cf. app. Themes, Symbols, and Images, s.v. “Vice & Virtue,” and app. Technique, s.v. “Catastrophe.”

RIGGS (1989 [135–36]): “A younger J would have characterized the speaker [i.e., Volpone] as a buffoon and (in case anyone missed the point) produced an authorial [136] spokesman to itemize his follies. The author of Volp offers no rebuttal whatever to these all too believable claims, but instead leaves his audience suspended midway between approval and revulsion. [...] Like FQ and PL, Volp forces its readers to work their way through a maze of seductive falsehoods; if they are any wiser at the end of the play, it is because they have withstood this assault on their moral bearings.”

b) Moral Satire

WARD (1875 [2:361–62]): “... the play itself is in aim a moral, not a literary, satire, although one at least of the literary predilections of the day is derided. The [362] comedy of Volp, beyond all doubt one of its author’s most powerful efforts, is at once a picture of the moral depravity of the age and an indignant satire upon it. Beyond doubt the picture is disgusting, as the satire is full of bitterness; but what exposure could equal that which a few years later the conditions of society were to undergo in the terrible scandal of the Overbury case?”
ORNSTEIN (1960 [116]): “In Volp the operation of the moral order produces comedy—the comedy of
futility, the Seven Deadly Sins—which establishes, if only by inference, that God’s in his heaven though
all’s not right with the world.”

KERNAN (1962 [15–16]): “It is quite clear that a moral standard is present in Volp, but the ethic is
implicit rather than explicit. The play does not have a moral spokesman denouncing this world in the
thundering terms of a Jeremiah, but action and speeches are constructed in a way which reveals the values
gold is obliterating. When Volpone in his opening speech substitutes gold for the sun, for religion, for
family, for friends, and for society, we are reminded forcefully of the values and the moral principles which
the sun and these traditional institutions represent embody. Irony is thus J’s chief satiric [16] technique: the
world of the play is an upside-down world, the mirror world that satirists so often create….”

DUTTON (1983 [72–73]): But what has really changed in Volp and J’s other best plays (where,
admittedly, his ‘powers of realistic depiction’ are at their most impressive) is not his ‘loudly proclaimed
moral purpose’ so much as the targets on which that moral purpose concentrates and the strategies by
which they are attacked. In the earlier comedies, vices were exposed and follies ‘exploded,’ for the most
part, with the tacit consent of the audience, who were scarcely called upon to do much more than admire
the author’s just exaction of shame and repentance from his erring creatures. That is what gives those plays
their rather smug, self-satisfied air. But following on from Sej, Volp cast the audience in a different, more
active role; where in the tragedy they became additional members of the Senate, here they implicitly join
the Court of Avocatori, charge with passing judgement on all the action and the characters of the play. As
we have seen, however, this is not a ply where the business of judgement is simple and clear-cut; our
sympathies are often at odds with what we know to be right, and our scale of moral values is continually
turned upon its head. Yet we are charged to do our best, and to do this we must recognise and overcome
within ourselves the weakness and blindesses that might allow a Volpone to flourish, that might prompt us
to be less than just or objective in our judgements. We must, for a start, rid ourselves of the social
prejudices that distort the judgment of the actual Court of Avocatori; but, more than that, we must get over
the temptation simply to sneer at the likes of Corbaccio and Voltore, and to recognise what there is of
Corbaccio and a Voltore within ourselves.”

c) Social Satire

THORNDIKE (1916 [424–25]): “A marked indication of the change in the interests of the audience may
be found in the large number of plays of social satire that appeared in the very decade in which the private
theaters were establishing themselves. […] Only a society far more self-conscious and critical than in the
days of Tamburlaine could have welcomed plays as Marston’s Malcontent and J’s Volp.”

KERNAN (1962 [4]): “This gold-centered world is, of course, a grotesque image of the materialistic
culture of the Renaissance, and J constantly reminds us of the width of his satire by frequent reference to
contemporary professions and practices: the courtiers who ‘ply it so for a place’ at court; the usurers who
coffin men alive for debt; the mill owners who grind ‘oil, corn, or men’ into powder; the doctors who ‘kill
with as much license as a judge’; the Puritans who sometimes ‘devour flesh, and sometimes one another’;
the projectors—i.e. entrepreneurs—with such fantastic commercial schemes as ‘waterworks in perpetual motion.’ We should not forget that this materialistic world is also very much our world, for we are Volpone’s true heirs who by now take for granted our mountebanks trumpeting promises of eternal youth, wealth, and beauty if only we listen to their song and buy of their oil. That the twentieth century is much like the seventeenth in its idiocy would not have surprised J, for like all great satirists he does not merely portray ephemeral vice and folly but searches out those deeply rooted, apparently permanent, human weaknesses which are the source of the particular forms of foolishness in any given age and place.”

JOHANSSON (1967 [57]): “The King ... must have been delighted by J’s scathing satire of lawyers in Volp where, in a conversation between Voltore, the lawyer, and Mosca, Volpone’s servant, he makes the latter sum up almost all the grievances against lawyers, yet [58] in such a way that the conceited barrister does not realize that he is being ridiculed: [quotes 669-84].”

d) Literary Satire

WARD (1875 [2:361-62n]): “See the famous sarcasm against the plagiarists of the Pastor Fido [quotes 1832–35]. Mr. Jacob Feis, in his elaborately perverse argument intended to show that Volp was designed by J as a counterblast [2:362n] against Ham and Sh’s supposed attack upon him as a friend of Florio, the translator of Montaigne, and an admirer of Montaigne himself, has sought to twist the passage into an attack upon Sh. I can perceive nothing that lends a colour to such a theory, unless it be that J presented to Florio a copy of Volp ... with an autograph inscription saluting him as ‘The ayde of his Muses.’ In the context of the passage cited he speaks of the device of the plagiarised author as ‘fitting the time, catching the court-ear,’ an insinuation which, as Mr. Fleay points out, would fit Daniel, whose Arcadian Pastorals had been recently performed before royalty, but would have glanced off harmlessly from Sh. The entire theory of a controversy between Sh. and J turning on the merits, or the reverse, of Florio-Montaigne, I cannot but consider preposterous.”

e) Personal Satire

Thomas Sutton (1532–1611)

WINSTANLEY (1684 [318–19]): “I have conversed with some of the Wits, who credibly informed me, that Ben Johnsons Play of the Fox under the name of Vulpone, had some allusion to Mr. <Thomas> Sutts manner of treating of his kindred.”

LANSDOWNE 1198 (ca. 1669–77): See EVANS (1989) below for excerpts from this BL MS.

AUBREY (1669–96 [179–80]): “He got in time to have 100 pounds a year from the King, also a pension from the Cittie, and the like [180] from many of the nobility, and some of the gentry, which was well payd for love or feare of his railing in verse or prose, or both.”

[291] “Thomas Sutton, Founder of the Hospital, was first a Garrison-soldier at Barwick. He was a lusty, healthy, handsome, fellowe, and there was a very rich Brewer that brewed to the Navy, etc., who was ancient and he had married a young buxom wife, who enjoyed the embraces of this more able performer
as to that point. The old brewer doted on his desirable wife and dies and left her all his Estate, which was
great. Sutton was a man of good understanding and improved it admirably well: But the particular wayes
by which he did it I have now forgott. But he was much upon mortages, and fed severall with hopes of
being his Heire. The Earle of Dorset (I thynke Richard) mightily courted him and presented him, hoping to
have been his Heire; and so did severall other great persons. The later end of his dayes he lived in
Fleetstreet at a Woolen draper’s shop, opposite to Fetter-lane; where he had so many great Chests full of
money, that his chamber was ready to groane under it; and Mr. Tyndale, who knew him and I thynke had
money of him on mortage during his Lawe-suit, was afraid the roome would fall. He lived to establish his
Hospital, and was Governor there himselfe. ‘Twas from him that B. Johnson tooke his hint of the Fox: and
by Seigneur Volpone is meant Sutton.”

CHETWOOD (1756 [12–13]): “… made Overfeer of the Workmen in Building Lincoln’s-Inn, where he
was first [13] taken Notice of by Sutton, Founder of the Chartereux, who observing him often with a
Horace in his Hand, contracted a Friendship that lasted for Life.”

WHALLEY (1756 [1:liv]): “Mr. Wood acquaints us, [in his Athenae Oxonienses that] Dr. Morley,
Bishop of Winchester, informed him, that I had a pension from the city, from several of the nobility and
gentry, and particularly from Mr. Sutton, the founder of the Chartereux hospital in London; and Mr. Wood
insinuates, that these pensions were paid him, to prevent being made objects of his satire; as if J, like
another Aretine, was the scourge of the great, who refused to become tributaries to his muse.”

CHALMERS (1810 [5:448]): “Sutton, the founder of the Charterhouse is said to have been one of his
benefactors, which renders it improbable that J could have intended to ridicule so excellent a character on
the stage: yet according to Mr. Oldys, Volpone was intended for Mr. Sutton. But although it is supposed
that J sometimes laid the rich under contributions by a dread of his satire, it is not very likely that he would
attack such a man as Sutton.”

DISRAELI (1814): “Sutton’s biographer (HERNE [1677 (42)]) after noticing this report, says—‘It is
probable the poet never intended what they think: for in that age several other men were pointed at, and
who was the true person, was then a matter of doubt!’ It is no longer so—we are better judges of these
matters than the contemporaries of Sutton, and decide without difficulty.”

DISRAELI (1814 [3:133n–35n]): “To prove the great liberty J allowed himself in personal satire …
[134n] … Sutton, the founder of the Hospital, was Volpone, or the Fox.”

[135n] “In the Ded. of The Fox to the two Universities, he boldly asks, ‘Where have I been particular?
Where personal?—Except to a mimic, cheater, bawd, creatures (for their insolencies) worthy to be
taxed.’—But, in this very play, the hero was Sutton. The mere list he here furnishes us with, would serve to
crowd <sic> one of the ‘two-penny audiences’ in the small theatres of that day.”

GIFFORD (1816 [1:xxxii]): “The Fox was received, as it well deserved to be, with general applause.
The author’s enemies however were not inactive: they could not venture to question his talents; they
therefore turned, as usual, their attacks against his character, and asserted that, under the person of
Volpone, he had satirized Sutton, the founder of the Charter House, his friend and benefactor.”
I regret to find Mr. D’Israeli among the poet’s accusers; for he is an anxious inquirer after truth, and brings, as far as I have been able to discover, an unprejudiced mind to his investigations. His fault is too great a deference for names unworthy of his trust. This is an evil which every day will contribute to abate. Twice in one page he charges J with bringing Sutton on the stage.

It is not a little amusing to see the calumniators of our poet in that age, driven to the absurdities as those of the present day. Two characters more opposite in every respect than those of Sutton and Volpone are not to be found in the history of mankind. Sutton inherited a large estate; he was one of the greatest traders of his time, he had agents in every country, and ships on every sea: he had contracts, mines, mills, ploughs, he was a naval commissioner, and master of the ordnance in the north; in a word, one of the most active characters of an active period. Now mark the description of Volpone, as given by himself: Sutton was a meek and pious man, Volpone is a daring infidel; Sutton was abstemious, but kind and charitable; Volpone is painted as the most selfish and unfeeling of voluptuaries. Again: Volpone is a creature of ungovernable lust, a monster of seduction; Sutton was the husband of one wife, to whose memory he was so tenderly attached, that upon her death, which took place about two years before the date of <F b ÿ>, he had retired from the world, to a life of strictness and reserve; he was at this time, nearly fourscore, and bowed down to the grave with sorrow for his loss, while Volpone, in the full vigour of manhood, exclaims. In a word, the contrast is so glaring, that if the commentators on Sh. had not afforded us a specimen of what ignorance grafted on malevolence can do, we should be lost in wonder at the obliquity of intellect Much could detect the slimiest resemblance of Sutton in the features of Volpone.

It is well known that the author received periodical sums not only from public bodies, but from several of the nobility and gentry: these it has been said, were not bestowed as free gifts, or as honourable testimonies of his superior talents, but extorted from reluctant hands by the dread of his satire. Hence sprung the several pensions said to have been paid to J, and which should rather be considered in the light of retaining fees than gratuitous donations, and still less, forced tributes to malevolence. Great and generous spirits like Sutton might indeed think their wealth not misemployed in supplying the deficiencies of fortune; but that most of what he received was hire and salary, scarcely admits of reasonable doubt.

... I was induced, from internal evidence, to express my doubts as to the identity of Lanthorn Leatherhead and Inigo Jones; at present, I disbelieve it altogether. The loose reports of the time weigh nothing with me: and those who have noticed the remarks on the imaginary resemblance of Sutton and Volpone will, I flatter myself, be inclined to think as lightly of them as myself.

H&S (1950 [9:681–82]) regard Aubrey’s “earlier identification” as “quite untrue”; cite relevant passages from Aubrey, and modern historians S. R. Gardiner and Gerald S. Davies; refer to Gifford’s efforts quoted above; and conclude that “[i]t is easy to see from Aubrey’s gossip how the legend of [Sutton]...
sitting for the portrait of Volpone arose, but a knowledge of the true facts of his life completely refutes the
imputation.”

Evans (1989 [300]) analyzes the design and influence of Herne’s biography in light of its regularly
overlooked primary source, the anon. BL MS. Lansdowne 1198 written ca. 1669-77, and various other
contemporary documents. “Comparing the MS. with Herne’s redaction shows how Herne chose to
highlight certain aspects of Sutton’s career (and the legends associated with it) while downplaying or
ignoring others. The MS. deals much more forthrightly and at greater length with various controversial
aspects of Sutton’s life than does Herne.”

[302–3] “Given his circumstances—his extreme but somewhat mysterious wealth, his isolation, his
dependence on a garrulous factotum, the resentment his position bred—it hardly seems surprising that
many spectators of Volp assumed that Sutton was J’s target. […] The manuscript’s discussion of this issue
… is curiously ambivalent. On the one hand the passage dismisses the possibility that J targeted Sutton; on
the other hand it condemns and mocks him for attacking so worthy a figure: ‘a particular pique against him
was thought to be maintained against him by five sorts of persons whom he used to forebode to misery and
poverty viz: … poets the last of whom being commonly poore themselves addresse themselves to the rich
in Panegyrickes, and flatteries, and that not working upon them … they fall upon them with scoffes and
jeares…. […] Ben: Johnsons Volponi is generally reported to be [303] master Suttons humour… […]—yet
Ben: Johnson himself was so farre from owning that design upon master Sutton that + + often frequenting
the Schoole & the hall since the foundation of the Charterhouse he expressed his great admiration of him
who he sayd had erected soe noble a foundation that he wished himself (as his friend Broome was) a
member of it. Ben understood well enough that his mushroome playes could never disparage or outlast mr
Suttons lasting good workes where the oddes is as great as between paper and stone; between pleasure and
piety; betewene what at present Ticklish, and what is for ever usefull. If he had designed the portraicture of
Master Sutton in that play … yet Ben: Johnson lived to correct his mistake of him … in his master Suttons
great care for the enlarging of his estate it appeared that he sought not soe much a prey for his covetousness
to enjoy, as an instrument for his goodnesse tobestow; who knew that of great riches there is noe real use
but distribution, the rest is conceit—the personal enjoyment of the wealthiest man living can never reach to
feel great riches beyond the imaginary way of the custody of fame of them unless it be by the phantastick pleasure of
Lavishing them upon vain followers or the real one of dispensing them among needy and poore
men.”

[303] “Herne also denies that J attacked Sutton, but, like the author of the MS., he covers all bases,
asserting that if the poet did have Sutton in mind, then, ‘he was first of all an ungrateful Wretch, to abuse
those hands which afforded him Bread, for he allowed him a constant Pension: And secondly, he disowned
his very Handwriting, which he sent to our Founder, in Vindication of himself in this matter.’ It would be
interesting to know Herne’s sources for his charges about J’s pension and his ‘Vindication’; since, in these
respects, he goes beyond the authority of the MS., perhaps his information came from the personal
testimony he alludes to in his preface.”
"Certainly J could not have been surprised to learn that others spotted a connection. There is no way to know, of course, whether he deliberately intended any personal satire, and there is even less evidence about his more precise motives even if such satire was intended. However, the standard assumption of earlier scholars—that J could not possibly have aimed at Sutton—seems less convincing than it once did. After all, their picture of Sutton—a picture stressing piety and exemplary character—have been drawn largely from the very sources that sought to whitewash his contemporary reputation. Yet even these sources (especially the unnoted MS.) offer evidence that many people of Sutton’s time viewed him far less benignly than subsequent generations have done. The fact that the resemblances between Sutton and Volpone are not even more striking does not necessarily prove that no satire was intended. Indeed, if the playwright had wanted to mock Sutton, he would have had to guard against mocking him too obviously, lest he be charged with personal libel.”

“Any implied attack on Sutton in the play could have been read by J, his audience, and even by Sutton himself as a well-intentioned (if pointed) reminder about what really mattered in life, and about the proper uses of prosperity.”

Evans (1989 [309–10]) also notes that the Stanhope copy of Fz (1640) adds a marginal note to the play’s Argument: “This was just | rich ould | Suttons case”; cf. Feales (1632) t.p.: “said to be drawn for M Sutton | founder of the Charter House | but not true.”

Evans (1994 [61]) later added that “Like many other members of J’s earliest audiences, Stanhope seems to have had no difficulty imagining that the playwright’s works for the public theatre were often tinged by micropolitical motives.”

Hotine (1991 [80]) locates in Sutton’s General and Household accounts among the Charterhouse Papers a petty cash disbursement dated Wed 11 Feb 1606/7 and accompanied with the note “for a coppie of Johnsons petition—12d. […] There is no contraction sign on ‘petition,’ so we can only guess what this word indicates. […] The coincidence of the date of the ‘petition’ and <J’s prefatory Epistle suggest Herne’s statement that J ‘disowned his very Handwriting, which he sent to our Founder, in Vindication of himself in this matter’ could refer to the Epistle.”

Among another list of payments from Feb 1609/10 occurs the name “Mr Johnson” followed by the amount “x l’, which would seem to support Aubrey’s claim that J received support from Sutton: “Forty pounds from Sutton is about the figure one would expect.”

The author draws a correlation between J’s claim in the Epistle to ‘keep old men in their best and supreme state, or, as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength’ and Sutton’s slow follow-through on his initial plans for the charterhouse. “Some time before 1595, that is over ten years before Volpone was first performed, Sutton had the idea of endowing ‘a hospital, chapel, and schoolhouse.’ Apparently, the plan lapsed. Then, on 20 Oct 1606—seven months after the first performance of the play—Sutton conveyed a large number of his properties to finance a charitable foundation on his death.”
Other writers who have discussed the topicality and personal satire of *Volp* in terms of the Sutton-Volpone controversy include Shipley (1992), Steggle (1998 [101-2]). Also rf. app. *Extra-Dramatic Texts*, s.v. “The Epistle.”

**Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury (1563–1612)**

Dutton (1983 [148]) remarks that “there is a fairly obvious link between *Volp* and Salisbury even in the title. Volpone, of course, means the Fox, and J’s contemporaries used the Italian and English version of the title interchangeably. The Fox, as it happens, had been widely used as a nickname for Salisbury’s father, the first Lord Burghley; Burghley, like his younger son, was often characterised as crafty and devious (he has been suggested as the original Polonius of *Ham*) and we find, for example, Francis Bacon sneering at one of his political manoeuvres: ‘The old fox crouches and whines.’ But Burghley had died in 1598; there is considerable evidence, however, that the nickname attached itself to his younger son and political successor. One of the most tantalising pieces of evidence is an epitaph penned by Samuel Rowlandson and entitled ‘In Vulponem’ [see app. *General Comments & Allusions*, s.v. 1612]. The hunting references allude to King James’s passion for the sport, which ambitious courtiers naturally made the most of; Salisbury was physically disabled and so did not join in, but nevertheless outwitted his competitors until his death. It is tempting and, I hope to show, reasonable to suppose that one of the plays that had ‘been writ’ about him is *Volp*. J’s audience would, then, have been alerted to possible ‘glancings’ at Salisbury by the mere title of the play, though its traditional beast-fable format makes the allusion less than immediately incriminating. In the play itself we find no simple allegory of contemporary events, or any single character ‘shadowing’ Salisbury and his polices; given the dangers, this was unthinkable. But there are two characters who do, in their own ways, seem to ‘glance’ at him: Nano and Sir PoliAc Would-be.”

For further commentary concerning Salisbury’s potential resemblance to Nano, cf. app. *Characters*, s.v. “Nano” and “Sir PoliAc Would-Be.”

**Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639)**

Rea (1919 [xxxvi–xliv]) examines *Volp*’s Venetian action and characters according to the play’s period of composition (ca. Dec 1605–Jan 1606) and interprets a series of potential correspondences between J’s personal motives and their relation to major contemporary events and public figures in England, especially Wotton, who served at this time as James’ ambassador to Venice and possibly J’s model for Sir PoliAc Would-be: “During the last months of 1605 and the first few months of 1606, the minds of all were turned to one thing—plots against the government, and the supposed connection of the Catholic church and Spain with these plots. The Gunpowder Plot was discovered in Nov 1605. Examinations, trials, and executions kept up public interest during Dec and Jan; no one knew who might be involved in the plots, or how far the latter might extend. […] If we turn to Venice … we find the city itself in active opposition to the power of the Pope. The Eng. Ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton, was busily engaged in trying to form some sort of league of the Protestant countries of Europe, including, of course, the Netherlands and England, to oppose
the Pope, the King of Spain, and Spinola's armies. Wotton's letters are full of stories and rumors of plots of all sorts. The Gunpowder Plot seemed to him a part of a widespread conspiracy. King James was the more inclined to take an interest in these reports of his ambassador, and credit them, because of an incident of a few years earlier, before he became King of England. In 1601 Wotton had come to James in Scotland, with the word of a Catholic plot against his life. He had disguised himself as an Italian, calling himself Ottavio Baldi, bringing from his friend, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, antidotes for poison.

[xxxii] “What would be J's attitude toward the situation? He was, according to his account to Drummond, a Catholic at this time and for some years later. He must, therefore, have felt some concern over the course of events. Such toleration of Catholics as the government had shown during the first part of James' reign was likely to be much diminished as a result of alarm at the recent disclosures, and the rumors of more serious danger. It would, of course, not have been possible to write in actual support of the Catholics at this time; J, at any rate, would hardly have been the man to do this. But it was quite possible to satirize the tendency of the public to believe all sorts of wild stories, and so to discredit the purveyors of such anti-Catholic reports. This, I believe, J tried to do in Volp, by caricaturing one of the chief news-gatherers, Sir Henry Wotton, under the character of Sir Politique Would-bee. The likeness could have been made very easy for the audience to distinguish; some of the features are still clearly recognizable.”

[xxxi] “If Sir Politique is Wotton, J is evidently trying to discount his reports, on the ground that he is a mere chatterer. [...] As Sir Pol he is often referred to by other characters who mention him. If it is remembered that Wotton was pronounced Wooton, Sir Pol Would-bee is not a bad parody of Sir Hen. Wotton. Various characteristics of Wotton are to be found, in somewhat exaggerated form, in Sir Politique.”

H&S (1950 [9:680n]): “Note the joke on 'poll' and 'hen'; how many of the audience saw it?”

For a comparative analysis of Sir Pol and Wotton, see REA (1919 [xxxiii–xlili]), which concludes: “the case may be summed up by saying that all the qualities possessed by Sir Politique are caricatures of qualities Sir Henry Wotton can be shown to have possessed. Furthermore, not only were the policies of Wotton obnoxious to J, but as an Italianate Englishman, and as possessing something of the fantastic character that marked the genius of his intimate friend, John Donne, he would seem a fair object of ridicule.”

H&S (1950 [9:680]): “… it is impossible to pass by Dr. Rea’s outrageous suggestion that Sir Politic Would-be is a satire, ‘very easy for the audience to distinguish,’ on Sir Henry Wotton. Twelve pages are devoted to proving it. Every fatuity of which Sir Politic is capable is twisted into a caricature of something Wotton said or did. It is an instructive example of the way in which, when once identification of this kind is made, evidence can be procured with very little effort”

[9:681] “I respected Wotton as a poet. He knew by heart Wotton’s poem ‘How Happy is He Borne, or Taught’; he quoted it to Drummond at Hawthornden, and his autograph copy of it is preserved at Dulwich College.”
Sir Anthony Shirley

H&S (1950 [9:681]), with reference to Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Cross* (1937 [269]), note the author’s “suggestion … that J had the erratic Sir Anthony Shirley in mind in depicting Sir Politic. It need not be taken as an attempt at a complete picture, but the two had certainly some traits in common. And there is a clue at the close—the proposal to ship Sir Politic away to Zante or Aleppo and put his adventures in ‘The Book of Voyages.’ In Oct 1600 there had appeared *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shirleys Journey overland to Venice, from thence to Seaton, Antioch, Aleppo, and Babilton, and so to Cashine in Persia.*”

Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury

DUTTON (1983 [148–51]) discusses the possible relationship between Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and Nano: “The significant link between Nano and Salisbury is that the latter was abnormally small, as well as being hunch-backed. Queen Elizabeth, an inveterate nicknamer, called him her elf and her pigmy, to his great distress. King James more notoriously used to call him his ‘little beagle.’ The dwarf who acts as zany to the Venetian magnifico is an obvious parallel to the little, deformed politician: [quotes 1714–25]. This may simply mean that the dwarf amuses people by imitating fully grown-up men, but it could equally mean that Nano’s role in the play was to parody some ‘greater’ man who, all the circumstantial evidence suggest, would have to be Salisbury. He is certainly called on to be present on a number of occasions which might well give scope for inventive parody, and when indeed it is difficult to see why he is at all if not for some such purpose. […] Given that Volp is a play about inheritance, about the passing on of wealth and power, parallels with the Cecil ‘dynasty’ are only too likely: the hunch-backed Salisbury’s body receiving the father’s transmigrant soul. The idea would seem even more cruelly apt to anyone who knew that Salisbury’s daughter, Frances, was also physically deformed. We should also notice that, in the last three transmigrations of Pythagoras’s soul before it reaches Androgyno, Nano’s recitation suddenly focuses—for no apparent reason—on the religious dissensions of ‘these days of reformation’ [514]. Firstly the soul was a Protestant, ‘one of the reformed’ [515]; then a Catholic monk, a ‘Carthusian’ [518]; and latterly a Puritan, ‘a precise, pure, illuminate brother’ [527]. It seemed to some of J’s contemporaries that Salisbury had similarly ‘shifted [his] coat’ in the years leading up to his militant anti-Catholicism in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot—once a conventional upholder of the Protestant settlement in England, then encouraging James’s toleration of the Catholics at the outset of the reign and now turning on them with Puritan zeal.”

DUTTON (1983 [151–52]) also discusses the possible relationship between Cecil and Sir Politic Would-be: “If Nano is in some way a physical reminder of Salisbury, Sir Pol seems to be a comic version of the arch-politician. There may even be a particular significance in his name; Salisbury complains in one of his letters about the endless succession of titles and nicknames that the King was pouring on him: ‘From Essendon to Cranborne, from Cranborne to Salisbury, from Salisbury to Beagle, from Beagle to Thom Derry, from Thom Derry to Parrot, which I hate the most…. ’ No doubt to be known as Pol-Parrot was the common fate of politicians (see *Epig* 71, ‘On Court Parrot’), but if the King applied it to his hunchbacked
Principal Secretary, it was surely likely to stick. For all that, the most convincing parallel between Sir Pol and Salisbury lies in their both being pedlars <sic> and discoverers of plots. From the outset, Sir Pol's talk is full of schemes and espionage; [quotes 1019-23]. He receives the news of Stone the fool's death" [quotes 1081–88]. There was, as everyone knew, only one man in England receiving 'weekly intelligence' and communicating it to ambassadors, and that was the Earl of Salisbury.

King James I

FLEAY (1891 [2:50–51]) claims that the revised and revived _Mucedorus_ of 1610 responded to "J's Fox, in which the King's miraculous healing powers by touch are perhaps ridiculed as Oglio del Scoto [rf. 1228–29]."

REA (1919 [xlii], re: the dramatic correlation of Sir Pol and Volpone/Scoto in the mountebank scene: "J's purpose in this scene becomes evident if we identify Sir Politique as Wotton; he is ridiculing the pretensions of Wotton to have saved the life of James, and suggesting that he has probably been imposed upon by some trickster in Italy. The oil 'surnamed _oglio del Scoto_' is, of course, a reference to Wotton's Scotch trip, since which, J suggests, the oil has been named for the Scotch King, instead of for the grand duke."

[xlir] "Fleay thinks the _oglio del Scoto_ is a reference to the healing power of the royal touch practiced by James. This does not seem likely."

3. Beast Fable

BRADBROOK (1955 [123]): "In _Volp_ the moral element predominates; the characters are strongly satirized, as their generic names imply.... The presentation of man as a beast was a favourite satiric device."

KERNAN (1962 [207]): "At the basis of this play is a beast fable—much like those told by Aesop and retold with variations during the Middle Ages—in which the fox, pretending to be dying, attracts the birds of prey only to outwit them in the end. The names of the characters are forms of animal names...."

[18] "...[T]here was in the Ren., as always, a middle way, a balanced view of the possibility of man controlling the beast in himself and nurturing his reason. Sir John Hayward expresses this view (which would also seem to have been J's) in terms which are so appropriate for _Volp_ ... [quotes Hayward's _David's Tears_ (London, 1653)]. Hayward describes perfectly what happens in _Volp_. The beast fable which underlies the play and the names of the characters—the fox, the crow, the vulture, the parrot, the flesh fly—make it clear that the men who bear these names have been [19] transformed by their cunning and greed into the beast to whose sensuality they 'principally decline.' The animal imagery—wolf, hyena, chameleon, crocodile, tortoise, swine, hog-louse—which appears throughout the play also serves to remind us that we are watching a spectacle of men turning into beasts. We might add that even as the characters become animals, they also become mere caricatures of living men, utter fools devoid of common sense, let alone reason, who can be persuaded to past with all their virtues and possession in the fatuous hope of coming

407
into great wealth. Mosca describes them in terms which reduce them below even of animal and fool to that of dirt, mere gross matter: [quotes 2938–41]. All the characters of the play, with the exception of Celia and Bonario, move themselves downward on the scale of being. By choosing their lower faculties over their higher, they succeed in reducing themselves to animals and clods. But J turns a simple moral point into the chief structural principle of his play by use of dramatic irony.”

DUNCAN (1970 [26]): Volp’s “sense of inevitability is heightened by the use of the beast-fable, since animals necessarily fulfill their natures, and the author, having established the equation of men with beasts, appears merely logical, and not guilty of any cynical twisting of evidence, in showing them behaving as such. But it was a fine piece of intuition on J’s part to see how closely the fabulist’s irony coincides with the Lucianic variety. [...] Fable and dialogue alike can give the disturbing sense of a direct encounter with evil by presenting, quite without comment, a world where false values are normative and parade themselves unselfconsciously.”

PARKER (1999 [14]): “J exploits the symbolic associations of individual beasts. The fox was represented as a crafty shape-shifter with the habit of running in circles, emblematising both longevity and the essential ruthlessness of life, and was associated with misers, usurers, and Machiavellians in general, and then, by extension, with the Devil himself.”

Other critics who have commented upon Volp and its relation to beast fable include ADAMS (1904 [299]), DUTTON (1983 [64]), PARKER (1976), et al. Also see app. Sources, s.v. “Animal Lore.”

4. Tragedy and Tragicomedy

SCHELLING (1914 [171]): “The general theme and the sombre tone of this able play [i.e., John Marston’s The Malcontent] suggest MeasMeas. Like this play of Sh., his TrailCres and J’s Volp we have here rather tragicomedy than comedy although none of these dramas end in violence.”

H&S (1925 [2:49–50]): “In the sternness of the catastrophe, J felt, it approached tragedy. And in its whole conception and conduct, in the lurid atmosphere which pervades it from beginning to end, in the appalling [50] and menacing character of the principal movers of the plot, it approaches, not indeed the profound and human-hearted tragedies of Sh., but, very obviously and significantly, his own grandiose and terrible tragedy of two years before. Sej opened up to him that new technique in drama of which Volp was to be the finest fruit. History, in the great example of Sejanus’ career and fall, brought home to him anew the immense value of a continuous and close-knitted plot, with terror and scorn for its ruling motives; it perhaps impressed him also, anew, with the wealth, in dramatic material of this kind, of the records of imperial Rome, still unexplored and unexploited by his dramatic contemporaries.”

HERRICK (1955 [262]): “I could have taught Beaumont and Fletcher how to conceal their denouement until the very end. In Volp, for example, the resolution is not complete until the end of the last scene” [262–63n] “I was conscious that the final unmasking of Volpone and the meting of rather severe punishment to Volpone, Mosca, and the three Venetian citizens might seem to overstep the bounds of a comic catastrophe and encroach upon—did he mean tragedy or tragicomedy?”
“Elizabethan critics like Sidney and J were emphatically opposed to the loose forms inherited from medieval times and consequently did not favor Engl. tragically-comedy in the shape of tragical comedies and histories. Most Elizabethans, however, showed little concern for the rules.”

Ornstein (1960 [85]): “[J’s] satire probed beneath the surface of human folly to uncover the sordid joke of inhuman vice. And in Volp, we are often told, he shattered the decorums of comedy by creating a protagonist who possessed an almost tragic magnificence. We cannot say that the qualities which made J triumphant in comedy were unsuited to tragedy. We can only say that these qualities ... are not strikingly evident in Sej or Cat.”

Critics who have discussed Volp as a tragedy, or in conjunction with J’s other tragedies, include H&S (1925 [2:17–18]), et al.

5. Romance

Coleridge (1831 [12:3.180]), writing ca. 1815–1819: “If it were practicable to lessen the paramancy of Volpone, a most delightful Comedy might be produced, Celia being the Ward or Niece instead of the Wife of Corvino, & Bonario her Lover—.”

Aubrey (1669–96 [178]): “‘Twas an ingeniose remarque of my Lady Hoskins, that B. J. never writes of Love, or if he does, does it not naturally.”

Swinburne (1889 [35–36]): “[T]here is in Volp a touch of something like imagination, a savour of something like romance, which gives a higher tone to the style and a deeper interest to the action.”

McDonald (1988 [126]): “Distrust of romance pervades Volp, and J’s expression of that doubt is characteristically vigorous. The extravagant language of the opening lines presents Volpone’s gold as a religious object drawing pilgrims to worship.... The blasphemous symbolism signifies J’s dubious opinion of both tenor and vehicle: the playwright applies the terms of religious quest-romance to the metal of commerce, thus cheapening object and language.”

[127] “The romantic selves and experiences the protagonists fashion for themselves are only attitudes, and J repeatedly exposes the beasts’ pretensions.”

[128] “When Lady Would-be responds to Mosca’s report that her husband has been seen with a courtesan in a gondola, she rushes out to apprehend him and takes with her Volpone’s dwarf (Bergeron compares her to Una in quest of Redcross). The episode illustrates J’s application of irony to the conventions of romance. Lady Would-be, perhaps having seen too many Shakespearean comedies before her departure from England, knows very well not to be deceived by simple appearances; hence, she accuses Peregrine of being a whore in male disguise. The truth, however, is as ordinary as it seems.” This interpretation applies specifically to Volpone, Mosca, Celia, and the Would-bes. See app. Characters.

For further commentary related to Volp and romance, see app. Dramatic Structure and Technique, s.v. “Catastrophe.”

C. Characters
General Comments: Characters and Characterization

DIBDIN (1800 [3:293–94]): “Certainly the plot is upon a very meritorious principal, and the characters are forcibly drawn. A knave who feigns illness in order to impose upon knaves ... is one of the boldest ideas of a character that can be conceived, and yet moral justice is rendered more complete by making that knave imposed upon by another of yet superior cunning; shewing that the machinations wicked, be they ever so subtle, are constantly counteracted by the same devil that inspired them. The group of characters that are introduced to work up those materials, are full of contrast, strength, and nature; would not one think it, therefore, very extraordinary that this piece, even supported by admirable acting, has never greatly succeeded? Nothing, considered superficially, can be so unaccountable; but, when the subject is fairly investigated, nothing can be more clearly comprehended. Quaint, dry, studied correctness, unsupported by quickness, spirit, and fire, can never satisfy. The author in this piece conducts us into a uniform and proportionable building, presents us with an entertainment, and introduces us to company, but the apartments are cheerless vaults, the viands are carved marble, and the quests are statues.”

ANON (1818 [193]): “In no other of his plays has he exhibited a greater portion of that art, which he possessed in such eminence, of familiarizing us with his personages before their appearance; and in none, assuredly, has he more accurately distinguished the nicer shades, by which similar characters preserve a separate identity.”

COLERIDGE (1831 [12:3:171]), writing ca. 1815–1819: “The Observation, I have prefixed to the Volpone, is the Key to the faint Interest, that these noble efforts of the intellectual power excite—with the exception of the Sad Shepherd—because in that fragment only is there any character, in whom you are morally interested.”

COLERIDGE (1831 [12:3:180]), writing ca. 1815–1819: “This admirable indeed, but yet still more wonderful than admirable Play, is from the fertility and vigor of Invention, Character, Language and Sentiment the strongest proof, how impossible it is to keep up any pleasurable Interest in a Tale in which there is no goodness of heart in any of the prominent characters—After the 3rd Act, this Play becomes not a dead but a painful weight on the Feelings.—F. C. Fathom, and Zelucco are instances of the same truth. ... Bonario and Celia should have been made in some way or other principals in the Plot—which the[y] might be, and the objects of Interest, without being made characters—in Novels the Person, in whose fate you are most interested, is often the least marke[d] character of the whole. If it were practicable to lessen the paramouncty of Volpone, a most delightful Comedy might be produced, Celia being the Ward or Niece instead of the Wife of Corvino, & Bonario her Lover—.”

HAZLITT (1819 [6:43]): “had no idea of decorum in his dramatic fictions, which Milton says is a principal thing, but went on caricaturing himself and others till he could go no farther in extravagance, and sink no lower in meanness. The titles of his dramatis personae, such as Sir Amorous La Foole, Truewit, Sir John Daw, Sir Politic Would-be, &c. &c. which are significant and knowing, show his determination to overdo every thing by thus letting you into their characters beforehand, and afterward proving their pretensions by their names. Thus Peregrine, in Volp, says, ‘Your name, Sir? Politick. My name is Politick

410
Would-be.' To which Peregrine replies, 'Oh, that speaks him.' How it should, if it was his real name, and not a nick-name given him on purpose by the author, is hard to conceive."

COLERIDGE (1836 [2:268–69]): "The observation I have prefixed to the Volpone is the key to the faint interest which these noble efforts of intellectual power excite, with the exception of the fragment of The Sad Shepherd; because in that piece only is there any character with whom you can morally sympathize."

SYMonds (1884 [68]): "... [J] wrote systematically, deducing characters from fixed conceptions of specific attributes, building up plots with all the massive machinery of learning and potent intellectual materials at his command. Unlike the poets of Imaginative Comedy, he adhered to scenes of common human experience; and, deviating from the traditions of the school he adopted, he portrayed unusual and exaggerated eccentricities (Volp and Aelch), instead of the broader and more general aspects of humanity. Therefore the name of Humour, which recurs so often in his work, may be taken as the keynote to his conception of character."

SYMonds (1886 [64–65]): "Indeed, he treated wickedness of every kind so sternly that even his best plays fail to win our sympathy from the utter atrocity of their characters and the nakedness with which J has unmasked them. Hallam says justly of Volp that 'five of the principal characters are wicked beyond any retribution that comedy can dispense'; while Coleridge remarks that the extreme badness of the personages destroys the interest of this stupendous play. The spectacle of their unmitigated evil presented to our gaze affects us much in the same way as the perusal of a treatise on ethics. Instead of regarding these monsters as men with passions [65] like our own, we recognise the abstractions which a powerful rhetorician has gifted with mechanical vitality."

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxviii]): "No such revolting figures as Volpone and his instrument, Mosca, had yet been drawn with such sustained and merciless vigour, for the Eng. stage. The hideous occupations of the parasite and 'captain,' stock subject of every Rom. satirist, are reproduced with incomparable vividness before the relatively innocent Eng. public. [...] Instead of the old motley company of Humours, loosely strung together in a phantasmagoria of five acts, we have the picture of a single career, about which all the other personages revolve.

ELIOT (1919 [135]): "... lines of J, detached from their context, look like inflated or empty fustian. [...] We cannot call a man's work superficial when it is the creation of a world; a man cannot be accused of dealing superficially with the world which he himself has created; the superficials is the world. J's characters conform to the logic of the emotions of their world. They are not fancy, because they have a logic [136] of their own; and this logic illuminates the actual world, because it gives us a new point of view from which to inspect it."

MACCarthy (1921 [57]), following Eliot's remarks, adds: "Put in this way, J's characters, if you think of them apart from their particular setting and their actions in it, cease to be interesting. They are rammed to the muzzle with vitality in that setting, but out of it they seem mechanisms. This seems to me much the same as saying that they are simplified down to walking monomaniacs, which is the classic criticism of them."

411

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BARISH (1960 [92]): "In J, the creativeness appears in figures like Mosca, Volpone, Subtle, and
Truewit, who can within limits control their own personae, command their own metamorphoses. The butts
in the plays are those who try to live within an alien persona, adopting the kind of mask that flatters their
ambitions but exceeds their capacities, and so failing to realize either."

McDONALD (1988 [113]): "[P]ride in cunning characterizes virtually everyone in Volp. [...] All the
Jonsonian rogues and would-be rogues are simultaneously cunning and naive."
Also see app. Extra-Dramatic Texts, s.v. "The Persons of the Comedy."

1. Volpone and Mosca

a) Volpone

DENNIS (1695 [2:384–85]) regarding the inconsistency of Volpone's characterization, especially within
act 5: "the Character of Volpone is Inconsistent with itself. Volpone is like Catiline, alieni appetens, sui
profusus <Sallust, BelCat 5>; but that is only a double in his Nature, and not an Inconsistency. The
Inconsistence of the Character appears in this, that Volpone in the fifth Act behaves himself like a Giddy
Coxcombe, in the Conduct of that very Affair which he manag'd so craftily in the first four. In which the
Poet offends first against that Fam'd rule which Horace gives for the Characters. Servetur ad imum, / Qualis
ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet [ArsPoet 126–27: "(if you boldly fashion a fresh character,)
have it kept to the end even as it came forth at the first, and have it self-consistent" (Fairclough, trans.,
461)]. And secondly, against Nature, upon which, all the rules are grounded. For so strange an alteration, in
so little a time, is not in Nature, unless it happens by the accident of some violent passion; which is not the
case here. Volpone on the sudden behaves himself without common discretion, in the conduct of that very
affair which he had managed with so much Dexterity, for the space of three yeas together. For why does he
disguise himself? or why does he repose the confidence in Mosca? Why does he cause it to be given out
that he's dead? Why, only to plague his bubbles. To plague them, for what? Why, only for having been his
bubbles. So that here is the greatest alteration in the world, in the space of twenty-four hours, without any
apparent cause. The design of Volpone is to cheat, he had carried on a cheat for three years together, with
cunning and with success. And yet he on a sudden in cold blood does a thing, which he cannot but know
must endanger the ruining all."

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:151]): "Volpone, who gives his name to the piece, with a fox-like craftiness
deludes and gulls their [i.e., the Legacy Hunters'] hopes by the agency of his imitable Parasite, or (as the
Gr.and Rom. authors expressed it) by his Fly, his Mosca...."

WARD (1875 [2:363]): "The revolting aspects of life exhibited in this comedy are likely to prevent full
justice being rendered its merits by most modern readers. Yet it long retained its hold over the national
stage, while—which is less to be wondered at—the central character continued to the popular mind the
incarnation of a most loathsome variety of the vast genus hypocrite."

SYMonds (1886) [7]: "He has conceived Volpone as a man in green old age, sound still of
constitution, enjoying the possession of his senses and his intellect. Craft and extravagant voluptuousness

412

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form the main-springs of his character. He has grown hoary in vice, and nothing now delights him more than the spectacle of human baseness. Therefore he expends his more than ordinary mental powers and ill-acquired knowledge of the world on subtle schemes for making life a comedy, and proving all the men around him knaves and fools. He is avaricious but not blinded by the love of gold. Wealth he values chiefly as the means for tempting and corrupting others, after he has surfeited himself with every pleasure [72] it can purchase. Fantastic in his sensuality, he lives like a Roman of the Empire or an Oriental, secluded from the world among his creatures...."  

Swinburne (1889 [41-42]): “So far from regarding the comic Nemesis or rather Ae which infatuates and impels Volpone to his doom as a sacrifice of art to morality, an immolation of probability and consistency on the altar of poetic justice, I admire as a master-stroke of character the haughty audacity of caprice which produces or evolves his ruin out of his own hardihood and insolence of exulting and daring enjoyment. For there is something throughout of the lion and the fox in this original and incomparable figure.”  

Fleay (1891 [1:14]): “I need hardly add that the characterization of Volpone along with ‘some of Balzac’s masterpieces’ as human reptiles ‘over-fattened in the vast slime of the poet’s brain’ by Mr. J. A. Symonds [rf. 1886 (87)] is to me most repulsive, and I might use a stronger word.”  

Eliot (1919 [136-37]): “But if we dig beneath the theory, beneath the observation, beneath the deliberate drawing and the theatrical and dramatic elaboration, there is discovered a kind of power animating Volpone [et al.] ... which comes from below the intellect, and for which no theory of the humours will account. [...] It is not merely Humours: for neither Volpone nor Mosca is a humour. No theory of humours could account for J’s best plays or the best characters in them. We want to [137] know at what point the comedy of humours passes into a work of art, and why J is not Brome.”  

Kernan (1962 [13–15]): “Acting is for Volpone and Mosca a magical power, a short cut to fulfillment of boundless desire which avoids such unpleasant realities as old age, decay, satiation, poverty. Acting opens up for them a brave new world of the imagination where man can contend with the gods themselves, as Volpone boasts to Celia: [quotes 2076–77]. If their adoration of gold suggests Volpone’s and Mosca’s materialism, their faith in acting marks them as believers in the theory that man can make of himself whatever he wills to be, even a god. They are thus the spokesmen for progress, the kind of progress based on increase of material possessions and rugged individualism. And in this they are one with [14] such titans as Tamburlaine, Faustus, Richard Ill, Edmund, Lady Macbeth, and Milton’s Satan, who all express—before coming to tragic awareness—the optimistic Ren. view: [quotes PL 1.254–55]. We cannot help being moved by the power of such a belief, and a comic figure such as Volpone, as well as a defiant Satan thundering from the depths of hell, has a magnificence about him, a gusto for experience and a turbulent vitality that is attractive.” [Kernan supports his argument via Pico della Mirandola’s Oration on the Dignity of Man (1486).]  

[15] “The freedom of will which this passage celebrates so joyfully is, of course, orthodox Christian doctrine, but Pico gives man a great deal more freedom in choosing his own ends—‘the maker and molder
of thyself”—than had ever been allowed. And the Catholic Church condemned as heretical the theses which Pico proposed to argue in 1487 and for which the Oration was intended as a preface. This passage, though Pico would surely have objected, would have been acclaimed by Volpone and Mosca as an exact statement of their own beliefs in man’s limitlessness; but J held more traditional views than either Pico or the characters in Volp.

Donaldson (1985 [xvi–xvii]) discusses the lead characters as masters of impersonation, and representatives of J’s dramatic methods: “Volpone and Mosca purloin identities as coolly as they purloin property. [...] An older generation of critics thought J’s characters to be fixed and simple. In fact his major characters are quite giddilying complex; their ‘real’ identity—what remains when they have stopped playing— is always [xvii] in doubt. [...] The impersonations ... are both like and unlike those more serious impersonations which J himself practises throughout his work. They are parodies of a higher art, ‘fox-like thefts’ whose ultimate aim is further theft. At a deeper level, perhaps, there may be a partial affinity between J’s own practices and those of the illusionists and confidence men whom he creates. The central aim and activity of theatre is, after all, impersonation....”

McDonald (1988 [91]): “After Poet the ideal world disappears from Jonsonian drama, at least explicitly, and the playwright devotes himself to the world as it is. [92] Accordingly, the virtuous surrogates like Horace and Crites vanish too. The artists become the great con-men, Volpone and Mosca....”

Lewis (1989 [49–50]): “In J’s Volp, shared humor unites social groups while the collapse of shared humor leads to or emphasizes their disintegration. At the outset, Mosca and his master are joined in cunning wit against ... greedy potential heirs to the supposedly dying Volpone.... [50] As early as the opening of act 3, however, Mosca begins to declare his growing self-love or admiration, a feeling that will, when occasion presents itself, move him away from Volpone. [...] This trap, of course, snaps back at both fox and fly. Mosca and Volpone are destroyed not so much by their external foes, who are corrupt and divided, but by their own failure to continue working together, a failure most clearly seen in the way their joking grows apart.”

McDonald (1988 [106]): “... the histrionic gifts [Volpone] shares with Mosca constitute another route of imaginative escape into other, better realms: [quotes 2144–50]. [107] Even the theatrical transformation of himself into a dying man is an ironic avenue to power and distinction: “I gaine / No common way.” Such visions of heaven, earthly and otherwise, represent J’s most effective dramatic means of presenting the wholesome and poisonous fruits of the human fancy and will.”

Kernan (1962 [12–13]): “Volpone’s belief in the powers of acting appears most clearly in his sensuous and passionate temptation of Celia, one of the best-known speeches in Ren. drama. His imagination runs riot as he pictures for her the incredible wealth they will enjoy and the sensual pleasure they will share, if only she will submit to him. All the world will be plundered to supply them with a moment’s delight, a jewel, a rare dish, a luxurious bath; and then they will pass on to the greatest of pleasures, love: [quotes 2144–53]. His appetite for infinite variety and his fertile imagination hurry him...
onward to describe even more shapes which she will assume to avoid satiety: Persian, Turk, courtesan, 'quick negro,' 'cold Russian;' and he will 'meet' her, [quotes 2158–62]. The action discernible in these lines is the action of human genius as Volpone understands it: to 'flow' by means of acting, to [13] change shapes from mere man to the immortal gods—Jove, Mars, Erycine—and thus enjoy endless pleasure and endless change."

DUTTON (1983 [66–67]): “Like Milton’s Satan, Volpone has the makings of greatness in the true Renaissance manner; but his positive qualities have been perverted and misapplied in the service of a kind of self-worship. His besetting sin is nothing as mean as avarice or the lust for gold [quotes 421–23]. He has an image of his own greatness, seeing himself as a kind of god, and he is determined to live up to it; his sin is really pride. Therein, of course, lies his blindness to the threat that Mosca poses—he is too proud to acknowledge the competition from his own parasite—and also his final determination to suffer at the hands of the Court rather than allow his parasite the satisfaction of getting the better of him; he may suffer more physical punishment this way, but it will be easier on his ego. There is a kind of grandeur even in that gesture, not taking the easy and sensible way out. [...] Nevertheless, there is magnificence, even generosity, about Volpone’s image of himself, which cannot but compare favorably with the mean, grasping, jealous and slow-witted suitors whom he dupes. It is this which makes Volp such a disconcerting play, since all the moral judgments which J keeps insisting that we make seem bound to be relative, partial, less than satisfactory.”

MCDONALD (1988 [113]): “Volpone illustrates better than any other Jonsonian figure this mixture of insight and blindness, of earthy smarts and high-flown imagination. The temptation among critics and directors to consider him a tragic figure implies yet another link with Sh.’s tragic protagonists. He shares with them, as with Face, an amour propre that gives him absolute faith in his own judgment and an immensity of will that proscribes compromise.”

[116] “Volpone’s insistence upon the supremacy of his wit ... is characteristic of all the Jonsonian rogues. Their capacity for being all things to all men is central to their hubristic view of themselves and their world, and it is the one value they will never alter or compromise.”

[121] “[T]he idealism of characters like Volpone makes them resemble the Shakespearean idealists, and they resemble the villains in that the action depends upon their ability to identify, exploit, and shatter the unrealistic hopes of others. In Sh. and in J, the agents of disillusion are, above all, rationalist, clear-eyed individualists who comprehend and seek to profit from vain imaginings.”

[126] “[J] is equally ironic about Volpone’s inflated self-conception: the fox imagines himself as a kind of superman, a being exempt from the constraints of mortality and superior to his earthbound clients.”

MICKEL (1999 [119]): “… a clearer understanding may be gained if the growth of the antimasque is considered in conjunction with J’s satirical comedies. [...] Although the characters in later comic plays such as Volp and Aich are ‘humorous,’ they are more than mere symbol. The plurality of character and plot, and even the overplotting of these plays allows greater scope for alternative readings.”
Yamada (2000 [69]): “the attempt to compare oneself to the gods would have unmistakably reminded the sharper reader of the tragic ends of Tamburlaine and Dr Faustus, or their caricatures—Volpone and Epicure Mammon.”

Lunney (2001 [68]): “There was no inevitability about the arrival of the ‘debatable’ character. Most characters after 1585 were merely more ‘complicated.’ As a rule, the figures on stage grew more various in kind, more distinctively ‘individual,’ more individually complicated than the characters of the late morality. But this multiplication of traits did not necessarily make a character more ‘debatable.’ We learn a great deal about Richard and Hieronymo, or for that matter Tamburlaine and Barabas. They are more interesting, satisfying, and entertaining than any figures on stage before them. Yet we also remain in little doubt about their ‘characters’ and motives. We consider the meaning of what they do (what, that is, their deeds exemplify) rather than the nature of how they ‘are.’ The same response applies to the many richly elaborated or overdetermined characters in later plays (J’s Volpone is but one instance): our interest in them remains primarily ethical, not psychological. Complication was the dominant trend in the late sixteenth-century drama, but it led to Volpone rather than Hamlet.”

For commentary directly related to Volpone’s character within particular scenes, rf. app. Dramatic Structure and Technique, esp. “Major Scenes.”

b) Mosca

Cumberland (1788 [4:151–52]): “… in this finished portrait J may throw the gauntlet to the greatest masters of antiquity; the character is of classic origin; it is found with the contemporaries of Aristophanes, though not in any comedy of his now existing; the Middle Dramatists seem to have handled it very frequently, and in the New Comedy it rarely failed to find a place; Plautus has it again and again, but the aggregate merit of all his Parasites will not weigh in the scale against this single Fly of our poet.”

Symonds (1886 [72]): “Mosca is the Fox’s right hand. Without him Volpone’s schemes would be impracticable; and the ruin, which comes upon him in the end, is due to his habit of regarding this devil of roguery as a second self. In Mosca J paints a monumental portrait of the parasite, as he may possibly have existed at the worst courts in the most debased epochs of civilisation. Plausible, ingenious, pliant to his master’s whims, loving evil for its own sake, Mosca glides through the dangerous and complicated circumstances of their common plots with the suppleness and quickness of a serpent. But when he sees the way to build up his own fortunes on Volpone’s downfall, he turns round suddenly, implacably, upon his patron. With the same cold cynicism which he had used against Corbaccio to tickle the Fox’s fancy, he now lays his fox-trap.”

Holt (1905b [165–66]): “J owes his conception of Mosca’s character not to the parasite of the Lat. comedies, but to the tradition of the Eng. stage, which had developed a type of a different kind, though called by the same name. And there is no doubt in my mind that J recognized this difference when he put these words in Mosca’s mouth: [quotes 1615–23]. Now this description of what Mosca does not mean by the parasite is exactly what Plautus and Terence did mean by the name. To Mosca’s mind he himself, a
parasite, is an example of: [quotes 1324-30]. How different this conception is from those miserable, fawning, half-starved creatures who haunt the plays of Plautus and Terence under the same name of Parasite, and whose sole end and highest ideal is a good dinner! Mosca follows the Eng. tradition in combining with this ideal a rare genius for strategy and wickedness. The ancestor [166] of the Eng. parasite is Matthew Merrigreek of Rolster Doister, originally intended, in all probability, to be modelled strictly on classical lines, but as a matter of fact partaking more of the nature of the Lat. slave than of the Lat. parasite. Readers of the classical comedies will remember that inevitable slave, often apparently the only character of ordinary intelligence in the whole cast; whom master and master’s friends find an ever ready help in necessity; to whom all business, public or private, is entrusted; the go-between on all occasions; and finally the deus ex machina by whom all the tangled threads of the plot are separated and arranged. J, impregnated as he was with the classics, could not follow the varying Eng. tradition without a kind of protest that he realized the name parasite was here applied to a character not drawn on conventionally classical lines. He made his protest by putting into the mouth of Mosca a careful definition of the difference between the parasite of classical convention and himself, the former a mere appetite, himself joining to that a rare genius for knavery.”

KERNAN (1962 [13]): “Mosca is not so flamboyant as Volpone, but the achievements of his acting put Volpone to shame: [quotes 1606–8]. But as he warms to the praise of his own acting, the ability to skip out of his skin becomes a minor accomplishment, for he feels that [quotes 1624–30]. Here is a man altogether freed by his ability to act from the limitations reality imposes on ordinary men! Not only can he be anything he wishes, he can be several persons in several places at once!”

DUTTON (1983 [64–65]), regarding Mosca’s staging of the interlude for Volpone, observes that “it is the first opportunity that an alert audience has to spot that Mosca is not the loyal and unquestioning lieutenant that he pretends to be. He too is an actor, though more subdued in style than his master; Volpone only recognizes when it is too late that he has failed throughout to appreciate his parasite’s long-running performance—a fatal lapse of attention which begins here, with his failure to appreciate the shrewd character assessment (and contempt?) that has gone into this effort to entertain him....”

MCDONALD (1988 [116]): “It may seem inappropriate to describe as intransigent those great Jonsonian intriguers who thrive by means of their protean talents. Adaptability—here a wicked sprezzatura—is the main subject of Mosca’s boast in his famous encomium to the genuine Parasite [quotes 1627–30]. Ironically, however, flexibility is the one point on which the schemer is dogmatic.”

[126] “Although Mosca is properly differential to the high priest in the opening scene, he too thinks of himself in romantic terms.... Mosca prides himself on his uniqueness ... [quotes 1609–10]. He thinks of himself as something of a wizard specializing in a ‘mysterie,’ but his talent of buzzing through the air is one that shares ... with his namesake, the fly. The magician is a member of a lower order, an insect.”

MICKEL (1999 [80]) notes that Mosca shares with Sejanus “an unbridled delight in his apparently more than human capacities.”

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2. The Legacy Hunters: Corvino, Corbaccio, and Voltore

General Comments

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:151]): "The characters of the Hare dipetes, depicted under the titles of birds of prey, Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino, are warmly coloured, happily contrasted, and faithfully supported from the outset to the end."

ANON (1818 [193]): "Avarice is the predominant vice of all the Hare dipetes; but how differently does it operate on each! It is said of one of Bunbury's drawings, in which a number of hats are hanging round a public room, that we might easily appropriate each to its respective owner's head. In like manner we defy the most unobservant reader to mismatch a single speech of Voltore, Corbaccio, or Corvino; or to confound the lesser passions, which minister to their ruling principle. 'Facies hic omnibus una est, / At diversa tamen.'" [Ovid, Met 2.13–14: "facies non omnibus una, / non diversa tamen" ("They have not all the same appearance, and yet not altogether different" [Miller, trans., 1:61]).]

DUTTON (1983 [64–65]): "The men [Volpone] dupes into believing that he will leave them his fortune are in this sense, an audience—one that enjoys his act all to readily and uncritically. ... The 'audiences' within Volp consistently distort what they see into what they want to see, and act accordingly; I challenges us to do better.”

DUTTON (1983 [67]): they "all seem far more culpable and despicable than does Volpone in duping them."

a) Corvino

Gifford (1816 [3:249n]), in reference to 1961ff.: "This is excellent after what we had from him [ref. 1430ff.]. The genius and skill with which J has conceived and conducted the extraordinary vicious character, are altogether surprising."

SYMONDS (1886): [78] "He [i.e. Corvino] is the most contemptible and reckless of the set, swallowing any bait, committing himself to plans for Volpone's murder more openly than Corbaccio, ready, as we shall see, to merge his ruling passion of jealousy and to drown his honour in the madness of his gold-lust. [78] Corvino, whom J has made a gross and brutal fellow in the prime of vulgar manhood, in order to contrast him with the lean greediness of Voltore and Corbaccio's senile delirium of covetousness...."

DUTTON (1983 [64–65]): "Even Corvino is convinced by the most transparent of charades into transforming himself from a jealous husband to a willing pimp."

DESSEN (1986 [136]) “... In performance, the moral plays may have seemed less blatantly allegorical, a reminder that could narrow the gap that seems to separate them from later ‘realistic’ plays. [...] How different, then, would be the viewer's experience of an actor playing a merchant or usurer named Greediness, whose behavior is linked to the central thesis of the play, from that viewer’s experience of an actor playing Corvino ... whose behavior is also liked to J’s satiric thesis about gold and human values?"

b) Corbaccio
DENNIS (1695 [2:384]): “Corbaccio the Father of Bonario is expos’d for his Deafness, a Personal defect; which is contrary to the end of Comedy, Instruction. For personal defects cannot be amended; and the exposing such, can never Divert any but half-witted Men. It cannot fail to bring a thinking Man to reflect upon the Misery of Human Nature; and into what he may fall himself without any fault of his own.”

CONGREVE (1695 [179]) “Sometimes Personal Defects are misrepresented for Humours. I mean, sometimes Characters are barbarously exposed on the Stage, ridiculing Natural Deformities, Casual Defects in the Senses, and Infirmities of Age. Sure the Poet must both be very Ill-natur’d himself, and think his Audience so, when he proposes by shewing a Man Deform’d, or Deaf, or Blind, to give them an agreeable Entertainment; and hopes to raise their Mirth, by what is truly an object of Compassion. But much need not be said upon this Head to any body, especially to you, who in one of your Letters to me concerning Mr. Johnson’s Fox, have justly excepted against this Immoral part of Ridicule in Corbaccio’s Character; and there I must agree with you to blame him, whom otherwise I cannot enough admire, for his great Mastery of true Humour in Comedy.”

WHALLEY (1756 [2:294n]): “There never was a scene of avarice in the extremity of old age, better drawn than this of J’s.”

HURD (1753 [2:103]): “the humour of the dialogue is sometimes on the point of becoming inordinate, as may be seen in the pleasantry of Corbaccio’s mistakes through deafness, and in other instances.”

Gifford (1816 [3:192n]) adds to Whalley: “Nor ever so well. [Richard] Hurd (who had just been reading Congreve’s letters to Dennis) terms the humor of it ‘inordinate’; and blames J for sporting so freely with the infirmities of Corbaccio. I can see no occasion for this. If avarice be, in any case, a legitimate object of satire, surely it is eminently so when accompanied, as here, with age and infirmity. Bad passions become more odious in proportion as the motives for them are weakened; and gratuitous vice cannot be too indignantly exposed to reprehension.”

CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:499]): “This admirable letter of Congreve’s Concerning Humour in Comedy is absolutely buried from the world in The Select Works of Mr. John Dennis, 2 vols., 1718. It was Dennis who raised the objection, and Congreve replies that in this instance, ‘I must agree with you to blame, whom otherwise I cannot enough admire for his great Mastery of true Humour in Comedy.’”

SYMONDS (1886 [76]): “The Old Raven is a masterpiece of J’s dreadful art. Deaf, worn out with the diseases of extreme old age, he yet clings sordidly to the miserable shreds of life, and burdens his last days with detestable crimes for the sake of the gold he cannot carry with him beyond the tomb. [77]: Being far more deaf than Volpone, he [i.e. Corbaccio] stumbles into ludicrous mistakes of Mosca’s meaning, each of which is so contrived as to reveal his one absorbing preoccupation with the Fox’s inheritance. It is only by stimulating his jealousy of Voltore that the parasite brings him to lay down a heavy bag of cash as goodwill offering.”

REA (1919 [170–71]): “Whalley comments on this scene: ‘There never was a scene of avarice in the extremity of old age, better drawn than this of J’s.’ Gifford adds: ‘Nor ever so well. Hurd (who had just been reading Congreve’s letters to Dennis) terms the … reprehension.’”

419

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DONALDSON (1971 [133]): as “the idea of burial alive ... creates a certain frisson of mild horror. Much the same feeling, perhaps, is aroused by the figure of Corbaccio, the living dead man.... Such death’s-head figures as Corbaccio—loathsomely senile and decrepit—are no uncommon in the comedy of this period [cf. Dampit in Middleton’s A Trick to Catch the Old One].”

DUTTON (1983 [64]): “Corbaccio’s ‘deafness’ is symbolically appropriate here; it is typical of the inadequacies of most of the ‘audiences’ within the play, who do not examine the facts carefully but construe things as they want them to be, only becoming disturbed if they feel their wish-fulfillment is threatened. [Quotes 742–44.] Naturally, Corbaccio interprets every development in Volpone’s death-bed scenes in whatever way most flatters his won ego.”

c) Voltore

H&S (1925 [2:63]): “... the knowing advocate, is as blinded by greed and as easily gullled as the dull and deaf Corbaccio, and executes volte-faces when the cause requires it as shamefully as Corvino.”

CREASE (1978 [10]): “… is most alive when the lawyer, and is formidable when in his own element during the first trial. Yet as Volpone’s client, the lawyer is gullible and malleable as are Corbaccio and Corvino, and is hardly allowed by Mosca to get a word in. His intellect is so subdued by lust for gold that the edge of his professional scepticism is blunted.”

DUTTON (1983 [64]): “Voltore, who as a lawyer is supposed to be concerned with the ‘truth,’ is only capable of constructing whatever ‘truth’ appears to be in his own interest.”

Also see app. Major Scenes, “The First Court Scene.”

3. Bonario and Celia

General Comments

COLERIDGE (1815–1819; 1831 [12:3.180]): “Bonario and Celia should have been made in some way or other principals in the Plot—which the[y] might be, and the objects of Interest, without being made characters—in Novels the Person, in whose A A  you are most interested is often the least marke[d] character of the whole. If it were practicable to lessen the paramony of Volpone, a most delightful Comedy might be produced, Celia being the Ward or Niece instead of the Wife of Corvino, & Bonario her Lover—.”

MACCARTHY (1921 [57]): “After the third act, when even the two leagued rogues turned on each other with the ferocity of wildcats, I began to feel as parched as if I were in a sandstorm. I was dazzled and delighted, but the marrow of my humanity was scorched within me. All the characters, with the exception of a too docile wife and a too filial son, are what Carlyle would have called “unspeakably unexemplary mortals.””

[57–58] “Swinburne is of the opinion that ... the instinct of a true artist in J withheld him from allowing us even a momentary relation of half-sympathy or sympathetic understanding with these figures. I dispute that. I felt while watching the play that a greater artist would have done it, and also have made
Bonario and Celia something more than insipid dummies of virtue and brought them nearer the foreground."

[58] "... a delicious fresh rill of comedy might have been introduced had Celia been the child of Corvino and Bonario her lover. Their relation would have been as the shadow of a rock in a thirsty land. We should have been in better trim to welcome again rays of the scorching brazen sun of mockery which blazes without intermission above this swarm of scrambling, biting, kicking creatures."

COOK (1962 [41]): "It is important to notice how flat and wooden are the speeches of Celia and Bonario, contrasted with the ringing crescendi of Volpone.... Our attention is not to be diverted into romantic side issues."

DONALDSON (1971 [123–24]), in response to JACKSON (1968 [67]) and PARTRIDGE (1958 [91]): "[T]he essential issue would seem to be not the mere fact of a representation of Christian values in the play, but rather the quality and power which J gives to such representation. In this respect it is necessary to admit at once that Celia and Bonario play very subordinate roles in Volp ....; that both are solitary, and, on the whole, taciturn figures. [...] Moreover, Celia and Bonario rarely seem to speak to one another, or to work as allies in virtue, despite the fact that they stand side by side in the dock for so much of the play. Few other dramatists would have resisted the temptation to introduce a little romantic interest as some point."

[124] "How easy it to put things right in Volp! But it is part of the over-all severity of the play, its defiance of an expected comic pattern, that Jack hath not Jill, the avocatori simply sending Celia home to her father with a trebled dowry. [...] If, then, we want to say that Celia and Bonario represent Christian values, it is necessary to add that they represent these values in a way which suggests their frailty, solitariness, and relative impotence."

DUTTON (1983 [69–70]): "By contrast to the Would-bes, Celia and Bonario offer hope of something better than the destructive egoism that besets Venice—hope that Volpone's appeal can be resisted by positive qualities rather than incompetence. They have virtue, idealism and faith in a just providence; unfortunately, these are all qualities that the play undercuts with consistent irony. His rescue of her from the clutches of Volpone is the only selfless act in the whole play, but his derring-do oratory—[quotes 2192–93]—is ludicrously over-alliterative, revealing the whole episode as melodramatic make-believe in the grimmer reality of Volpone's Venice. Similarly, when in Court they are asked to name their witnesses, they reply: [quotes 2791–92]. Innocents indeed they are, and laughably out of place in this world. They bring to mind Milton's famous comment in his Areopagitica (1644): 'I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where the immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.'"

DUTTON (1983 [70–71]): "In the final scenes, these two praise heaven for the revelation of the villainy and their own delivery—Celia: [quotes 3436]; and Bonario [quotes 3634]—but this misses the point and only underlines their naivety: heaven had nothing to do with it. The evil characters may reveal and discredit each other, but the forces of virtue have little cause to congratulate either themselves or heaven at the end of this play. As in Sej, they are tried and found wanting; it is not enough, in this fallen world, merely to

421
look to you private virtue and trust heaven for the rest. This surely is the truth that J wishes to enforce on
his audience by not allowing Celia and Bonario to marry when it is all over. No doubt many would agree
with Coleridge that it would be nice if Celia were ‘the ward or niece instead of wife of Corvino, and
Bonario her lover, but throughout the play these characters have acted as ironic foils to the audience’s
comfortable hopes and illusions about how things will work out well in the end, and it is no part of J’s plan
to indulge such sentimental notions: neither they nor, perhaps, we have done enough to deserve such a
positive outcome.”

a) Bonario

DUTTON (1983 [70]): “Bonario—whose name means ‘good man’—has only youth as an excuse; for
him the pursuit of virtue means being a knight in shining armour—but it is a pursuit without ‘dust and
heat.’ Apart from carrying Celia away from a fate worse than death, he does not actually do anything in
virtue’s cause, and this is simply unrealistic in the face of the kind of deceit and corruption Volpone
represents. Such virtue cannot last long.”

b) Celia

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxix]): “... the part of Celia is accordingly one of the few pathetic passages in the
dramas of this master of Elegy.”

DONALDSON (1971 [123]): “Celia is mute at her first appearance in the play, as she throws her
handkerchief from her window to the supposed Scoto of Mantua—an odd act, perhaps, for a representative
of Christian values—and she is, to all intents and purposes, mute at her various appearances in the
Scrstone; J allows her only three, half-line exclamations in the final act. During her long scene with
Volpone in Act Three she is, for the most part silent; when she speaks it is usually in verse, which, put
beside that of Volpone’s lavish and intentive invitations, seems at once terse and lifeless: [quotes 2109–10].
Uttering, at infrequent intervals, curt ejaculations of this nature, Celia remains a curiously unlovable and
unexplorable figure; I doubt if one ever becomes as involved in her plight as one does in that of (say)
Isabella in Meas Meas or of Marina in Per.”

DUTTON (1983 [67–68]): “A further difficulty about judging [Volpone] lies in the fact that he may be
said to reveal as much corruption as he truly creates; even Celia is not totally innocent....”

[70] Dutton also notes that if Celia seems out of place in Volpone’s Venice, then “[t]here is some
excuse for Celia; she has indeed been restricted to a ‘cloistered virtue’ by her jealous husband, but we
notice just how fragile that is when she sees the mountebank Volpone from her window and lets her
handkerchief fall.”

McDONALD (1988 [127]) “I creates an action emphasizing the romantic origins of Volpone’s
posturing. Celia’s unapproachability makes her all the more desirable ... and she is locked away in a tower
by a sadistic guardian. Her conventionally romantic name which BERGERON (1986) thinks comes from
Spenser's House of Holiness, and her dropping her handkerchief from the window complete the parody of the romantic beloved.”

Other writers who have referred to or commented upon Celia, and her role as one of two female characters in *Volp*, include DUSINBERRE (1975 [110]).

4. The English Tourists

**General Comments**

DENNIS (1695 [2:384]) remarks that “the play has two Characters [i.e., Sir Politic Would-be and Peregrine], which have nothing to do with the design of it, which are to be look’d upon as Excrecencies.”

WARD (1875 [2:364]): “These personages <i.e., the Wouldbes> are of irresistibly comic force; but such is the hideous nature of much of the villainy in the play, that a robust digestion is required to go through the whole of it, in order to recognise the genuine power which it possesses.”

REA (1919 [xxviii]): “But if we look further into the true purpose of *Volp*, it will readily bee seen that the Would-bes form a very essential part of the play. They represent the effect of It. life and ideals on Eng. men and women.”

BARISH (1953 [83]): “… Sir Politic and Lady Would-be caricature the actors of the main plot.”

[S] “Sir Pol] and Lady Would-be, the only survivors of earlier humor characters, are <at the conclusion of the subplot> now ‘out of their humor,’ purged of their imitative folly by the strong medicine of ridicule.”

DUTTON (1983 [68-69]) acknowledges Barish, but observes how the Would-bes “are often thought of as something as a diversion from [the main action] and are often left out of modern performances altogether. This is surely a mistake; the Would-bes are not out of place in Volpone’s Venice, merely out of their depths, and in so being they offer us a usefully different perspective on it. Unlike Celia and Bonario, who do their best to opt out of the pervasive corruption, Sir Pol and his lady have come expressly to become a part of it, but with conspicuous lack of success. We never see the courtesans whom she has come to ape or the political intriguers who he emulates, but we instinctively know that they do it with so much more style and conviction than the Would-bes. They are very much what their name proclaims them to be, anxious to achieve what they perceive to be true sophistication but incapable of doing so. They are amateur in a world of professionals—he with his endless gullibility, whether it be about mountebanks or about ‘plots,’ and she with her mindless ‘free-thinking,’ about anything from philosophy to sex. This is why we see them as essentially comic characters in a comedy short on easy laughter; her ‘free-thinking’ appears irrelevant in a world where, morally, anything goes already, and his political intrigues are ludicrously inept in a Venice where even parasites betray their masters: he deserves to end up, pathetically crawling under a turtle-shell. The problem with the Would-bes is that they are so *English*. Therein lies J’s little joke, and his challenge to his audience. The English are notorious for their contempt of foreigners—a trait which J was to mock again in the use of the Spanish disguise in *Alch*—and it would be only too easy to dismiss the corruption of Volpone’s Venice as something typically foreign: nothing to do with us. The Would-bes even
seem to reinforce that possibility, with their laughable failure to achieve the depths of Venetian decadence. But it is a very two-edged failure; they were trying anyway (no faulting their enthusiasm) and there is nothing greatly reassuring about the fact that it was only incompetence which stopped them from being more successfully corrupt than they were. The fact is that the Would-bes represent the thin edge of the wedge that leads to the full-blown corruption of Volpone’s Venice; their follies only seem inconsiderable by contrast with the blatant vices all around them. It is tempting simply to laugh them off, but that would be to ignore the very real threat that such characters represent, for all their incompetence. This is surely one reason why I gave Pol a constant companion....” But while Peregrine’s “comments break directly through the dramatic illusions, reminding the audience on the one hand that this is only a play, but on the other hand that it has some kind of resemblance to real life (most obviously in the case of the Would-bes) and that it is their duty to assess it. In assessing it, we are also required to judge the moral culpability of the characters for their actions, and we should not exonerate the Would-bes simply because they are so familiar.”

McDonald (1988 [127–28]): “[The Would-bes’] surname encourages us to connect their posturing with that of the chief characters, and they also may be profitably seen as parodies of romantic figures. Lady Would-be travels with a squire and ladies-in-waiting. She claims acquaintance with It. romantic literature.... She studies art and music and prides herself on her uncommon sensitivity.... [128] Her husband is equally self-deluded.”

a) Sir Politic Would-Be

Rea (1919 [xxxiii]): “It is singular that no one seems to have noted that Sir Pol is one of the birds of the play; he is no vulture, raven, crow, but merely the chattering poll-parrot.”

H&S (1925 [65]): “a pleasant variation of [J’s] ‘projector type.”

H&S (1950 [9:687]) reproduce the following allusions to Sir Pol: “Withers, Faire-Virtue (1622 [A4]), Prol., nominally by the publisher: ‘I entreated him [i.e., Withers] to explain his meaning, in certaine obscure passages. But, he told me, how that were to take away the employment of his Interpreters. Whereas, he would purposely, leave somewhat remaining doubtfull, to see, what Sir Politicke Would-bee, and his Companions, could picke out of it.’ Jasper Mayne to Francis Cheynell in A Sermon against False Prophets Vindicated (1647 [21]): ‘Here, Sir, methinks, being a Poet, I see a piece of Ben Johnson’s best Comedy, the Fox, presented to me; that, you, a Politique Would-be the second, sheltring [sic] your self under a capacious Tortoise-shel.’ Saint-Evremond wrote a comedy Sir Politick Would-be, “a la manière Anglois” (Oeuvres Meslees [1709], 1:251–348), with the scene at Venice. For a speech borrowed from Volpe, see [note] on 4.1 [H&S 9:721–22].”

Bentley (1945 [1:127]), regarding the inordinate number of allusions to such a minor character as Sir Politic Would-Be: “... one is a bit puzzled at first glance by the vogue of Sir Politic Would-Be. The explanation is probably similar to that for Doll Common: the name came to be used as a generic one for pretenders to political knowledge.”

Barish (1953 [83–84]): “... Sir Politic and Lady Would-be caricature the actors of the main plot. Sir Pol figures as a comic distortion of Volpone. As his name implies, he is the would-be politician, the
speculator *manqué*, the unsuccessful enterpriser. Volpone, by contrast, is the real politician, the successful enterpriser, whose every stratagem succeeds almost beyond expectation. Sir Pol, like Volpone, is infatuated with his own ingenuity, and like Volpone he nurses his get-rich schemes; but none of these ever progresses beyond the talking stage."

**Barish (1960 [187]):** "Sir Politic Would-be differs from many of J's previous fools in that while he sedulously apes Venetian customs, he does not, in his speech, mimic a language other than his own, nor does the texture of his speech in itself imply falsity. In the mountebank scene, he falls victim to a false rhetoric, but he is not the perpetrator of it."

**McDonald (1988 [112]):** "The hapless Sir Pol boasts of exceptional perspicacity: the whale in the Thames is a 'project' 'either sent from Spaine, or the Arch-dukes! / Spinola's whale' [1066–67]; Mas Stone, the fool, was 'one of the most dangerous heads / Living within the state' [1081–82]; the It. mountebanks 'are the onely-knowing men of Europe!' [1150]. Considering himself a man 'of wisdom and of reach,' Sir Pol plays Polonius to Volpone's Hamlet, a parodic embodiment of the central figure."


**b) Lady Would-Be**

Regarding her actions in 4.6, *Whalley* (1756 [2:374–75n]) writes: "There never was a character supported with more propriety, than this of Lady Would-be. She comes into the court in all the violence of passion, and having vented her rage in a hasty epithet or two, she relapses into her usual formality, and begins to compliment the judges. Tired with her breeding and her eloquence, they are obliged not to give her a reply, and proceed to the examination of the other parties. The preceding scene is a great instance of the power of avarice, when the poet brings the father and the husband, to bear testimony against the son and the wife"; repr. *Gifford* (1816 [287–88n]).

**H&S (1925 [2:65]):** "an admirable specimen of the 17th-c. bluestocking, more comic in herself and employed to more genuinely comic purpose than the Collegiate Ladies of the next play <i.e., SilWom>, which her merciless loquacity at the expense of Volpone in another way anticipates."

**Van den Berg** (1987 [42]) notes J's disdain for rhyming sonneteers: "Lady Would-Be, an Englishwoman on the loose in Volpone’s Venice, predictably disregards such matters of poetic craft and judges Petrarch ‘passionate’ in her comic summary of Italian literature [1807]. H&S conclude that the rigidity, not the intimacy, of the sonnet form offended Jonson, and that Petrarch was less at fault than his extravagant imitators." [H&S (1925 [2:392–93]) note that "it was the rigidity, not the intricacy, of the sonnet form which offended him. The Sonnet had moreover, during its brief but enormous vogue in England, afforded a privileged asylum to the extravagances and inflations of style which Jonson most abhorred."]

**Coren** (2001 [237–38]): "[J] stages in the same play the grotesque Lady Would-Be who reads such writers as Aretine, and he makes her reading a marker of the obtuse sexual license of the Englishwoman

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with scholarly pretensions. Dramatic constructions of women do not give us evidence of actual women's reading, reciting, or singing practice, any more than female persona poems represent women's voices."

**Lady Would-Be and Epigram 62**

_Dutton_ (1983 [147]) notes that the woman described in _J_’s poem “is a lady of the Court, dedicated to its pleasures rather than the duties and responsibilities of motherhood, which she wards off with abortion-inducing drugs; she seems irrelevant in this world of bad reading, spies and political reputations, except as a very indirect comment on the unnatural moral climate. A Lady Would-be does occur elsewhere in the 1616 folio, however, and we should not ignore the possibility that _J_ is here suggesting a link between these poems and that other context, _Volp._”

**Peregrine**

_Dennis_ (1695 [2:384]) remarks that “the play has two Characters [i.e., Sir Politic Would-Be and Peregrine], which have nothing to do with the design of it, which are to be look’d upon as Excrecencies.”

_Dutton_ (1983 [68–69]): “Peregrine is a lineal descendant of Asper, Crites and Horace, a man of real wit and judgment (though perhaps a certain arrogance) who is allowed to share his insights with the audience. _J_ eschews the use of such a character in the main action of _Volp_, where the moral ambiguities must speak for themselves, but with Sir Pol Peregrine is able to remind the audience directly of their responsibilities as ‘understanders’ [quotes 1072–76]. Such comments break directly through the dramatic illusions, reminding the audience on the one hand that this is only a play, but on the other hand that it has _some_ kind of resemblance to real life (most obviously in the case of the Would-bes) and that it is their duty to assess it. In assessing it, we are also required to judge the moral culpability of the characters for their actions, and we should not exonerate the Would-bes simply because they are _so familiar._”

_Harp_ (2001 [26n]) notes that Peregrine’s innuendo concerning how Lady Would-Be receives her training from Venice’s courtesans [ref. 1042–45] “identifies his character.”

5. The Freaks

**General Comments**

_Slights_ (1985 [370]): “We can never be quite sure who Volpone’s three freaks are: they have no clear-cut identities apart from the roles they play in the embedded fable of metempsychosis.”

_Procter_ (1989 [1:439]): “although it was not unusual in the Ren. to find such unfortunates in the courts and houses of great men, their presence points to Volpone’s pleasure in perversions of nature.”

_Parker_ (1999 [95n]): “The latter remark must have appealed specially to the audiences of Oxford and Cambridge, and the learned parody and dense classical references of the interlude make it, in fact, not unlike many University burlesques. For the Ren. taste for entertainment by the deformed, see Constant Mic, _La Commedia dell’Arte_ (187): “The Duke of Mantua wished to see a play that was put on with particular success by the Gelosi company, in which all the characters were humpbacked. His highness laughed a great
deal and took great pleasure in the spectacle....' King James also favoured 'antick dances' for his court entertainment.

a) Nano

DUTTON (1983 [148–51]): “First, and on stage most visually effective, is the zany dwarf, Nano; he is the most prominent of the three unnatural ‘bastards’ of Volpone, taking the main role in the burlesque descent of Pythagoras’ soul, helping Volpone in the mountebank scene [1139ff.], claiming ‘precedency’ [1717] over his two fellows in the second recitation [1714–31] and being generally involved in the scenes with Lady Would-be.”

DUTTON (1983 [148–51]) analyzes the possibly wider satiric function of this otherwise minor character: “The mountebank scene also offers considerable scope for extempore parodic pointing; Nano is certainly there—Volpone’s first words, ‘Mount, zany’ [1169] draw attention to him, and he later addresses him as ‘Zan Fritada’ [1233]—but he says nothing. His only given function is to sing the two songs—but it would be unlike a true zany to stand quietly by while other characters perform. One significant feature of this scene is that it is the only occasion on which Volpone and Sir Politic Would-be are on stage together—the latter a credulous believer in everything Volpone says; we may suspect that Nano directs his attentions to him. The evidence for this comes in a later scene, when Mosca ‘rescues’ Volpone from the clutches of Lady Would-be by telling her (falsely, as it happens) that her husband is consorting with ‘the most cunning courtesan, of Venice’ [1895]. She rushes out in a fit of jealousy, only to return immediately, to ask which way they were heading and to add, rather mysteriously: ‘I pray you lend me your dwarf’ [1904]. Thus Nano is present when she confronts her husband and the supposed courtesan [2453ff.] but in fact he does nothing; he has only one more or less superfluous line [2457] and then appears to take no further part in the proceedings, despite the care which J has taken to have him there. As in the mountebank scene, the likeliest explanation is J want him there to ‘ape’ Sir Pol.”

Also see app. Genre, s.v. “Personal Satire.”

6. Minor Characters

a) The Avocatori

General Comments

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:154–55]) “The judgment pronounced upon the criminals in the conclusion of the play is so just and solemn, that I must think the poet has made a wanton breach of character and gained but a sorry jest by the bargain, when he violates the dignity of his court judges by making one of them [i.e., 4 Avocatore] so abject in his flattery to the Parasite upon the idea of matching him with his daughter, when he hears that Volpone has made him his heir; but this is an objection, that lies [155] within the compass of two short lines, spoken aside from the bench [i.e., 3576–77 (+ 3588)], and may easily be remedied by their omission in representation; it is one only, and that a very slight one, amongst those venial blemishes—quias incuria fudit” [Horace, Ars Poet 352: “… which a careless hand has let drop” (Fairclough, trans., 479)].
SYMONDS (1886 [85]): “The judges take the dispute into their own hands, and order Volpone to be whipped, that he may bear himself discreetly to a gentleman in Mosca position. Up to the last, thus J scourged society’s adulation of wealth; for here are the Venetian officers of justice bending before an enriched parasite.”

JOHANSSON (1967 [48]): “The safest way for a playwright to attack justices was … to lay the scene in another country. That is what J does in Volp, where the servility of the judges before Mosca is nauseating.”

DONALDSON (1971 [122]): “Justice’ in Volp appears not as a heavenly illumination, a blinding abstraction, but in the too human forms of the devious, blundering, and (it must be said) often insipid avocatori of Venice.”

DUTTON (1983 [71]): “… [T]he Court of Avocatori that passes judgment is hardly above suspicion itself. At one stage, one of them sizes up Mosca as a potential son-in-law: [quotes 3576–77], while all of them are more concerned at the end of the day to preserve social distinctions rather than mete out strict justice. So Mosca suffers the more severely of the villains, not because he was more evil, but for having: [quotes 3648–50]—while Volpone, by [quotes 3656–57].”

D. Dramatic Structure and Technique

1. Setting

a) Venice

WHALLEY (1756 [1:xiii–xv]): “There are only two comedies of J, where the scene is laid abroad, the Poet and the Fox.” [xiv] “In the design of Volp, the poet had a more generous design in view; and by his admirable execution of that design, he hath left posterity a lasting monument of his genius and art. And here he was induced, for the sake of probability, and to give lively and strong colouring to his draught, to fix on Venice for the scene of his drama. By this choice he gained an opening for the introduction of a domestic character, which, placed upon a middle ground, gratified his favourite passion of displaying a particular folly of his age and nation; [xv] for as the scene was laid abroad, he had the inviting opportunity in the character of Sir Politic Would-be, to expose the reigning affectation of knowing men and manners; when the youth of the kingdom were sent, in quest of policy and knowledge, to poison their faith and morals, by the acquisition of Italian atheism and Italian deceit.”

GIFFORD (1816 [1:xxxv–xxxvi]), with the quarto version of EMI, J “placed his scene in Italy, <but drew> all his incidents from his own country. It must be added to his praise, that he did not entirely neglect the decorum of [xxxvi] place, even in this performance: but there was yet too much of Eng. manners, and the reformation of the piece was therefore well-timed and judicious. J fell into no subsequent incongruities of this kind, for the Fox is without any tincture of foreign customs, and his two tragedies are chastly Roman.”

WARD (1875 [2:362–63]): “The scene of the play, moreover, is laid in Italy—at Venice, a city whose name is associated through a succession of [363] centuries with the notion of dark intrigue. Yet at the same
time the types introduced are likewise those of vices unhappily common, under certain conditions, to humanity at large, while so far as they are types of manners, they may be said to belong to the age of their presentation rather than to the country with which they are identified."

SYMonds (1886 [71–73]): "Right instinct led J to lay the scene in Venice and to make his hero a Magnifico of the Republic." [72] "The exorbitances and eccentricities of evil he has chosen to depict, would have gained but little credence if the action had taken place in London. But the sensualities of Aretino, the craft of Machiavelli, the diabolical ingenuity of Italian despots, lent verisimilitude to his picture—'that most vivid picture,' in Taine's (1869) absurd [73] enthusiastic language, 'of manners of the century, where wicked covetousness display themselves in their full beauty, where sensuality, cruelty, lust for gold, and the impudicity of vice develop a sinister and splendid poetry, worthy of some Bacchanalian piece by Titian.'"

REA (1919 [xxviii–xxx]): "It is not an accident that the scene is laid at Venice, nor is the author in this merely following the fashion of the day. On the contrary, the chief purpose of the play is point out the dangers of the It. influence, and more especially of the Venetian. To J, Venice represented, with its [xxix] wealth and splendor, a very real menace. Not only in religion, but in morals and literature, it seemed to him to stand for those things that he, with his sturdy common-sense, hated most—the fantastic, the extravagant, and the immoral. [...] The Italianate Englishman, as he saw him in Sir Henry Wotton and others, seemed to represent an alarming tendency in contemporary Eng. life. [...] It is noteworthy that J's dislike of all things Italian became so great that it resulted in the rewriting of EM; and never after the time of Volp did he lay the scene of one of his plays in Italy, in spite of the great popularity of such plays."

H&S (1925 [2:64]): "Jonson had painted in Puntarvolo the absurdities of English travellers at home; his Venetian scene here provided an opening hard to resist for exhibiting the fantastic tricks they played in the foreign cities of their resort, and nowhere more extravagantly than in Venice."

KERNAN (1962 [207]): "In J's time, Venice was known not only for its connection with trade but also for its wealth, luxury, sophistication, and political cunning. The first act of Oth provides an excellent picture of what Venice meant to the Ren. Englishman."

DUTTON (1983 [26]): "In [J's] finest works, the balance between the characters and their setting—Volpore's Venice ...—is so handled that it helps us not only to judge individual follies and vices but also to see each one, perhaps relatively harmless in itself, as part of a wider malaise, a corporate insanity."

[150] "[Venice's] status as, in effect, middle ground in the struggle between the Protestants and the Catholics in the Counter-Reformation is also undoubtedly significant. The city was Catholic but maintained its independence of the Papacy and of other Catholic powers to such an extent that Sir Henry Wotton, an English ambassador at this time, even entertained hopes of its turning Protestant. It is indicative of this equivocal position that, when J wanted to find the Catholic priest for the Privy Council, he first approached the chaplain of the Venetian ambassador, presumably expecting a sympathetic response; no one seems to have connected this fact with the choice of Venice as the setting of the play he had finished writing two or three month later. It is the city's role as a centre of Counter-Reformation politics that makes it so attractive..."
to Sir Politic Would-be. And there can be no doubt that the most significant figure directing England’s role in the Counter-Reformation was the Earl of Salisbury.” For further commentary related to Wotton and Cecil, cf. app. Characters, s.v. “Sir Politic Would-be” and “Nano” respectively, and app. Genre, s.v. “Personal Satire.”

STEGGLE (1998 [101]): “… Volp deals in ideal types, in a Venice whose physical and ethical difference from London is harped upon within the play.”

b) Volpone’s Household

KERNAN (1962 [2–3]): “The brave new world begins in the house of Volpone, where life is given over to voluptuousness, freedom, and cunning; and these values create a new [3] type of household. Here there is no wife, child, parent, ally, or servant, only grotesque relationships based on gold. Master and servant are confederated to cheat the world, and one another if possible; dwarf, eunuch, and hermaphrodite are said to be the unacknowledged bastards of the householder, begotten only for pleasure and used only for entertainment. To this house come ‘friends’ mouthing concern for the supposedly sick Volpone but in reality longing only for his death and willing to hasten it with poison or suffocation, So they may inherit his fortune. For Volpone these friends and fellow Venetians are no more than fools who can be coined ‘into profit.’ From this golden center the infection spreads outward, recreating the world beyond. In hopes of fortune Corbaccio disinherits his son, Corvino is willing to whore his wife, Lady Wouldbe offers her virtue, and Voltore, who for pennies would ‘plead against his Maker,’ dishonours his profession.”

Duncan (1970 [27]): “The allusions to Lucian and Erasmus in 1.2 have the important function of establishing the basis of the sense of humour in Volpone’s household, the peculiarly uncomfortable kind of humour to which, in its more superficially appealing aspects, we are soon to capitulate.”

RIGGS (1989 [136]): “Volpone worships gold because it holds the promise of unlimited self-gratification: [quotes 461–72]. The distinctive feature of this household is the absence of any familial ties whatsoever. […] The Fox, who has neither wife, parent, child, nor ally, takes a perverse delight in the ruination of other men’s families.”

2. Plot

General Comments

WARD (1875 [2:362]): “In Volp J shows himself to have overcome the tendency noticeable in most of the comedies previously mentioned. […] It is probable that the general influence of It. examples had helped to impress upon J the importance of an effective plot even in a comedy more especially concerned with the delineation of character.”

SYMonds (1886 [86–87]): “What most excites admiration in Volp is the sustained vigour of the action, and the ingenuity of the fable. Few extant plays exhibit so closely connected an intrigue. The mechanic force and versatility of invention which are lavished on the framework of this comedy suffice to carry the reader or spectator onward to its unforeseen conclusion. Yet some objections may be taken to the plot. As
Dryden first pointed out, the unity of action is not well preserved; one motive being exhausted at the end of act 4, 'the second forced from it in act 5.' [...] In all other respects, the use which J made of base passions as the cords of human conduct in this drama may be looked upon as masterly; and the skill with which he has woven them into a comic net of serried strength is indubitable. The spectacle, alas! is too grisly. Nature rebels against it. We do not easily or willingly believe that men and women are such as J painted them. We rise from the study of Volp, as we do from that of some of Balzac's masterpieces, with the sense that all these human reptiles, true enough in their main points to life, yet over-fattened in the vast slime of the poet's brain, represent actual humanity less than they personate ideals, which the potent intellect, brooding upon one vice of man's frail being, has diversified into a score of splendidly imagined specimens.

**HERFORD** (1893–95 [xxx]): “Both Volp and SilWom failed to entirely realise the Jonsonian ideal of comedy, as an ‘imitation of life’; the one through the archaism, the other through the triviality, of its central motive.”

**ELIOT** (1919 [134]): “We have difficulty in saying exactly what produces this simple and single effect. It is not in any ordinary way due to management of intrigue. J employs immense dramatic constructive skill: it is not so much skill in plot as skill in doing without a plot. He never manipulates as complicated a plot as that of MerchVen; he has in his best plays nothing like the intrigue of Restoration comedy. [...] In Volp, Alch, or SilWom, the plot is enough to keep the players in motion; it is rather an ‘action’ than a plot. The plot does not hold the play together; what holds the play together is a unity of inspiration that radiates into plot and personages alike.”

**DUTTON** (1983 [26]) includes Volp within his general characterization of J's comedies, which may be distinguished by their “unsentimental tone, the rather mechanical plot (oiled by a witty ‘servant’), the clearly defined character ‘types,’ even the relative insignificance of the female characters”; such comedies “generally revolves around intrigues over money or power, set firmly in the urban (and predominantly masculine) world of cheaters and cheated,” “pointedly do not end on such a genial note at all [compared with Sh.],” “always attempt to show and ‘image of the times,’ reflecting the contemporary scene as his Roman models had done,” and are “always resolutely plausible and unfanciful about the things that guide human destinies.”

a) **The Unities**

**CAVENDISH** (1662): “... Ben. Johnson as I have heard was of that opinion, that a Comedy cannot be good, nor is a natural or true Comedy, if it should present more than one days action, yet his Comedies that he hath published, could never be the actions of one day; for could any rational person think that the whole Play of the Fox could be the action of one day?”

**DRYDEN** (1668 [17:49–50]): “I was going to have named the Fox, but that the unity of design seems not exactly observ’d in it; for there appear two actions in the Play; the first naturally ending with the fourth Act; the second forc’d from it in the fifth: which yet is the less to condemn’d in him, because the disguise of Volpone, though it suited not with his character as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with
that of a voluptuary: and by it the Poet gain'd the end at which he aym'd, the punishment of Vice, and the reward of Virtue, both which that disguise produc'd. So that to judge equally of it, it was an excellent fifth Act, but not so naturally proceeding from the former. [...] The continuity of [SilWom's] Scenes is observ'd more than in any of our Plays, except his own Fox and Alchymist. They are not broken above twice or thrice at most in the whole Comedy.... [...] In BartFair, or the lowest kind of comedy, that degree of heightening is used, which is proper to set off the subject: It is true the author was not there to go out of prose, as he does in his higher arguments of comedy, The Fox and Alch...."

DENNIS (1695 [2:384]) expands upon Dryden's charge of inconsistency in the characterization of Volpone, particularly within act 5.

DENNIS (1720 [2:196]) bases his admiration for Volp, together with Alch and SilWom, as "incomparably the best of our Comedies" upon their adherence to classical standards, "for they are certainly the most regular of them all. If you will not take my word for this; let us see what Ben says himself to the Matter, in his Prologue to the Fox [quotes 379-84]. Now, do not you see by this last Line, that it was the opinion of the greatest of all our comic poets, that the Rules were absolutely necessary to Perfection?"

DENNIS (1722 [2:295]) defends the classical rules, as well as Lord Roscommon's recent translation of Horace's Ars Poetica: "Did that translation give them that authority here which Ben Johnson's famed and perfect originals could not give? Were not The Fox, The Alchemist, and The Silent Woman formed upon them? Has not the author told us, before the first of them, that he was a strict observer of the rules, even of the unities?"

WHALLEY (1756 [2:405n]): "I do not see why Mr. Dryden should say there are two actions in the play; the first naturally ending with the fourth act; the second forced from it in the fifth. The action indeed is something varied, but it still tends to the disappointment and mortification of the pretenders to Volpone's wealth. Yet, as he adds, this disguise of Volpone, tho' not suited to his character, as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with that of a voluptuary: and, by it, the poet gained the end at which he aimed, the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue, both which that disguise produced."

SCHELLING (1914 [172]): "J's penchant for the unities, which he was, for the most part, too sensible to abuse (although there are two trials of the same culprits for the same offence in one day in Volp)...."

REA (1919 [xxvi–xxvii]): "Recognition of the real sources of Volp will, however, help to clear away some criticisms of the play based on misunderstanding of its purpose. Its general unity has been commented upon by many writers, but two features are often mentioned as impairing this unity—the scenes dealing with the Would-bees, esp. Sir Pol, and the interlude by Nano and his fellows in the first."

H&S (1950 [9:682]) note that "[t]he unity of place is maintained while the actors are allowed freedom of movement. The time of the action is one day. [...] The 'sundry times' when [Volpone] had appeared <to Celia> [2072] are by a dramatic economy rare in J not included in the play. J perhaps forgot that Mosca had discovered Celia 'but yesterday' [1000]."
BARISH (1953 [83]): “Without questioning the orthodox opinion that the links of intrigue between the two plots are frail, one may nevertheless protest against a view of drama which criticizes a play exclusively in terms of physical action. What appears peripheral on the level of intrigue may conceal other kinds of relevance. And it is on the thematic level that the presence of the Would-bes can be justified and their peculiar antics related to the major motifs of the play.”

ORNSTEIN (1960 [86]): “Actually J pays far more attention to conventional unities in his greatest comedies than he does in his tragedies, and yet the elaborate designs of Volp and Alch are breathless works of the imagination.”

MCDONALD (1988 [9]): “J subscribed to the ancient doctrine because he believed it helped to sustain dramatic illusion…. [T]he unity of time demarcates and comments on the action of Volp: the opening speech is an aubade, the Fox is in the full heat of passion at noon, and his gold is confiscated and his scheme exploded as darkness descends.”

PARKER (1919 [88n]), re: the unity of time: “the play begins in early morning (cf. 1.3.4 [619]); Lady Pol’s call is put off till ‘Some three hours hence’ (1.5.98 [960]); Volpone tells Celia he was the mountebank outside her window ‘but this morning’ (3.7.147–48 [2038–39]); Lady Pol keeps her delayed appointment in 3.4, presumably in the early afternoon; and the play end with the Court’s judgment ‘ere night’ (4.6.61 [2761]). Thus Unity of Time is maintained.” Yet a “possible discrepancy” may occur in Volpone’s lines to Celia at 3.7.148 [2037]).

PARKER (1919 [87n]), re: the unity of place: “… unity of place is never precisely defined by J”; “in Volp it encompasses three or four locations in the centre of Venice.”

Also see the entries organized around those characters chiefly responsible for upsetting the unified design of Volp, in particular, Volpone and the Would-bes.

b) The Subplot

DRYDEN (1668 [19]) critiques the use of any secondary or sub-plot, “For two Actions equally labour’d and driven on by the Writer, would destroy the unity of the Poem; it would be no longer one Play, but two: not but that there may be many actions in a Play, as Ben, Johnson has observ’d in his Disc; but they must be all subservient to the great one, which our language happily expresses in the name of under-plots

UPTON (1749 [25]): “This whole episode of Sir Politique Wouldbee never did, nor ever can please. He seems to be brought in merely to lengthen out the play. Perhaps too ’tis particular satire.”

WHALLEY (1756 [2:308n]) adds: “I cannot help thinking this episode to be rather an excrescence than a beauty, as it has no sort of connection with the rest of the play: yet the character is not destitute of humour, and possibly might be intended for some particular person. However, it exposes with great life the taste of that state-intriguing age, in which it was easier to find a politician, than a man.”

DENNIS (1695 [2:384]) remarks that “the play has two Characters <i.e., Sir Politic Would-Be and Peregrine>, which have nothing to do with the design of it, which are to be look’d upon as Excrecencies.”
CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:154]): “It is with regret I feel myself compelled to protest against so pleafant an
epifode, as that which is carried on by Sir Politic Wou’d-be and Peregrine, which in fact produces a kind of
double plot and catablope; this is an imperfection in the fable, which criticifm cannot overlook; but Sir
Politic is altogether fo delightfull a fellow, that it is impossible to give a vote for his exclusion; the moft that
can be done againft him is to lament that he has not more relation to the main bulines of the fable.”

SYMonds (1886 [86]): “The slight and meagre under-plot of Sir Policy Would-be [sic] and his wife
(which I have omitted in my analysis, except in so far as Lady Would-be affefts Volpone) is superfluos
and tolerably tedious.”

H&S (1925 [2:64]): “One exception ... to the otherwise unbroken predominance of dull virtue and
revolting vice—the by-plot of Sir Politick Would-be. A breath of lighter and more wholesome air from the
old Humour-comedies enters with this quaintly refreshing personage and his associates; and it is significant
that J recovers the normal temper of his comedy precisely where he is reverting to his normal topics, when
he turns from the Venetians of his erudite invention to the English of his familiar experience, the eccentrics
whose humours were to be studied from the life in Fleet Street and Westminster. Sir Politick and his lady
are, in truth, as alien to the spirit of the play as they appear to be to the usages of Venice; foreigners full of
naive curiosity and enterprise, who thrust themselves into dangerous entanglement with an affair which
they do not in the least comprehend and on which they have not the least effect. The peculiar humour of the
picture depends in large part on the contrast between their fussy and officious interference and their
irrelevance; humour which was not to be had, if their absurd contortions had any bearing upon, or inner
relation to, the main theme.”

BARISH (1953 [92]): “…[T]he subplot of the Would-bes is relevant to the total structure of Volp.
Starting from a contrast between It. vice and Eng. folly, J personifies the latter in two brainless Eng.
travelers, makes their folly consist chiefly in mimicry of It. vice, and It. vice itself, in its purest form,
consist of the more comprehensive form of mimicry we have termed ‘metamorphosis,’ thus bringing the
two aspects together into the same moral universe and under a common moral judgment; with the use of the
beast fable he binds together dramatically, and by the distribution of poetic justice he preserves the
 distinction between them. Each of the episodes involving the Would-bes, including the much despised
incident of the tortoise, thus serves a definite dramatic purpose, and one may conclude, then, that the
subplot adds a fresh dimension and a proffonder insight without which Volp, though it might be a neater
play, would also be a pooper and thinner one.”

LITT (1969 [218]), in response to BARISH (1953): “A more meaningful analogy may be found by
contrasting Would-bee with Volpone’s would-be heirs.” See app. Themes.

McDONALD (1988 [128]): “The Would-bes withdraw [from Venice and the play] in shame... […] The
collapse of their romantic illusions forecasts the denouement in the main plot and fills out J’s picture of
romantic pretension.”
EVANS (1989 [306-7]): “The play’s sub-plot, with its Eng. characters and its many references to contemporary Eng. events, would have given comfort to any spectator who wanted to view the main plot in similar terms. The Venetian setting distances the work only partially from relevance to life in London.”

Other writers who have commented negatively on the sub-plot and its characters include SAINTSBURY (1912 [181]), CASTELAIN (1907 [301]), SMITH (1919 [111]). For further commentary related to the sub-plot, cf. app. Characters and Major Scenes.

3. Major Scenes

[392–418] Volpone Greets his Treasure (1.1)

SYMONDS (1886 [73–74]): “The key-note of the drama is struck in the first lines. […] Critics have judged that this opening invocation to [74] the presiding deity of the drama rises to tragic sublimity. The playwright must indeed have had full confidence in his power to sustain the action upon a corresponding note of passionate intensity, when he composed it. Nor was he mistaken; for Volpone’s rhetoric of adoration lives again in every word and deed of all the characters.”

DOBREÉ (1934 [253]): “… the opening speech … which has so strong a flavour of The Jew of Malta, still has the ring of Marlowe.”

PARTRIDGE (1958 [74]): “Volpone’s opening speech wastes no time in dramatizing an attitude and exposing a world. [Quotes 392–93.] Two lines are spoken, and the listener is thrown suddenly into a world where gold is blessed, sainted, enshrined. Volpone’s morning prayer—for this speech is apparently meant to be a parody of a prayer—moves on. ‘Haile the worlds soule and mine.’ The equation is brutally direct: gold is his saint, his soul, and the world’s soul. The shock of this whole soliloquy is all but lost on an age, like the present one, whose saint seems to be money or whose attitude is closer to Volpone’s than to the one which J, by implication, proposes. But to an age which, like the Elizabethan, at least knew the normal Christian attitude, this perversion of religious imagery must have been shocking. To realize how blasphemous this speech is, one has only to contrast the attitude expressed here with that of the Benedicte in the Matins, or Psalm 148, or even, if one can ignore chronology, the morning prayer of Adam and Eve in PL 5.153ff.”

KERNAN (1962 [1–2]): “The crucial action of Volp occurs in the first twenty-seven lines of the play, Volpone’s celebration of gold. He first elevates—as the host is raised in the mass—a round gold coin, and the shining, yellow piece of metal, the ‘son of Sol, in that instant replaces the sun which has for ages past brought life to the ‘teeming earth’ and which on the first day of creation was ‘struck out of chaos,’ driving the primal darkness to the lowest place in all creation, the center of the earth. Gold is the new center, the unmoved mover, the still point, around which all existence now circles and from which it must draw its life. Having completed his new cosmology, Volpone hastens on to construct his new religion, his new history, his new society, and his new man. The high priest of the new cult, Volpone kisses ‘with adoration’ the ‘relies of scared treasure’ and bursts into rapturous praise of his ‘dear saint’ [quotes 413–14]. [2] Where the traditional view of history held that mankind had degenerated from an innocent, simple way of life
distinguished by a lack of precious metals, Volpone as economic historian redefines human history by making it a movement controlled by man’s search for material prosperity beginning in an age of riches, the ‘Golden Age’: [quotes 405–6]. As sociologist he substitutes hard cash for the forces of blood, piety, friendship, and love which have in the past bound men together: [quotes 407–12]. As philosopher-psychologist he quickly defines man as a seeker of gold, who when he attains it achieves at one stroke all the goals for which men in the past have struggled so confusedly and painfully: [quotes 416–18]. Volpone, an apostle indeed blessed by his ‘dumb god’ with the gift of tongues, is announcing in the opening lines a new act of creation; and as we watch the play we are watching this new gold-centered world come into being.”

DUNCAN-JONES (1997 [214]) notices potential echoes between this scene, the opening of Marlowe’s Jew of Malta, and Sh.’s Son 52.2, with its conceit of the rich (but restrained) man and his “sweet up-locked treasure.”

[483–566] The Interlude of Nano and Androgyno (1.2)

The piece of domestic entertainment that Nano terms “neither play, nor Vntiversy Show” (486) has since been generally classified by commentators as an interlude. In an exceptional case, WARD (1875 [2:362n]) refers to the antic performance as an “anti-masque.”

UPTON (1749 [8–9]): “This whole scene is an interlude invented by Mosca to entertain his patron Volpone. [...] And the whole is chiefly borrowed from one of Lucian’s dialogues, entitled The Dream, or The Cock.”

WHALLEY (1756 [2:278n]) adds that the interlude “is intended as a ridicule on the vulgarly believed doctrines of Pythagoras [e.g., metempsychosis].”

GIFORD (1816 [3:174n]) insists that “Lucian and J had better objects in view than the exposure of such absurdities.”

SYMONDS (1886 [74–75]): “... the dwarf, page, and eunuch enter, fantastically attired, and play a comic [75] farce with songs to entertain [Volpone]....”

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxix]): “... of all the professedly comic scenes, surely the most ghastly is that where Volpone’s human playthings ... entertain their master with ‘songs’....”

REA (1919 [xxvii]): “But Nano’s interlude serves a very definite purpose; it is inserted at the beginning of the play to point out to us that these supposed fools are not really the most foolish or most unhappy of mankind, but rather that those whom the world generally considers happy are the real fools. Just in the midst of Nano’s moralizing appears the first of the procession of fools who are only illustrations of his theory, and whose activities are to fill the rest of the play. Instead of being a digression, therefore, this scene is the keynote of the whole drama. J has merely substituted the group of professional fools as a dramatic equivalent for Folly herself, who, arrayed in cap and bells, serves a similar function in Erasmus’ MorEn.”

H&S (1950 [9:691]): “The cynicism of this interlude in the choice of performers would not appear repulsive in J’s day. Compare the masque of Melancholy in John Ford’s Lover’s Melancholy, 3.3, and the
fashion of visiting Bedlam as one of the sights of London (cf. SilWom 4.3.24: ‘And goe with vs, to Bed’lem, to the China houses, and to the Exchange’). The antique flavoring from Lucian and Diogenes Laertius gives the show a distinctive touch. For the allusions, see W. Bang’s discussion in Mélanges Godefried Kurth (1908 [351–55]).”

KERNAN (1962 [210]): “The scene has, however, a third dimension. It is a brief announcement of the central theme of the play. We have here a short and irreverent history of the progressive degeneration of mankind—the soul which comes first from Apollo, ends at last in a fool and a hermaphrodite—and in the body of the play itself the characters pass through a variety of assumed shapes, ending in the forms of ridicule and sickness which the court forces them into at the end of the play. Volpone, for example, while imagining himself actually to be in his cleverness the ‘paragon of animals,’ passes successively through the shapes of a sick man, a mountebank, an ‘impotent,’ and finally an inmate of a prison for incurables. LEVIN (1943) compares this scene to other contemporary treatments of the theme of degeneration, such as Donne’s Aniversaries.”

KERNAN (1962 [6]): “This historical perspective appears in concentrated form in the interlude in which Nano and Androgyno act out Mosca’s flippant dramatization of the ‘progress’ of the human soul. The divine essence of man, which came first from Apollo, the god of healing and poetry, and was then passed to the heroes before Troy and the grave philosophers of antiquity, has now after many transformations come to rest in lawyers, puritans and hermaphrodites. But along its path downward the ‘world’s soul’ has inhabited many no better than the d.p. of J’s play.”

BROCKBANK (1968 [xxi–xxii]): “The entertainment has been taken by some commentators to be a significant encapsulation of the play’s theme, and it does indeed offer a curious gloss on the main action. Its deliberate gaucherie of manner, however, and its placing in the play as an aspect of Volpone’s amusement at the antics of freaks, prevent it from being the vehicle of momentous truths that Rea and others would make it. In Lucian’s Dream the cock is able to use the tale of Pythagoras’s migrant soul to reconcile the cobbler to his poverty; Mosca uses it to suggest that the wisdom of Pythagoras is now (embodied in the hermaphrodite) a plaything of the rich. But, as Keman points out, the changing roles and forms in the play are not only a source of entertainment for Volpone and Mosca, they are manifestations of a grim process that finally overtakes them.”

DUNCAN (1970 [27]): “The ‘entertainment’ provided by Mosca derives from Lucian’s Galitus and modulates, by a significant progression, into an Erasmian praise of folly. Keman’s remark in his note that Mosca has chosen Lucian because he was ‘another cynical and sophisticated author’ like himself could be taken to mean that J was condemning Lucian (and presumably Erasmus too) by associating them with Mosca. But it was the Dream which had inspired Erasmus’ encomium on Lucian already quoted, and J’s admiration of MorEnc is beyond question. The implication is rather that these satires were open to misrepresentation by such as Mosca, and the purpose of the entertainment—apart from its thematic relevance, noted by several critics, in treating degeneracy and universal folly—is to illustrate the perverted brand of Lucianism which Mosca and Volpone themselves practise.”
FIZDALE (1973 [454, 459]): “the most obviously erudite section” of “one of the most erudite comedies in English.”

ADAMS (1979 [7n]): “This little interlude tells us something about the tastes of the man for whom it is performed. The loose, jog-trot meter that the characters recite is reminiscent of the vices in the old morality plays”; rpt. HARP (2001 [8n]), who adds that vices “were buffoonish figures of evil.”

DUTTON (1983 [64–65]): “The challenge is posed most forcefully at the outset of the play, in the ‘entertainment’ which Mosca devises for Volpone. Nano and Androgyno trace the supposed ‘metempsychosis’ (or transmigration of the soul) of the Gr. philosopher, Pythagoras, through various unseemly residences to its latest resting place, the hermaphroditic body of Androgyno himself. It is all done in the worst possible taste; the verse is execrable doggerel and one suspects that the performance is graced with lewd embellishments. […] The play-within-a-play proves to be the epitome of the wider action. This mockery of the mystic philosopher, through a perverse parody of his own teachings, relegates man’s divine soul and intelligence to the level of a performing freak, a perversion of nature; it is analogous to the way in which Volpone himself perverts the splendid Ren. aspirations of Venice into a bestial circus of self-seeking. What sort of taste could find such fare entertaining? The answer, of course, is Volpone’s own…..”

PARKER (1999 [94n]): “This scene is frequently cut or replaced in modern productions because of the difficulty of its references. At Stratford, Ontario, in 1972 it was replaced by a mimed orgy.”

For interpretations of this scene as a parody of romance conventions, rf. MCDONALD (1988 [126]), and app. Genre. For further commentary related to Volpone or Mosca and the performance of this interlude, rf. app. Characters. For its meter, see app. Dramatic Structure and Technique, s.v. “Style and Language.”

[617–965] The Morning Visits of the Legacy Hunters (1.3–1.5)

HAZLITT (1819 [6:44]): “The scene between Volpone, Mosca, Voltore, Corvino, and Corbaccio, at the outset, will shew the dramatic power in the conduct of this play, and will be my justification in what I have said of the literal tenaciousness (to a degree that is repulsive) of the author’s imaginary descriptions.”

SYMonds (1886 [76]): “The reader must remember that these scenes are enacted in the presence of Volpone, who is supposed to be stone-deaf and blind, but who hears and sees everything with lynx eyes and fox’s ears from behind his bed-curtains. The situation lends itself to accumulated touches of saturnine humour.”

MCPHERSON (1972 [3]): “The savage view of human vice implied by the characterization and the theme is also implied by the savage quality of many metaphors in the play; the imagery is often gross and nasty. The action literally revolves about Volpone’s body, this piece of supposedly diseased flesh, as it lies on the couch at center stage. […] We first meet the three carrion-eating human birds as each in turn circles expectantly around the prospective meal of flesh.”

[1016ff.] Sir Politic Would-be Meets Peregrine (2.1ff.)

[1142–1337] The Mountebank Scene (2.2)

Hurd (1753 [2:103]): "There are even some Incidents of a farcical invention; particularly the Mountebank Scene [is] in the taste of the old comedy; and without its rational purpose."

Symonds (1886 [79–80]): "Volpone, obeying his humour for fantastic pleasure and extravagant disguises, goes forth to win a sight of Celia. He attires himself in the costume of a quack doctor, Mosca in that of the charlatan’s drudge. They set up their platform under Corvino’s windows. Volpone acts the mountebank with such spirit that Celia is drawn to the balcony, and while she takes her pastime of the crowd, her husband rushes in and drags her to a back room with brutal insults. The man is here revealed under the violent pressure of coarse jealousy, just at the very moment when he will be made to sacrifice his honour to his avarice."

Smith (1912 [187]): “Among the many Italianate plots, many disguise and lazzic scenes that in Eliz. plays may possibly be echoes of commedie dell’arte, I have found but one that can with any probability be referred to a [188] scenario source,—the mountebank performance in Volp. [...] J appropriately chooses a retired corner of St. Mark’s Place, Venice, for this bit of action, probably because some traveler had told him that here the mountebanks were wont to assemble.”

Freeburg (1915 [192]): “A playwright could produce farce from any given situation involving a disguised lover by merely playing a laughable trick on the confident intriguing gallant. [...] Almost equally vivid is the picture of Volpone, disguised as a mountebank, being beaten away by the irate husband of his inamorata.”

[192n] “The mountebank scene is borrowed from commedia dell’ arte. See Smith (1912 [187]). Other cases of disguised lovers being caught and beaten are found in Giancarli’s Cingana, Piccolomini’s Alessandro (the original for Chapman’s May Day), Mercati’s Lanzi, and Cenati’s Silvia Errante.”

Rea (1919 [179]): “This scene is one of the most important in the play. The suggestion for it is to be fond in the following passage from Erasmus, MorEnc 54. See app. Sources.

H&S (1950 [9:702]): “Coryat (1611 [272–75]) gives a full description of the Venetian mountebanks: [272.5–8] ‘although there are Mountebanks also in other Cities of Italy; yet because there is a greater concurre of them in Venice then else where, and that of the better sort and the most eloquent fellows.’”

H&S (1950 [9:702–3]), per Coryat (1611 [272]): “The name is derived from montare and banco, ‘because these fellows do act their part upon a stage which is compacted of benches or fournes.... These Mountebanks at one end of their stage place their trunke, which is replenished with a world of new-fangled trumperies. After the whole rabble of them is gotten vp to the stage, whereof some weare vifards being disguised like fooleis in a play, some that are women (for there are divers women also amongst then) are attyred with habits according to that perfon that they fultaine; after (I say) they are all upon the stage, the musike begins. Sometimes vocall, sometimes instrumentall, and sometimes both together. This musike is a preamble and introduction to the enuing matter: in the meane time while the musike plays, the principal Mountebanke which is the Captaine and ring-leader of all the rest, opens his trunke, and fets abroach his wares; after the muske hath cealed, he maketh an oration to the audience of halfe an houre long, or almost
an houre. Wherein he doth most hyperbolically extoll the vertue of his drugs and confections: *Laudat venales qui vult extrudere merces.* Though many of them are very counterfeit and falle. Truely I often wondred at many of these naturall Orators. For they would tell their tales with such admirable volubility and plausible grace, even extempore, and feafoned with that singular variety of elegant jells and witty conceits, that they did often strike great admiration into strangers that never heard them before: and by how much the more eloquent these Naturaliasts are, by so much the greater audience they draw vnto them, and the more ware they felle. After the chiefest Mountebanks first speech is ended, he deliuereth out his commodities by little and little, the iefer still playing his part, and the mufitian singing and playing vpon their instrumennts. The principall things that they sell are oyles, foueraigne waters, amorous fongs printed, Apothecary drugs, and a Common-weale of other trifles. The head Mountebanke at euery time that he deliuereth out any thing, maketh an extemporall speech, which he doth ettoones intermingle with such fauorie iests (but spiced now and then with singular furrillity) that they minifter paffing mirth and laughter to the whole company ... (273.5–274.8). I haue obserued marueilous Arange matters done by some of these Mountebankes. For I saw one of them holde a viper in his hand, and play with his fling a quarter of an houre together, and yet receiue no hurt; though another man shoulde haue beene prefently flung to death with it. He made vs all beleue that the fame viper was linealy descended from the generation of that viper that lept out of the fire vpon* [4ct. 28.5] S. Pauls hand, in the Iland of Melita now called Malta, and did him no hurt ... (274.12–21). Alfo I haue obserued this in them, that after they haue exGlled their wares to the skies, hauing let the price of tenne crownes vpon some one of the commodities, they haue at laft defcended so low, that they haue taken for it foure gazets, which is somthing leffe then a groat’ (275.4–9). It wiA be seen how closely this later account of an eyewitness tallies with J’s scene; J probably got his facts from Florio. A passing reference to the *circulatores* (or charlataini) in Erasmus’s *MorEnc* [as above] would not take him very far.”

H&S (1950 [9:703]): “P. L. Duchartre, *The Italian Comedy*, trans. Weaver (1929 [63]), reproduces an engraving of Giacomo Franco (1610) of Comedians and Charlatans in the Piazza of St. Mark. There are three platforms with performers, and the ground charlatan. In the foreground, watching the nearest comedians, is a cosmopolitan crowd, including one ‘Inglese.’” [HENKE (1997) reproduces this engraving, from Franco’s *Habiti d’Huomeni et Donne Venetiane*, as Figure 1 at the outset of his article.]

KERNAN (1962 [213–14]): “There is no longer any exact equivalent of the mountebank and his show, but the old-fashioned Indian Medicine Man with his traveling wagon, his show, his ‘snake oil,’ and his ‘spiel’ was in the direct line of descent from the mountebank. A picture of the type of stage referred to here is reproduced in P. L. Ducharte, *The Italian Comedy* (1929 [63]), where the crowd, including one figure called, ‘Inglese,’ is gathered around stages set up in St. Mark’s Square. The date of this print is 1610.”

ADAMS (1979 [27n]): “The word ‘mountebank’ comes from the It. *mountambanco,* meaning ‘to mount the bench’; other terms for the same fellow are *saltimbanco* and *charlatain.* They are a mixture of public entertainer and patent-medicine salesman who gave a very considerable semidramatic, improvised performance before delivering their pitch.”

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DUTTON (1983 [72–73]): "J’s satire seems, in effect, to have developed a more sober estimate of its capacities. In *Volp*, as in *Sej*, the eradication of a particular embodiment of evil offers no automatic hope that society will change for the better, since the circumstances which allowed that evil to flourish—the weakness and blindness of human nature, coupled with the failure of virtuous men to act positively—have only been revealed, not expunged. J seems almost to comment on this change in his satire in the mountebank scene, where the disguised Volpone offers to sell [quotes 1218–20]." His *unguento* "is a flake, of course; there is no such cure-all for the ‘humours’ that afflict mankind—though there are those like Sir Politic Would-be who are gullible enough to believe in it, and Celia is sufficiently impressed to drop her handkerchief. If J is now prepared to mock his earlier claims to have a remedy … it may seem to some that he is abandoning his pretensions to be a satirist."

For further commentary related to the language of this scene, see app. *Language and Style*; for commentary related to Scoto, see app. *Sources*, s.v. “Historical Figures and Allusions.”

[1317–19] Celia at the Window Throws Down her Handkerchief (2.2)

SYMONDS (1886 [79]): “This young man had been hidden in a gallery by Mosca, in order that he might be witness to the act whereby his father meant to disavow and disinherit him. The parasite, it seems, had hoped to work upon his natural resentment so that he should commit some act of violence—either murder Corbaccio or compromise himself by yielding to his fury. I shall take occasion, later on, to criticise this motive on its artistic merits; for the present, it is enough to point out that it brings about the first catastrophe in the drama.”

[1475ff.] Mosca Tricks Corvino into Prostituting Celia to Volpone (2.6)

SALE (1951 [142–43]): “Mosca’s invention of a defeat for Corvino out of the victory the latter had just won, his retorting of his master’s discomfort upon the discomforter, in what is to Corvino quite another connection, is an instance of Jonsonian irony which must be called superb; even if its very ingenuity seems to deny its profundity. To keep a number of considerations co-present in the mind requires, perhaps, no more than application, but the unlikely cross-sparkings we are sometimes startled by in J are genius of the kind seen in the Metaphysicals’ perception of likeness and unlikenesses, though with him it produces mere incidents rather than echoing words. The fact that *his* possibilities are limited both by dramatic decorum and by the nature of the dramatic case, and are not the far-fetched spoils of raids into the unknown and the unpredictable, only intensifies the unexpectedness of some of the attractions and recoils of these few and familiar elements. This is perhaps a sententious appreciation of that every writer of farces must have in some degree. The difference is that J’s inventions are not [143] merely entertainment but both further and are part of the strong central theme. In farce, we are at the mercy of invention, and in J invention is at the service of a power making, if not perhaps for good, at any rate a dramatic autarky which cannot, nevertheless, be explained entirely in terms of drama.”

[1746–1871] Lady Would-be Visits Volpone (3.4)
BARISH (1953 [87-88]): “The scene between Lady Would-be and Volpone serves partly as a burlesque of the parallel scenes in act 1 between Volpone and the other captatores. All the essential ingredients of those scenes reappear, but scrambled and topsy-turvy. [...] The whole episode is a rich application of the principle of comic justice. If in the final denouement Volpone suffers the penalty of vice, here [88] he reaps the more ludicrous reward of his own folly. Trapped by Lady Would-be’s rhetoric, itself a consequence of his own scherzando, he is finally driven to pronounce himself cured.”

[88] “The same scene serves as introduction and comic distortion of the scene immediately to follow between Volpone and Celia. [...] Lady Would-be’s attempted seduction of Volpone having been thwarted, the stage is set for Volpone’s attempted seduction of Celia.

DUNCAN (1970 [34]): “… [I]t is symptomatic of [Barish’s] approach that he overlooked a practical consequence which this pattern must have on the audience in the theatre. The fact that the farcical parody precedes its more sinister object creates a problem which no actor or director can ignore. Eagerly expecting Celia, Volpone is forced to admit the English-woman: [quotes 1738—40]. Comic justice, as Barish says; also a shrewd comment on the psychology of lust. In the theatre, however, Volpone’s ludicrous subjection to Lady Would-be’s tongue destroys his sinister aspect at the moment when one think that it should be most threatening. The audience, with whatever complex of emotions it anticipates Celia’s arrival, is thrown off balance by Volpone’s comic groans of passive despair, and can hardly recreate its previous tension after Lady Would-be’s departure.”

[2453ff.] Lady Would-be and Nano Confront Sir Politic and Peregrine (4.2)

FREEBURG (1915 [97]): “The familiarity of the female page situation enabled playwrights to introduce a variation of that theme by letting people in the play suspect disguise when there was none at all. This happened as early as 1605. In Volp Lady Would-Be, seeing her husband with a young man, becomes suspicious and her jealousy turns suspicion into assurance that the young man is a courtesan in disguise. She berates her husband bitterly for being a patron of a ‘female devil in a male outside’ [2513]. In the next scene the truth is discovered and her anxiety relieved.”

Also see MCDONALD (1988 [128]).

[1917–20; 1933–41] Mosca Conceals Bonario in the Gallery (3.6; 3.7)

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:152-53]): “The incident of [Mosca’s] concealing Bonario in the gallery, from whence he breaks in upon the scene to the rescue of Celia and the detection of Volpone, is one of the happiest contrivances, which could possibly be devised, because at the same time that it produces the catastrophe, it does not sacrifice Mosca’s character in the manner most villains are sacrificed in comedy by making them commit blunders, which do not correspond with the address their first representation exhibits and which the audience has a right to expect from them throughout, of which the Double Dealer is amongst others a notable instance. But this incident of Bonario’s interference does not only not impeach the adroitness of the Parasite, but it furnishes a very brilliant occasion for setting off his ready invention and presence of mind in a new and superior light, and serves to introduce the whole machinery of the trial and
condemnation of the innocent persons before the court of Advocates: In this part of the fable the contrivance is inimitable, and here the poet’s art is a study, which every votarist of the dramatic mules ought to pay at-
[153] -ention and respect to....

SYMONDS (1886 [86]): “[T]he heaviest blot upon J’s construction remains to be noted. He has suggested no adequate motive for Mosca’s introduction of Bonario into Volpone’s palace, at the moment when Corbaccio is coming to execute his will, and Celia is being brought by her unworthy husband. Bonario’s presence there was necessary for the conduct of the intrigue. But this circumstance hangs upon so fine a thread of calculation in Mosca’s brain, that we must regard it as not sufficiently accounted for.”

[1924–2056] Corvino Forces Celia upon Volpone (3.7)

HAZLITT (1819 [6:40]): J’s “portraits are caricatures by dint of their very likeness, being extravagant tautologies of themselves; as his plots are improbable by an excess of consistency; for he goes thorough-stitch with whatever he takes in hand, makes one contrivance answer all purposes, and every obstacle give way to a predetermined theory. For instance, nothing can be more incredible than the mercenary conduct of Corvino, in delivering up his wife to the palsied embraces of Volpone; and yet the poet does not seem in the least to boggle at the incongruity of it: but the more it is in keeping with the absurdity of the rest of the fable, and the more it advances it to an incredible catastrophe, the more he seems to dwell upon it with complacency and a sort of wilful exaggeration, as if it were a logical discovery or corollary from well-known premises.”

[2063–2191] Volpone’s Temptation and Attempted Rape of Celia (3.7)

GIFFORD (1816 [3:259n]): “It would scarcely be just to J’s merits to pass over this admirable scene without remarking on the boundless fertility of his mind. Temptations are heaped upon temptations with a rapidity which almost outstrips the imagination; and a richness, variety, and beauty, which render mean and base all the allurements that preceding poets have invented and combined, to facilitate the overthrow of purity and virtue.”

SYMONDS (1886 [81]): “This introduces a scene, in which J has given rein to his peculiar fancy. Every word used by Volpone to ply Celia, every voluptuous image he suggests, is drawn from some repository of antique conceits; but these are so fused and interwoven that they appear to be the natural utterance of a hoary sybarite’s desire.”

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxix]): “But it is not merely the catastrophe which savours of tragedy. The peril which overhangs the innocent wife of Corvino is something more than an outrageous Humour....”

KERNAN (1962 [5–6]): “When Volpone offers Celia a diamond which [quotes 2120–22] he not only reveals his own extravagant wealth and imagination but establishes at the same time a link between the greedy vulgarity of the Renaissance, which he represents, and the insatiable rapacity of the post-Augustan Roman world, which Tacitus records in his Annals, where entire provinces were plundered to cover over the aristocratic trollop Lollia Paulina with a mass of jewels to make her seem like starlight. But though ‘hid
with jewels' she remained a piece of flesh which could be 'bought,' just as under his rich robes and his more gorgeous language Volpone remains a cunning animal, the fox. Past and present are fused in this way to create within the play [6] a history of vulgarity and pretense reaching from ancient days when Jove passed to Danaë in a shower of gold down to Volpone the Renaissance merchant prince counting his gold and satisfying his lust by trickery."

PROSSER (1967 [16–17n]) claims that Haydn's arguments regarding the virtue of wrath depend upon quotations that have been taken out of their proper contexts. As an example, she notes that "The failure to note the speaker's purpose is apparent in Haydn's application of evidence from Volp. In Celia's desperate attempt to dissuade her would-be ravisher, she pleads with Volpone to exercise not his lust but his 'manly wrath,' by destroying her beauty rather than her virtue. Such a frantic plea is scarcely proof that manly wrath was considered a true virtue by Celia, J, or the audience. Had Volpone poured acid upon her, as she request, surely no one in J's audience would have considered him a noble convert to honor."

DUTTON (1983 [66–67]): "The ambivalence surrounding Volpone and his actions is perhaps best demonstrated in his attempted seduction/rape of Celia. The episode is kept within comic bounds by our knowledge that Bonario is waiting in the wings, concealed, but even Volpone's display of charm and apparent sexual potency is not to be taken lightly. We may suspect that the man who (according to Mosca) has fathered the misbegotten brood of Nano, Castrone and Androgyno is not as potent as he would like to believe, but such doubts are driven from our mind—as so often—by his sheer command of language, which brings all his fantasies about himself to life. Therein, as with many of J's most impressive characters, lies his real—if limited—power. It is a measure of this that J should have given Volpone one of the most potent seduction-songs in the language with which to advance his case [quotes 2091–92] cannot lightly be dismissed. Even without the added charm of music, its graceful phrasing and plausible arguments are wickedly difficult to rebut, and we already know from the mountebank scene that Celia is sufficiently susceptible to Volpone's oratory as to have dropped her handkerchief. Here, her frosty denials are no real answer to his exultant passion, and Bonario's intervention leaves it beguilingly open to doubt which would have faltered first—Volpone's ego or Celia's virtue. The final effect of the scene is one of farcical let-down, with Volpone's grandly inflated desires rudely baulked; yet the brilliance of his virtuoso performance completely outshines the sober propriety of Celia and Bonario, who seem naive and uninteresting alongside this imaginative man of the world. In such ways, J provocatively blurs the rights and wrongs of all Volpone's actions, but always making him seem so much more attractive than the opposition, even when the opposition clearly has virtue on its side. How much more so then in the cases of Corbaccio, Covino and Voltore, who all seem far more culpable and despicable than does Volpone in duping them."

MCDONALD (1988 [106]): "Each dreamer regards the 'cunning man' as a source of knowledge, power, and change.... [...] The vision of a better world ... is not limited to Aick. Volpone's appeals to Celia are based upon Epicurean impulses—he offers her the milk of unicorns...."
COREN (2001 [237]): “The situation of beauty and goodness vulnerable to rape is the reverse erotic fantasy to that of these female persona songs. J has Celia in Volp subjected to a comic parody of the rape situation.”

[2090–2107; 2161–64] Volpone’s Songs to Celia (3.7)

ANON (1702 [52–53]): “Sullen. … while this ridiculous Humour lasts, I have no hopes of seeing our Poetry restor’d. CRITICK. But this error of Musick is not Yesterdays invention; old Ben with all his exactness stumbles here sometimes: [53] It does not well becomes me to arraign so establish’d an Author, but I’m sure he has Faults of all kinds, and to the purpose in Hand I take the Song sung to Celia in the Fox, to be one; ’tis in the Seventh Scene of the Third Act. He brings her in by a Strategem to Volpone, who is supposed to be Paralytick and quite disabled for Woman’s Sport; but finding himself alone with Celia, he shakes off[f] his Hypocrisie and his Furs, and he runs in an extasie to her Arms: She is ready to dye with the surprise, fain wou’d fly away, but he forces to stay, and she, without saying one Word, is suppl’d to listen to an entertainment of Musick, tho’ in all the Agony that the Poet cou’d give her. One wou’d think she shou’d rend, and tear, and cry out for help, as she did afterwards with fury enough; but that wou’d ha’ spoil’d the Song. I beg Ben’s pardon for this presumption, but this being to the purpose it came to my Mind.”

Gifford (1816 [3:254–55n]): “The praise, however, which is bestowed on J’s genius, can scarcely be extended to his judgment, in this instance. The song is evidently introduced somewhat too much in the style of that in The Rovers, where the conspirators join in a chorus ‘to conceal their purpose.’ The impropriety has not escaped the critics. ‘Celia,’ says on of them, ‘is surprised, and would fain fly; but being seized and forced to stay, she quietly listens to an entertainment of music.’ Methinks she would have rent, torn, and cried out for help, as she does afterwards:—but that would have spoiled the song.’ From the words in italics, it might be supposed that Volpone had called in a band of musicians to calm Celia, instead of endeavoring to captivate her by a few of the ‘graceful notes’ which had ‘attracted the ears of the ladies’ at the Doge’s palace. Nor is it clear that she ‘ought to have rent, torn, &c.’ She had hitherto sustained no actual violence, nor seemed to be in immediate danger of any. Her husband, for aught she knew, was in the plot against her; and having delivered her up to prostitution, was not likely to be recalled by her complaints. Afterwards, indeed, when she is seized by Volpone, her innate horror of impurity prevails over every other consideration, and her cries are just and natural. I have said thus much, to moderate, if possible, the indiscriminate levity with which the faults of this great man are censured; and not to defend the introduction of the song itself, which is confessedly ill-timed.”

REA (1919 [205]): “Gifford feels that the introduction of the song in this scene is ill-timed; it is, however, an interesting illustration of J’s method of writing: Volpone sings, not so much because this is a suitable way to tempt Celia, as because it is one of the regular attributes of the lover. See Erasmus, Adagia 4.5.15, on the proverb: ‘Musicam docet amor’” [“love teaches music”].

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KERNAN (1962 [220]): “The song is lovely but it evokes here not so much an image of a beautiful love seizing its moment, as of the ultimate faithlessness of Catullus’ Clodia, the Lesbia of the poem, and her degeneration into a sensuality as gross as Volpone’s.”

GARDINER (1975 [56]): “Volpone’s seduction poem is typical of J’s dramatic song-writing; it is the only song from his plays that he chose specifically to include in his nondramatic works, perhaps because of its origin as an adaptation of Catullus 5. Like Clerimont’s song in SilWom or Wittipol’s in DevAss, it advances the dramatic action of its play. Alone, the poem stands as a seduction piece by a corrupt speaker who is exposed to what he says, not by the poet’s moralizing. For instance, Volpone asks, ‘Why should we deferre our joyes’ with a bland assumption of eventual success, and his dismissal of fame as a toy shows him to be untrustworthy. Several of the rhyme words, including ‘spyes,’ ‘beguile,’ ‘wile,’ and ‘steale’ have sinister or criminal connotations, while the line, ‘Tis no sinne, loves fruit to steale’ recalls Eve’s apple and primal sine. The entire non-Catullan ending of the song emphasizes the illicit nature of the proposed ‘sports,’ exposes the speaker’s reliance on external standards like exposure, and leaves the strong word ‘crimes’ as the judgment on the whole seduction. For 5 is thus an effective poem of indirect censure using the dramatic speaker in contrast to the direct commendation of the satiric epigrams and epistles.”

GARDINER (1975 [57]) also characterizes the poem’s tone as “seducing cynicism”; and [62] contrasts the “seducer” speaker of For 5 with the “ardent lover” of For 6, a poem drawn from Catullus, Odes 7, the source of Volpone’s concluding verses to Celia [2161–64].

ADAMS (1979 [53n]): “the opening lines are adapted from Catullus, boldest and bawdiest of Lat. lyricists, and the whole song emphasises the theme of ‘carpe diem’ (clutch the fleeting moment), which is a common erotic incitement.”

VAN DEN BERG (1987 [125]), though primarily concerned with the poem’s placement within For, the following does illuminate certain features relevant to its use within Volp: “J’s first song to Celia surely embodies the seductive world the gentlewoman [of For 4, “To the World”] resists. This remarkable song shifts the audience from morality to eroticism, from complaint to lyric, from the chaste contemplation of the gentlewoman to the self-serving exhortation of Volpone. By juxtaposing “Farewell to the World” and “To Celia,” Jonson gives austere complaint and exuberant song equal weight as attitudes toward life. His For includes both contemptus mundi and hedonism, Christian plain style and lush Catullan lyric. There is one important point to make about the several songs grouped together in For: their theme and tone are less important than their highly polished art. The leavening of morality (and poetry) by sensual enjoyment—refined by the discipline of poetic craft—is sufficient justification for their presence here. Not love but love song is the substantive achievement they record. J includes the songs to Celia because they can stand alone as perfected songs, not because they are memorable bits from Volp. It has never been noticed that J added several lines from another Horatian satire (Sat. 1.2) to the For version of this song.” [(196n) “The pragmatic calculation of the lecher of the end of the Horatian satire seems quite alien to the spirit of Catullus’ “Vivamus mea Lesbia” (196n).] The last lines of J’s song, “To be taken, to be seen, / These have crimes accounted been,” echo a lecher’s final comment in a Horatian satire on the risks of adultery:
“deprendi miderum est” (“To be caught is an unhappy fate”). This Horatian allusion restores to the song something of the cynicism that was provided in *Volp* by the disparity between the lyric song and its lecherous singer.”

For commentary specifically related to the text of Volpone’s song, and not necessarily its dramatic effect, see app. Sources.

[2192–2200] Bonario Rescues Celia from Volpone (3.7)

Sale (1951 [158]): “The *FSD* could be more accurate, for Mosca had placed him well out of leaping range. Possibly the suspicion revealed in the last words had led him back to the eavesdropping nook where Mosca had *first* placed him, and to which the direction here refers. In that case, how did Mosca, dividing his attention between a front door that might at any moment admit the young man’s father, a restless gaping crow, and the still more restive and downright young man himself, come not to miss him? He seems to have encountered him only during the escape, probably as he returned from persuading Corvino to take a turn outside: but, in that case, he could not have known, but only guessed that Bonario had ‘harken’d, so.’”

McDonald (1988 [21]): “Surprise virtually disappears from *J*’s drama until the middle comedies, where it is employed rarely but effectively (Bonario’s rescue of Celia; the revelation of Epicoene’s gender)....”

[2560ff.] The First Court Scene (4.4)

Sale (1951 [181]): “In the trial scenes of act 4, Voltore’s brief is the version of events given him by Mosca in 3.9.28–35 [2262ff.], but extended to include the amours of Celia and Bonario. That he pleaded the whole story in perfect good faith cannot be conclusively disproved. Mosca and Corvino may have concocted the amours on the way to that consultation with Voltore at the Scrutineo of which we see the end in 4.4. There, it is true, Mosca says “Is the lie Safely convai’d amongst us?” [2565–66], but as Corvino then asks a question about Voltore which proves that the latter is not attending (he is meditating on, or reading over, his brief throughout), his inattention may well have preceded that question. But sanity, and *J*’s decorum, would not allow an accusation of acting in good faith to be brought against Voltore. He could not *then* have known of the young couple’s innocence; he could only have invented it, in revenge. And his own innocence would have proofed him against the irony to the truth of which his silent departure was a full confession (5.3).

Barish (1960 [147]): “*Volp*, too, has its court of high justice, but this is no longer represented as infallible. Though eager to find the truth and capable of recognizing it if it appears without disguise, the Venetian *Scrutineo* shares with the rest of the world a proneness to mistake vice for virtue, folly for wisdom, appearance for reality. Appropriately, then, *J* makes no linguistic distinction between the language of the court and that of the other Venetians; the *avocatori* speak only a slightly more stilted, more ceremonious version of the verse common to the fools and knaves.”

Brockbank (1968 [xxiii–xxiv]): “Voltores’s speeches to the Scrutineo, for example, are totally composed of forensic skill and forensic pathos; the rhetoric is absolute, there are no expressions or
cadences that do not wholly belong to it, for the 'invention' has been scrupulously judged: [xxiv] [quotes 2828–31]. The staggering cheek of the closing thought perfects Volpone's malicious fantasy. It is one of the delights of J's art that fantasies are splendidly articulated...."

[2888ff.] Act Five: General Comments (5.1–5.12)

SYMONDS (1886): [82] "This opens the fifth act; and here, in a sense, the drama is concluded. But it was required by J's plan that poetical justice should be done, and that the Fox should finally be caught. The poet has heaped ignominy on the legacy-hunters. But he leaves two innocent persons, Bonario and Celia, [83] under unmerited disgrace. His work will not be finished until Volpone and the parasite have been taken in their toils. At this juncture he calls the Até of the gods, the insolence of guilty creatures swollen with their own conceit, to the aid of his languishing intrigue. Volpone is so intoxicated with the triumph of his craft, so contemptuous of human nature, that he resolves to indulge his cynicism with a new trick."

HERFORD (1893–95 [xxviii]) compares Volpone to Sejanus: "The turning-point in the fortunes of both is due to their own infatuated confidence. Sejanus is ruined from the moment when he asks for the hand of Livia, and Volpone by his crowning audacity in feigning his own death. And in both, the false step is not immediately fatal, but ruin is postponed by one of those illusory triumphs at the eleventh hour in which J, with his essentially ironical mind, delighted. Sejanus, just before his fall, obtains the coveted tribunitial dignity; Volpone, on the eve of ruin, scores his own victory in court."

BARISH (1960 [79]): "Certainly the hoaxes and conspiracies that form the mainsprings of action in Volp, SilWom, and Aich involve causal sequence. But the sequences tend to be simple rather than multiple, and even so they often run aground and require relaunching. The fifth act of Volp provides a notorious example: the mainspring of the plot having run down, J must forcibly rewind it in order to bring on the catastrophe."

COOK (1962 [43–44]): "... a fine instance of J's keen dramatic imagination. How could this pair reach further? In any case, how could an extension of their power and skill be presented on the stage? This technical impasse is mastered with such ease that it may not occur to us to stop and consider what a difficult problem it was. Yet out of an unpromising situation J makes one of the finest passages in the play, clearly projected in dramatic terms—a comic climax, and at the same time a final epitome of the central motifs, as the dismayed fortune seekers find Mosca himself is Volpone's heir...."

[44] "Every hit is scored. The ideas are satisfyingly rounded out without any degree being laboured."

Also see app. Characters, s.v. "Volpone" and app. Plot, s.v. "The Unities."

[3163ff.] The Tortoise-Shell Scene (5.4)

UPTON (1749 [54]): "This whole scene seems to me impertinent, and to interrupt the story"; repr. Whalley (2:392 n5).
Hurd (1753 [2:103]): "There are even some Incidents of a farcical invention; particularly the Mountebank Scene and Sir Politique's Tortoise are in the taste of the old comedy; and without its rational purpose."

Gifford (1816 [3:308n]): "This whole scene, says Upton, seems to be impertinent; and to interrupt the story. It is not, indeed, very intimately connected with the main plot; yet it is not altogether without its use. I wanted time for Mosca to make 'the commandadore drunk,' and 'procure his habit' for Volpone; and it does not appear that he could have filled the interval more pleasantly, in any other manner. For the rest, this little interlude (it is no more) is intitled <sic> to a considerable degree of praise. The satire is strong, and well directed. Sir Politick is a very amusing piece of importance, and may be styled the prototype of all untravell'd politicians: and it would be an absolute defect of understanding, to place any of the precious ridicules of our own stage, or even that of France, (more happy in such characters) by the side of the 'Fine Lady Would-be.'"

Rea (1919 [223–24]) adds: "In Soame's paraphrase of Boileau's Art of Poetry is expressed a criticism of the buffoonery of this scene; cf. lines 393–400 (ed. Cook, p. 207): 'Thus 'twas great Jonson purchased his renown, / And in his art had borne away the crown, / If, less desirous of the people's praise, / He had not with low farce debased his plays, / Mixing dull buffonry with wit refined, / And Harlequin with noble Terence joined. / When in the Fox I see the tortoise hissed, / I lose the author of the Alchemist.' Scott notes of this scene: 'In the Volpone, or Fox, of Ben Jonson, Sir Politic Wouldbe, a foolish politician, as his name indicates, disguises himself as a tortoise, and is detected on the stage,—a machine much too farcical for the rest of the piece.'"

H&S (1950 [9:728–29]): "In a letter of Diderot to Sophie Volland, 5 Sep 1762 (Lettres, ed. Babelon [2:152–55]), there is a story of a trick played by Lord Chesterfield on Montesquieu at Venice which might have been suggested by this scene, especially if Chesterfield had seen Volp acted. Discussing with Montesquieu the characteristics of Englishmen and Frenchmen, Chesterfield agreed that the French were superior in wit, 'mais en revanche ils n'avoient pas le sens commun.' Montesquieu agreed, but said the two qualities could not be compared. The dispute lasted several days. Montesquieu went about Venice, sightseeing, inquiring, talking freely, and every evening making notes of his observations. A stranger called on him, a badly dressed Frenchman, who said he had lived in Venice twenty years and made a point of helping his countrymen there. 'On peut tout faire dans ce pays, excepté se mêler des affaires d'État. Un mot inconscidére sur le gouvernement coûte la tête, et vous en avez déjà tenu plus de mille. Les Inquisiteurs d'État ont les yeux ouverts sur vous conduite, on vous épie, on suit tous vos pas, on tient note de tous vos projets, on ne doute point que vous n'écriviez. Je sais de science certaine qu'on doit, peut-être aujourd'hui, peut-être demain, faire chez vous une visite. Voyez, monsieur, si en effet vous avez écrit, et songez, qu'une ligne innocente, mais mal interprétée, vous coûterait la vie.' Montesquieu in consternation collected all his papers and burnt them. When Chesterfield returned to the house, Montesquieu told him of the visit, and that he had burnt his papers and ordered a carriage for 3 a.m. Chesterfield carefully discussed the situation: it was unnatural; who was the man? how did he know his facts? The authorities would be
secret enough, and this beggar, if he learnt from, would not betray his masters. Finally, Chesterfield in a
tentative and hesitating way suggested that he might have been sent 'par un certain milord Chesterfield qui
aurait voulu vous prouver par expérience qu’une once de sens commun vaut mieux que cent livres d’esprit,
car avec du sens commun ...— Ah scélérat, s’écria le président, quel tour vous m’avez joué! Et mon
manuscrit! mon manuscrit que j’ai brûlé!''

BARISH (1953 [91]): “The mercatori enlisted by Peregrine perform the office of the avocatori who
pronounce sentence on Volpone, and the divulging of the pathetic notebook, with its scraps from
playbooks, becomes the burlesque substitute for the exposure of Volpone’s will, in bringing on the disaster.
Peregrine, echoing Voltore’s suggestion that Volpone be tested on the strappado, warns Sir Pol that his
persecutors will put him on the rack. Whereupon the knight remembers an ‘engine’ he has designed against
such emergencies, a tortoise shell. And to the disgust of three hundred years of literary critics he climbs
into the ungainly object, playing possum after the fashion of his model, Volpone, who has feigned death in
the foregoing scene. The arrival of the mercatori brings on the catastrophe: [quotes 3233–40]. Eventually,
by stamping and poking, they goad Sir Politic out of his exoskeleton. The scene thus rephrases in a vein of
broadest tomfoolery the essential question of the play: ‘What kind of creatures are these?’ […] The final
unshelling of the tortoise, a parallel to the uncasing of the fox in the last scene...”

MCDONALD (1988 [128]): “Sir Pol’s experience is also humiliating, for the tortoise shell—his ‘engine’
or ‘device’ for escaping the torture, a defense which seems foolproof in theory—is a miserable failure.”

[3417ff.] The Second Court Scene (5.10; 5.12)

SALE (1951 [181]): Voltore’s “retaliation is to gain an initial hearing for itself by a sensational reversal
of the Court’s verdict of guilty against those whom his “conscience” [3434] leads him to call “these
innocents” [3428]. That this is only a means to his end is declared in his insistence on Volpone’s
innocence, which denies most of theirs, for it leaves Bonario still guilty of assault and of laying false
charges, and Celia of collusion. His end is to incriminate Mosca. How, we cannot be sure, for all he
succeeds in doing is in raising an interest in Mosca which is very different from the kind intended and
which, in a kind of dusting and tidying process of preparation for his enemy’s triumphal entry, brushes his
sensation aside into the dust of the wings. The second brace of magistrates is all approving confidence that
Mosca holds the key to the situation and that this will not loosen his hold on his keys.”

For additional commentary directly related to the language of this scene, see app. Language and Style.

[3156ff.] Volpone and the Commandadore Disguise (5.3ff.)

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:153–54]): “... had the same address been exerted throughout, the construction
would have been a matchless piece of art, but here we are to lament the haste of which [J] boasts in his
prologue; and that rapidity of composition, which he appeals to as a mark of genius, is to be lamented as the
probable cause of incorrectness, or at least the bent and most candid plea in excuse of it: For one can deny
that nature is violated by the absurdity of Volpone’s unfeasable insulfs to the very persons, who had
witnefed falsely in his defence, and even to the very Advocate, who had so successfully defended him? Is it in character for a man of his deep cunning and long reach of thought to provoke those, on whom his all depended, to retaliate upon him, and this for the poor triumph of a fiUy jest? Certainly this is a glaring defect, which every body must lament, and which can escape nobody. The poet himself knew the weak part of his plot, and vainly strives to bolster it up by making Volpone exclaim against his own folly—I am caught in my own noose—[quoting 3437–38]. And again—[quoting 3488–93; 3500–4]."

FREEBURG (1915 [172–73]), generally re: Justice Overdo in BartFair: "When a motive has become so thoroughly familiar and conventionalized as the disguised spy it is not surprising to [173] find even the proverbially independent J adopting it as the main element of a comedy plot."

[173n] "... Volpone, after having given out the report that he is dead, haunts the house disguised as a commandatore and taunts the sycophants. But the disguise is assumed for the sake of gloating over, rather than spying upon, them."

Also see the critical entries located in app. Plot, s.v. "The Unities."

[3417ff.] The Conclusion, or "Catastrophe" (5.12)

CUMBERLAND (1788 [4:154–55]) "The judgment pronounced upon the criminals in the conclusion of the play is so just and solemn, that I must think the poet has made a wanton breach of character and gained but a sorry jest by the bargain, when he violates the dignity of his court judges by making one of them [i.e., 4 Avocatore] so abject in his flattery to the Paratite upon the idea of matching him with his daughter, when he hears that Volpone has made him his heir; but this is an objection, that lies [155] within the compass of two short lines, spoken aside from the bench [i.e., 3576–77 (+ 3588)], and may easily be remedied by their omission in representation; it is one only, and that a very slight one, amongst those venial blemishes—quas incuria fudit" [Horace, ArsPoet 352: "... which a careless hand has let drop" (Fairclough, trans., 479)].

SWINBURNE (1889 [41–42]): "Nor can I admit, as I cannot discern, the blemish or imperfection which others have alleged that they descry in the composition of Volp—the unlikelihood of the device by which retribution is brought down in the fifth act on the criminals who were left at the close of the fourth act in impregnable security and triumph. So far from regarding the comic Nemesis or rather Ate which infatuates and impels Volpone to his doom as a sacrifice of art to morality, an immolation of probability and consistency on the altar of poetic justice, I admire as a master-stroke of character the haughty audacity of caprice which produces or evolves his ruin out of his own hardihood and insolence of exulting and daring enjoyment. For there is something throughout of the lion and the fox in this original and incomparable figure. I know not where to find a third instance of catastrophe comparable with that of either The Fox or Alch in the whole range of the highest comedy; whether for completeness, for propriety, for interest, for ingenious felicity of event or for perfect combination and exposition of all the leading characters at once in supreme simplicity, unity, and fullness of culminating effect."

SCHELLING (1914 [166]): "As to Volp, it is truly a question (as in Sh.'s TrollCres, if for a somewhat different reason) whether we have here a comedy or not. The punishment which is justly enough meted out

451
to Volpone and his scoundrelly creature Mosca, seems less dependent on their crimes among rascals nearly as bad as themselves than upon the accident of their division and want of a dominating cleverness."

MACCARTHY (1921 [57]): "It is no relief that terrible punishments are meted out at the end all round, a conclusion on which J particularly prided himself. That curious, perfunctory, violent exhibition of moral indignation at the end only intensifies the impression of spiritual harshness and imaginative aridity. After Ben has revelled—with such enormous gusto—in the vitality of the audacious and perfectly heartless blackguardism of the whole crew, these Jehovian thunders are ridiculous and oddly sinister."

GREENBLATT (1976 [92]): "What is the effect of this 'finale'? For a moment, J offers the audience a resolution precisely the reverse of the one he will finally provide. It is as if he were testing the spectators, forcing them to re-examine their own sympathies: 'You have identified with Volpone, enjoyed his machination, taken his part against his victims, even the virtuous but vapid Celia and Bonario. All right, I give you Volpone's triumph' The audience must ask itself, 'What would a world be like in which Volpone has triumphed?' In reply, it wills Volpone's ultimate downfall. The spectators do not know exactly why they insist that the play continue—they scarcely have time to analyze their responses—but they do not applaud and they do not move for the exits. The victory they longed for has the taste of ashes."

SWEENEY (1982 [236]): "The more serious business, in terms of the entire play, is a theater where the easy, old, and conventional means of comic resolution are ineffective. [...] The interplay of the 'false ending' with the true ending of Volp is yet another perspective through which we view the play and its 'hero.' As the play approaches its conclusion, it becomes increasingly self-conscious about its own theatricality. What brings Volpone back to life after act 4 is the thought of vexing his victims. [...] To accomplish this, he surrenders his cautiously guarded theatrical authority and step out of the play and closer to the audience. Act 5 is one of the places in J's work where the anxieties of being a spectator are most clearly depicted. It demonstrates one of the primary tenets of J's theatrical creed: to be a spectator is to be a potential victim of someone else's self-gratifying designs."

DUTTON (1983 [71]): "Wherever the audience looks in Volp it will find little cause for comfort or for self-congratulation; there seems to be no answer to the power that Volpone exerts. This is most particularly so at the very end of the play, even though Volpone and Mosca are exposed and punished with exemplary severity. The problem is that, upon close examination, this stern solution proves to be no solution at all."

[72–73]: "One consequence of all this, however, is that no suggestion emerges of their abandoning their vices and follies, as their counterparts do in the earlier plays; they may be 'mulcted' by the Court, but not reformed. There is no pretence in J's best comedies, or his tragedies, that the problems of human nature which he depicts in them can be resolved miraculously by his art; however neatly he may orchestrate a satisfactory ending of affairs for the theatre, we are not allowed to forget the life goes on, and that mankind is as unregenerate as ever."

[73–74]: "When J admitted in the Ded. of Volp that the ending of the play might be excessively strict for a comedy, he was admitting in effect that he knew that he was flying in the face of the audience's expectations and perhaps also, in the case of Celia and Bonario's possible marriage, in the face of their
hopes. But basically what he was drawing attention to was the fact that this is a play; it is a work of art, not a slice of life, though it does bear some oblique relation to life. In drawing attention to this fact (as he does repeatedly throughout the play itself) J implicitly asks the audience to consider their expectations of a play and most particularly its ending: do they expect it to be more true to life, or perhaps more true to real (as opposed to poetic) justice? Do they want reality or justice at all or do they (like so many characters in Volp) want their dream to be fulfilled, a happy ending without work or suffering? The most important implication of all is that the audience should think about the ending of the play and not simply accept it. In what ways is it true, or proper, or just? These are the questions for which J has been preparing the audience throughout Volp. They are the questions which hallmark the endings of all his best plays.”

Baker & Harp (2004): the Avocatori, “by no means free from corruption themselves, [mete] out a justice reminiscent of Dante’s contrappasso, the principle of appropriate punishment. [...] The Thomistic concept of sin as the living out of a deluded self is carried forward in the sin’s penalty; the delusion of sin is itself a punishment…. Thus Mosca, the parasite who sought to bilk everyone else, is punished first by being whipped and then forced to live ‘perpetual prisoner in our galleys’; he who sought to make everyone else his slave becomes a slave of the state. Volpone’s good are stripped from him, and, having mimicked an incurable, he is placed in a hospital for real incurables until he becomes ‘sick and lame indeed.’ For someone whose soul is sense, to remove both his possessions and his health is to strip him of any identity he may have had…. Volutre, having scandalized the legal profession, is barred from it and banished; Corbaccio’s good are given to the son he intended to disinherit, and he is sent to a monastery to learn to ‘die well.’ Corvino, who had publicly shamed his virtuous wife, will be publicly shamed by being pilloried and pelted with garbage. As in the Inferno, each of these punishments is itself a variation on the sin it punishes.”

Also see app. Characters, s.v. “The Avocatori” and app. Genre, s.v. “Tragedy and Tragicomedy.”

[3691] Volpone and The Epilogue (5.12.Epil.)

Gifford (1816 [3:328n]): “This modest Epil. to the Fox, a play which holds so conspicuous a station among the noblest exertions of human wit, forms a singular contrast to the audacious vouching for the merits of CynRev <as printed in that play’s Epil.>.”

Hyde (1949 [194–95]): “In Volp (1605) J considers his audience’s desires first and his own second. He makes a conscious effort to please. The epilogue illustrates this change of tone. It is delivered by the Fox and shows a lack of concern for the author which is no less surprising than is its ingratiating concern for the audience.”

Duncan (1970 [36]): “It is a device to which J returned more than once. Wryly he forces the spectators to acknowledge that their approval of his play, the seal of its theatrical success, depends on their refusing to recognise that it has been directed against them.”

Greenblatt (1976 [104]): “The promise of amusement is recalled at the very close of the play by Volpone himself, who steps forward and speaks directly to the audience…. If earlier Volpone seemed like a character who had somehow survived his play, here for a moment he is literally that. And as such he can
call attention to the drama as entertainment, hearty fare for which the ‘seasoning’ is applause. A gap is deliberately opened between the play’s moral structure—by which Volpone must be punished—and its power to delight. [...] In Volp J has incorporated not only the audience’s applause, but... its departure. The exit may be irksome, as Volpone’s histrionics are enormously vital and attractive, but as this play bitterly insists, you cannot stay in the theater forever.”

MICKEL (1999 [87]) references the conclusion of Volp in her study of J’s antimasques, in particular: “the disruption caused by the antimasque figures is never really dealt with. Similarly, J’s dramatic rogues appear to elude the mechanics of justice; for example, although Volpone is sentenced by the Venetian authorities, he re-emerges in the epilogue to revel in the applause of the audience.”

4. Style and Language

General Comments

HURD (1753 [2:103]): “The cast of his plays indeed could hardly be any other, is we attend to the character of the writer. For his nature was severe and rigid, and this in giving a strength and manliness, gave at times too, an intertemerence to his satyr <sic>. ... Thus the bias <sic> his nature leading him to Plautus rather than Terence for his model, is not to be wondered that his wit is too frequently caustic; his raillery coarse; and his humour excessive.”

ELIOT (1919 [133]): “J is the legitimate heir of Marlowe. The man who wrote, in Volp [quotes 2075-77] and [2118-21] is related to Marlowe as a poet; and if Marlowe is a poet, J is also.”

[134]: “If you examine the first hundred lines of more of Volp the verse appears to be in the manner of Marlowe, more deliberate, more mature, but without Marlowe’s inspiration. It looks like ‘rhetoric,’ certainly not ‘deeds and language such as men do use.’ It appears to us, in fact, forced and flagitious bombast. That it is not ‘rhetoric,’ or at least not vicious rhetoric, we do not know until we are able to review the whole play. For the consistent maintenance of this manner conveys in the end an effect not of verbosity, but of bold, even shocking and terrifying directness.”

MACCARTHY (1921 [58]): “… Volp is indubitably and splendidly a work of art [...] It is suggested by the vigour and richness and humour of the words in which these crazy Chrysopticities (they are all mad after gold) express themselves; in the glorious towerings of their passions and absurdities in speech.”

BARISH (1960 [187]): “The return to verse in Volp, hence, marks a momentary shift of J’s attention away from specifically linguistic caricature.”

BARISH (1960 [188]): “As more than one critic has noticed, the philosopher’s stone resembles Volpone’s voluptuous daydreams in that both are impossible of attainment. In both [Volp and Alch] the object of the quest proves a vacuum; and a vacuum, being abhorred by nature, can be rendered only in correspondingly fabulous surrealistic language. The radically illusory nature of the hopes nursed by rogues and fools alike... all require J’s most radically hyperbolic blank verse incantations.”

For general studies of J’s syntax, with sustained attention to Volp, see PARTRIDGE (1953 [pass.]), which reprints PARTRIDGE (1948). For a linguistic study of J, with regular observations and tabulations
related to \textit{Volp}, see PENNANEN (1951 [pass.]). ORAS (1960 [18, pass.]) presents a statistical survey of pause patterns in EME dramatic verse, which includes \textit{Volp}.

a) The Meter of the Interlude

Early discussions of this scene centered on Nano’s reference to the “false pace of the verse” [488].

\textsc{Upton} (1749 [9]): “Our poet would not have you understand, by the \textit{false pace of the verse}, that he errs against all laws of metre, but that sometimes \textit{the pace of the verse} may offend the too delicate and nice ear, and that the measure is to be helped a little by the speaker; as it often happens to be the case in Plautus and Terence.”

[9–10]: “The measure is of the anapestic kind, consisting of Anapests, Spondees, Dactyls, and sometimes the pes procelsmaticus, i.e., the foot of four short syllables, as in this verse of Euripides.... After the same manner these verses here are to be measured.

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<td>‘Now room for’</td>
<td>fresh</td>
<td>gamsters</td>
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<td>They doe bring you</td>
<td>neither</td>
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<td>And therefore</td>
<td>doe</td>
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<td>May not fare a</td>
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To this measure the reader may reduce them all: a little lower we have,

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<td>all</td>
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And presently after “By others a precise, pure, illuminate brother / Of those devour flesh, and sometimes one another.” In this last there is plainly a word wanting, that spoils the measure and the sense: we should read,

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<tr>
<td>‘Of those \textit{that}’</td>
<td>devour</td>
<td>flesh</td>
<td>and sometimes</td>
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Let this suffice concerning the measure, let us now consider the meaning.”

\textsc{Gifford} (1816 [3:174–75n]): “Upton, a man of very considerable learning, which (unaccompanied, as it was, with an adequate portion of judgment) frequently betrayed him into absurdities; published in 1749, “Remarks” on this and the two following plays, of which Whalley occasionally availed himself. It seems to have been Upton’s chief object to point out J’s allusions to the classics; in this he is generally successful; indeed he seldom ventures beyond such as are sufficiently trite and obvious. When he attempts to correct the text he fails; whilst his explanations, which are given in a tone of formal gravity highly ludicrous, when contrasted with the subject, usually aim beyond the poet, and perplex where they do not mislead. J apologizes for the \textit{false pace} of his doggerel. But of this Upton will not hear: ‘We must not understand,’ he says, ‘that he errs against the laws of metre; but that the pace of his verse may sometimes offend the too delicate ear.’ Those who recollect, that, when Shakespeare produced a few words of prose, such as ‘Where hast thou been, sister?’ Upton pronounced that he meant he meant to afford a beautiful example of the ‘trochaic-dimeter-brachy-catalectic, commonly called the ithyphallic measure’ (\textit{Observer}, p. 381)<*>, will

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455

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not be surprised to hear, that the hobbling lines above are all good metre. They are, it seems, of "the anapestic kind, consisting of anapests, spondees, dactyls, and sometimes the pes procelesmaticus," and are to be scanned in this manner"—for which Gifford cites Upton's scansion of 487-88. "To this measure," exclaims Upton with great glee, 'the reader may reduce them all.' There is no doubt of it; and so he may all the lines in the daily papers, if he pleases. Surely unlettered sense is far more valuable than learning thus ridiculously abused."

CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:498]) regarding Gifford's citations of Upton*: "Here Gifford, as is not seldom the case, quotes very inaccurately." Cumberland is the true author of the Observer quotation.

HERFORD (1893-95 [xxix]): "... the intentional 'false pace of the verse' parodies their own imperfect humanity."

KERNAN (1962 [210]): "The entertainment put on by Nano and Androgyno provides a good example of the complexity and range of J's dramatic technique. Most immediately what we have here is a scene of sophisticated degeneracy: a dwarf and a hermaphrodite act out a dialogue in which such matters as souls, religion, war, and philosophy are treated in a mocking, cynical fashion. The scorn of these cynics for such matters is driven home by the use of the old-fashioned, stumbling, four-stress meter—the implication being that only in the crude, old-fashioned plays which employed this verse form were such matters as the soul taken seriously.

DUNCAN (1970 [27]): "... as a crude piece of doggerel acted by antic monsters, it has a rhetorical function analogous to that of the puppet-show in BartFair: to tempt the crudest spirits in the audience to applaud with the spectators on stage."

b) The Role of Language in the Mountebank Scene

REA (1919 [179]): "The language of Volpone as the supposed mountebank is imitated from Paracelsus; I have noted below a few typical passages from Paracelsus, but many others might be given."

BARISH (1960 [79]): Volp employs prose more ambitiously, though at a less critical point in the action, in the long an brilliant mountebank scene.... The scene afford the one instant in the play when the fierce intrigue going on between Volpone and his dupes impinges, if only obliquely, on the outside world. And it provides Volpone with a magisterial public role that allows him almost to wallow in the excesses of his own temperament, after the confining deathbed charade of the earlier scenes. By assuming the guise of an itinerant huckster, peddling his wares in a flamboyant spiel based on the improvisations of the commedia dell'arte, Volpone can satisfy his histrionic gifts, his linguistic virtuosity, his knavery, and his desire to see Celia, at one and the same time. The scene, with its lifelike milieu, is the most realistic episode in the play, also the most stylized. The monologue itself it a piece of bravura rhetoric, seasoned with Italian phrases and jawbreaking medical terms, in which Volpone contrives to use—and pervert—virtually every effect known to classic oratory. The lay public, represented by the credulous Sir Politic Would be and the hardheaded Peregrine, breaks in from time to time with the kind of choric comment that focuses our attention on the excesses of Volpone's jargon. "Is not his language rare?" exclaims the dazzled knight. "But Alchimy, / I neuer heard the like: or BROVCHTONS booke" returns the astringent Peregrine [rf. 1235-36], thus lumping

456

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Volpone’s cant with the mumbo jumbo of the alchemists and the obscure rantings of the Puritan divine Broughton as a trio of exercises in verbal fraud. Language thus for one moment becomes an explicit object of satire, and Volpone’s surcharged imagination achieves fully adequate linguistic expression. The rest of the play, as befts its basic antirealism and the hyperbolic nature of the visions that possess its characters, is rendered in the more incantatory medium of blank verse.”

5. Irony

Partridge (1958 [66]): “...the technique used here is typical of J: the emotions appropriate for religious worship are metaphorically applied to the worship of worldly goods—with an effect of ironic shock.”

Kernan (1962 [69]): “The sense of inversion or perversion appears in some form or other in most of J’s plays, but most clearly in Volp and Alch. In part, J hoped that, if his plays could show men how preposterous their manners and natures had come to be, they would go and sin no more. [...] Like all master of irony, Jonson celebrated the good obliquely: he made the foul ludicrous.”

Kernan (1962 [16]): “To understand the range and consistency of the irony in Volp we shall have to look briefly at that physical and moral arrangement of the universe which E. M. W. Tillyard has called the Elizabethan World Picture, and which was in one form or another the central image of creation from the time of Aristotle until the 18th c. Under one of its alternative names, the Great Chain of Being....”

[19-20] “Each of the gold seekers, from Volpone to Sir Politie, thinks of himself as rising in both the social and the hierarchical scale by his efforts. Voltoire considers himself well on the way to being the richest and most learned advocate in Venice; Corbaccio thinks he will live forever like the angels; Lady Wouldbe with her painting and her chatter thinks she has made a great lady of herself; Sir Politic with his empty-headed schemes and his idle rumors feels that he has become a great statesman and a mercantile wizard. What they actually are is always grossly apparent to all but themselves, and the great joke, for Mosca and Volpone as well the audience, is that purely by their own great [20] efforts and expense have they made themselves into vultures, crow, and parrots.”

[20] “The transformations of Volpone and Mosca are considerably more intricate and more interesting, and an examination of their degeneration reveals the extreme care with J constructed his play. Both of these master spirits of the play regard all the characters as fools and potential sources of profit. But Volpone and Mosca are supremely unaware that they are victims of the same irony as their victims.”

[25] “The greatness of J’s play comes from his ability to bring, by means of irony, two great views of human nature into perfect juxtaposition. On one hand we have a vivid depiction in Volpone and Mosca of an exuberantly sensual delight in the physical world, her symbolized by gold, and a bursting vitality which enables man to believe that by himself he can remake world and man to conform to his own desires—here symbolized by acting. [...] [But J] counterweights the joyful worldliness of his characters with a rigid moral system and a vision of reality built up and refined upon by pagan and Christian thinkers over two thousand years. Volpone and the views he represents were in J’s time, only the latest of a long series of challenges to society and established order. They were as contemporary and shining new as a fresh-minted
coin, and yet they were as old as Satan himself. And the end was the same in both cases. [...] [26] And by the end of *Volp* ... reality asserts itself once more as the impostors’ physical shapes are brought into conformity with their true natures. Their own greed unmasksthem, and the court locks these Proteans into the shapes they have wrought for themselves...."

[26n] “The subplot has the same kind of conclusion. Sir Politic after pretending to be a clever statesman is forced to confess his pretenses and, driven by his fears, to disguising (revealing) himself as a tortoise.”

E. Themes, Symbols, and Imagery

*General Comments*

The following appendix provides a selective, and perhaps overly narrow, treatment of those major analytical and interpretive areas upon which critics and commentators have focused over the years. If this index does not currently offer much in the way of discrete examinations of the play’s themes, symbols, and imagery, per se, these aspects are most certainly accounted for in the various other subsections of this appendix, namely *General Comments and Allusions, Genre, Characters, and Dramatic Structure and Technique.*

[5] “Thus, to take a very simple example, the legacy-hunters of *Volp* are avaricious if that is to be the central theme, or centrifugal if that is central, or the audience for Volpone’s and Mosca’s theatrics if that is what the comedy is about. Each fact is almost infinitely malleable because it does not exist as a literal *donnée* but only as a stimulus for (and justification of) the abstraction, and the abstraction itself, we noted, can be adjusted during the course of the analysis, so that it is an imaginative thematist indeed who is not able to produce a perfect fit.”

a) Vice and Virtue; Punishment and Reward

*Symonds* (1886 [70]): “*Volp* is no mere comedy of humours or comical satire. It is a sinister and remorseless analysis of avarice in its corrosive influence on human character. Nowhere else has J with so firm a touch bared one master vice, absorbing and perverting all the virtues, passions, and rational faculties
of man. ‘The accursed thirst for gold’ is here displayed as a fell tyrant, swaying the love of kindred and of
honour; before which lust, jealousy, and fear of shame are forced to bow....”

YEATS (1938 [5:244]): “The wicked should be punished, the innocent rewarded, marriage bells sound
for no evil man, unless an author calls his characters before a more private tribunal and has so much
intellect and culture that we respect it as though it were our own. Sh. and the ballad judge as we would
have them judge. In J’s Volp, one of the greatest satiric comedies, Volpone goes to his doom, but innocence
is not rewarded, the young people who have gone through so much suffering together leave in the end for
their fathers’ houses with no hint of marriage, and this excites us because it makes us share in J’s cold
implacability. His tribunal is private, that of Sh. public.”

DUTTON (1983 [64]): “... both < Sej with Volp> are concerned with the central question of how virtue
may be preserved or defended in an immoral or amoral world; and both depend crucially on the
involvement of the ‘understanders’ of the audience within the play’s discussion of the question. But where
Sej made ‘truth of argument’ and ‘integrity in the story’ the leading edge of its challenge to the audience,
Volp confronts us directly with its artifice, with its theatricality, teasing us about the strange, ambivalent
experience of being entertained by ‘make-believe.’ Since the play itself is about a whole succession of
‘make-believes,’ it is implicit from the outset that there is a parallel between the experience of the
characters within the play and our own experience as its readers/audience. It is through that parallel that J
involves us in the moral issues of the play.” For illustrations, see app. Characters.

MCDONALD (1988 [119–20]) “Even J. despite his reputation as a moralist, betrays some sympathy for
his dreamers’ fancies. Although the moderate in him regularly subverts these imaginative flights with irony
and finally condemns the solipsists and voluptuaries, the great passages given over to the realms of gold are
too prominent, impressive, and memorable to be scorned and dismissed.”

[120] “We remember the dreamers and their dreams, and it seems that these visionaries have captured
the imagination of their creator. [...] J invents such fantasies, fixes them permanently in dramatic form,
and, what is more, allows the audience to respond to their temptations. Just as his management of the
intrigue in the major comedies is designed to trap his spectators in the fun of morally dubious plots, so his
exhibition of physical delights leads them to share the yearnings of libertines and buffoons.”

b) Transformation and Degeneration

LEVIN (1943 [234]): “Now the main theme of Volp is a comic distortion of a theme that is tragic in
Ham and tragicomic in The Malcontent, the pervasive Jacobean theme of disinheritance. Volpone’s suitors,
cheated of their legacies in the fifth act, are adumbrated in Lucian’s cobbler, rudely awakened from his
illusory banquet. Here, then is the connexion between the interlude and the play, but the connexion has
been left out of the interlude, which concentrates on metempsychosis.”

KERNAN (1962 [11]): “The classical references which J works into his text frequently refer to some
instance of ‘acting’: Jacob covered with goatskins pretending to be Esau to cheat his brother of his blessing,
Jove disguised as a shower of gold in order to enjoy Danaë, Lollia Paulina covered with jewels to look like
starlight.”

459

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KERNAN (1962 [21–23]): “[Volpone’s] chief disguise throughout the play is that of a sick and dying man, and it requires no particular knowledge of Eliz. lore or the Great Chain of Being to see that the physical pretense here is the spiritual reality. In his soul Volpone is as sick as he pretends to be in body, and so, ironically, each detail of sickness which Volpone and Mosca work out and act so artfully, instead of [22] covering reality reveals the truth about the man who has substituted gold for God and his soul.”

[22]: “The same technique is used to reveal the lawyer Voltore. In 5.12, where he pretends to be possessed by a devil ‘in the shape of a blue toad with a bat’s wings,’ the pretence discloses the truth about a lawyer who pleads so eloquently for falsehood and for gold.”

[22]: “But over and above this general irony of disguise built into the play, Volpone, is traced down in the scale in considerable detail; and to appreciate this degeneration we must look more closely at the image of man as he was defined within the Great Chain of Being. [...] In outline the theory is quite simple ... to understand the moral judgement of Volpone based on this psychology and ethic. What J has done in the play ... is to conduct Volpone, via his disguises down his hierarchy of human faculties. His understanding disappears in the opening lines.... [23] His will is immediately corrupted for he chooses gold with all the fervor of a saint choosing salvation. His higher faculties gone, it is inevitable that he will further degenerate. [...] [24] To instrument a final joke on the fortune hunters he pretends to be dead.”

c) Folly

REA (1919 [xxvii–xxviii]): “But if it once be seen that the theme of the play is not greed, but folly in all its phases, both of the Would-bees take their proper place in the procession of fools; in fact, parallels for both are to be found in Erasmus’ list. With [xxvii] this in mind, the contrary criticism might be made, that too much of the play is given to one class of fools, the greedy. But here again J is following Erasmus and the satirists in general. [...] In thus making Folly the offspring of Wealth, Erasmus and J are merely following the satirists, including Lucian and Horace, who have always found this particular cause of folly the chief object of their satire.”

d) Deception and Disguises; Acting and Role-Playing

KERNAN (1962 [11–12]): “Obviously the iteration of this theme <i.e., of acting> reveals that a world and men given over entirely to materialism are unreal, mere pretenses. But this is almost a moral commonplace, and J’s anatomizing knife cuts deeper. Volpone and Mosca, and to a lesser degree Voltore and the other fools, think of man as homo ludens and his genius as ludere, to act, to play. Where for a fool like Voltore this means no more than pretending to be the honest advocate for the cause that pays the best, for a Volpone and a [12] Mosca playing becomes the exercise of a godlike power. Playing the roles of dying men and humble parasite are for them only rehearsals for metamorphosis, complete transcendence of reality.”

[20] “Volpone and Mosca believe their genius is most fully expressed in their ability to act, to play a part, to make themselves what they will. [...] [21] But their progression is in fact degeneration. In social
terms this is immediately evident. Volpone begins as a magnifico.... In the end he is reduced to the status of eternal prisoner confined in irons.... Mosca's case proceeds somewhat differently, for as Volpone appears to degenerate socially, Mosca appears to rise. His proper place in society is that of servant. [...] But his meteoric rise is all pretense and it finally melts away to the reality of the galley slave...."

LITT (1969 [218]), in response to BARISH (1953): "A more meaningful analogy may be found by contrasting Would-bee with Volpone's would-be heirs. Peregrine exploits the knight's desire to appear sophisticated and knowing in the subplot, just as Volpone exploits his clients' desire for his gold in the main plot. In both cases it is their victims' blindness which makes their exploitation possible. In their victims' blindness we find we find the unifying theme for the play: self-deception. Through this theme the subplot may be seen to mirror the main plot; the would-be sophisticate operates in a world of folly, while the would-be heirs operate in a world of vice."

DUTTON (1983 [64]): "Volpone himself is, above all, a consummate actor, whether in his continuing death-bed scenes or in his bravura performances as a seducer and a mountebank."

e) Imagery

General Comments

PARTRIDGE (1958 [67]): "In J's plays, imagery is one means by which this inversion of the commonly accepted values of humanity is accomplished. [...] But the use of terms taken from religion or love or classical mythology as either the tenor or the vehicle of images is an imaginative and economical way of showing how vicious or foolish or comic certain actions are."

PARTRIDGE (1958 [72–73]), re: religious imagery: "J is not merely glancing at religious imagery here, but insisting on detail. [Quotes 394–401.] The traditional religious implications in 'sunne,' 'celestial,' 'splendor,' and 'chaos' are wrenched around Volpone's [73] impious statement that he is 'more glad' to see his gold than the earth is to see the sun and by his claim that the gold's splendour darkens the sun's. [...] The religious terms crowd thick on the listener here: adoration, relic, sacred, blessed."

PARTRIDGE (1958 [73]), re: light imagery: "The sudden change from the metaphor of the previous lines to the similes in 'Shew'st like a flame, by mght or the day / Strooke o of chaos,' momentarily slows up the rapid movement of Volpone's speech and, by making it more deliberate, makes it more shocking. These are large figures, as they should be, and extraordinarily simple and vivid. [...] The light imagery suggested before in sun and day is made more explicit in the apostrophe which follows. [Quotes 401–4.] The reversal of normal values is re-emphasized: gold is brighter than the sun."

PARTRIDGE (1958 [73]), re: alchemical imagery in 1.1: "The use of 'Sol' sets into motion another kind of imagery—that taken from alchemy. According to the alchemists, the sun is the father of gold, and the moon, which receives the seeds of the sun, is the mother of gold. Latent in this speech, then, may be the gross, worldly, anti-Christian implications of alchemy."

KERNAN (1962 [1]), re: gold: "Judges in a court of law change their attitude towards men when they learn that they are rich; with money learning becomes possible, for you need only, as Mosca says, 'hood an
ass with reverence purple ... and he shall pass for a cathedral doctor; gold becomes a 'sacred medicine' and physicians practice only for their fees, flaying a man before they kill him. Not only are individuals, professions, and social institutions remade by the power of gold, but the yellow metal ultimately becomes the standard by which all things material and spiritual are measured. Celia's beauty can find no greater praise in Mosca's mouth than to be styled 'Bright as your gold, and lovely as your gold'; and her concern for her virtue when she resists bedding with Volpone can be discredited by her husband's conclusive argument, 'What, is my gold the worse for touching?' In the world of Volp gold like grace in a Christian world, appears finally to have no limits to its miraculous power: [quotes 3010–17]."

DUTTON (1983 [66]), re: images of disease, death, and decay: "J never allows the alert reader to forget the sheer evil which Volpone represents. It is most clearly reflected in the images of disease, death and decay which surround the roles he plays; note, for example, the mordant irony of this interchange with Mosca which, once again, Volpone himself does not appreciate [quotes 2988–91]."

F. The Extra-Dramatic Texts
The following entries concern the body of critical commentary surrounding those interdependent texts first printed with the Q version of J's play. In effect, "extra-dramatic" texts are those which may not have been presented as part of the play's performance, but have still managed to attract a sufficient amount of critical commentary to merit a separate appendix. Over the years, the Ded. and the Epist. have been both omitted from editions of the play and added to separate anthologies of 17th-c. literary criticism. As with the text of the song Volpone sings to Celia, this extra-dramatic text has inspired a critical tradition nearly independent of its original publication and representation in the text of Volp. Other texts did not even survive a second printing. As soon as the 1616 folio, the Commendatory Verses were displaced from the forefront of the text (some being dropped altogether); indeed, most modern editions, save PARKER (1999), do not reprint them at all. As the copy-text of this variorum reprints, and thereby preserves J's original literary design and publishing features, these seemingly inconsequential entries represent another level of critical attention that has been devoted to the printed presentation of Volp.

1. The Title-Page
   a) The Title
   DUNCAN-JONES (1997 [60]) argues that the title "SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS," particularly its genitive form, reflects the printer Thomas Thorpe's attempt to mock J's high-minded sense of authorship.

   b) The Epigraph
   GIFFORD (1816 [3:160]): "J republished [Volp] in 1616, without alterations or additions, and with the former appropriate motto, from Horace, Simul et jucunda, et idonea dicere vitae."

   Beginning with REA (1919 [137]), commentators tend to agree that J purposefully adapted his epigraph—"Simul & jucunda, & idonea dicere vitae"—from Horace's Ars Poetica: "Aut prodesse volunt
aut delectare poetae / aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere vitae” (333–34) [“Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life” (Fairclough, trans., 479).] The epigraph’s overall significance for J’s dramatic theory and/or practice within Volp itself has prompted a wealth of discussion. REA (1919 [137–38]) reprints the original Lat. verses and supplies translations from J’s Horace, His Art of Poetrie (1640 [477–78]): “Poëts would either profit, or delight, / Or mixing sweet, and fit, teach life the right,” as well as Byron (rf. Hints from Horace), but mainly discusses the epigraph’s relevance according to Ren. poetic theory and its recurrence throughout J’s work. “The doctrine became a commonplace of literary criticism; cf. Scaliger, Poetics (1561): ‘Namque Poeta etiam docet, non solum delectat, vt quidam aitabantur.’” The same line is used on the t.p. of StapeNews, and appears often in various forms in J’s writings. Cf. n. 358–60.

ANDERSON (1975 [48]): “J has not, however, abdicated his ethical intent as a dramatist to amend folly and instruct society. The purpose is clear in the t.p. motto....”

For details related to the publisher, printer, and date of Q, rf. app. Dates & Contexts.

2. The Dedication

General Comments

ANDERSON (1975 [48]): “… illustrates the unity as well as the instruction desirable in society.”

BEVINGTON (2000 [74]): “a token of [J’s] partnership in learning with those institutions.”

The Ded. prefixed to Volp is a distinct textual element separate from the Epist., which has also been noted and/or reprinted by LANGBAINE (1691 [297]).

a) The Formula of the Dedication and Shakespeares Sonnets

LEE (1916 [675n]): “Thorpe’s dedicatory formula and the type in which it was set were clearly influenced by J’s form of ded. before the first ed. of his Volp, which, like Sh.’s Sonnets, was published by Thorpe and printed for him by George Eld. The preliminary leaf in Volp was in short lines and in the same fount <sic> of capitals as was employed in Thorpe’s ded. to ‘Mr. W. H.’ On the opening leaf of Volp stands a greeting of ‘The Two Famous Universities,’ to which ‘Ben: Jonson (The Grateful Acknowledger) dedicates both it <i.e., the play> and Himselfe.’ In very small type at the right-hand corner of the page, below the dedication, run the words ‘There follows an Epistle if (you dare venture on) the length.’ The Epistle begins overleaf.”

REA (1919 [138]): “As to the influence of this dedication on the famous dedication to the Sonnets of Sh., see LEE (1916 [675n]).”

DUNCAN-JONES (1997 [36–37]) challenges Lee’s theory that Thorpe and Eld procured and published Son against Sh.’s wishes and argues that Sh. elected to pass over his friend and former publisher Richard Field because Thorpe had established ties to the theater and could assure the author a better price on his work. “After all, Sh. had been one of the ‘leading Tragedians’ in J’s Sej (Tiberius or Sejanus, perhaps?), and it has even been suggested that he had a hand in writing it <rf. BARTON (1984 [94])>. He could scarcely
have failed to notice the up-market print publication of this play, which had been a flop in the theatre, and
to observe also that it was published by Thorpe and printed by Eld, ‘who discharged his difficult task with a
high degree of accuracy’ <ref. H&S (1932 [4:330])>. Having noticed that, Sh. surely also took note of
Thorpe’s 1607 publication of Volp. It may reasonably be supposed that Thorpe gave a good price for
literary texts by dramatists, for J, to name but one, is most unlikely to have settled for anything else.”

**DUNCAN-JONES (1997 [60–61])** notes that the phrasing and “mock-lapidary form” of Thorpe’s
dedication for Son may allude (mockingly on behalf of Sh.) to the Volp dedication and the consuls’
proclamation printed in act 5 of Sej. J perhaps answered back with his 1616 dedication of his Epig to the
Earl of Pembroke, which indirectly impugns the overtly personal nature of Son. [62–63] reproduces side-
by-side facsimiles of the two dedications.

argues that Thorpe may have intended to mimic J’s phrase by styling himself “THE WELL-WISHING. | ADVENTURER” in the dedication to the Son.

b) The Disclaimer

The Ded. printed in Q concludes with the self-deprecating disclaimer that “There follows an Epistle, if
you dare venture on the length.” F drops these lines, together with the title, “The Epistle,” used in Q.

**EVANS (1989 [307]):** “Never before in this way had J felt so elaborate a need to explain and justify his
intentions; he even jokes about the dedication’s extraordinary length.”

3. The Epistle

**GIFFORD (1816 [1:xxxv]):** “The Fox is dedicated, in a strain of unparalleled elegance and vigour, to
the two Universi—....”

[3:162n]: “It appears from this judicious and learned composition, which in elegance and vigor stands
yet unrivalled, that the objections subsequently urged against the stage by Prynne and Collier, were but the
echoes of former complaints. It would not have been much amiss, if those who found themselves aggrieved
by them had been content with referring to J; for, to speak, tenderly, they have, after all their exculpatory
efforts, added little of moment to what is to be found in this and the preceding pages.”

**CUNNINGHAM (1875 [3:497]):** “Of this address, Godwin, who was one of the first, in recent times,
properly to appreciate J’s genius, says, ‘The address to the Two Universities, prefixed to his most
consummate performance, the Fox, will strike every reader familiar with the happiest passages of Milton’s
prose, with its wonderfull resemblance.’”

**WARD (1875 [2:361]):** “… in 1607 with an elaborate Ded. <i.e., the Ded. and Epist.> to these two
‘most noble and most equal sisters.’ J made war upon a mightier although less tangible foe than any
representative of a depraved literary taste. The Ded. aforesaid, indeed, refers to the poetasters of the time as
degrading the art of poetry, and contrasts with them the true poet....”

464

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FLEAY (1891 [1:373]): "J refers to the EastHo matter in his Dedication <i.e., The Epistle>, and claims that in the 'works' entirely his there are no personalities except to mimics, buffoons, &c. (Marston, Dekker); he has not attacked public persons (Northumberland), nation (the Scots), order, or state (soldiers or lawyers); other men's crimes have been imputed to him."

REA (1919 [139]): "Critics have agreed in praising this dedicatory epistle as one of the noblest pieces of English prose. Its foundation is ultimately the critical theories of Horace, J' favorite author; but it must be remembered that these theories of Horace had been stated and adapted many times by the writers of the Renaissance, until they had become common property. It is, therefore, often difficult to determine whether a given passage is based on Horace directly, or on later writer. In the present case the source is the EpistApol of Erasmus, written in defense of his MorEnc, the chief source of Volp. As often in his borrowings, J has done little but select and rearrange sentences; ... the whole of the two works should be read together."

H&S (1925 [2:49]): "a stately and pregnant dedicatory address, the most important document we possess of his notions in criticism, and of his mind about his own art in this early phase of his career."

DUrTON (1983 [71]): "J saw fit to comment on the conclusion of the play in his Ded. of it to the twin Universities Oxford and Cambridge; he admits that 'my catastrophe may, in he strict rigour of comic law, meet censure' [quotes 104–5] on the grounds that the penalties meted out are too severe for a play of this kind. [...] As so often when he writes about his own practice as a dramatist, J is being somewhat disingenuous. The 'justice' which he so solemnly claims to have imitated here is suspect, to say the least."

BURT (1987 [546]): "It is clear that J sought institutional authority outside the public theater to resolve the problems of judgment posed by commercial entertainment. [...] As early as Volp J had tried to distinguish himself from rival entertainers like Littlewit and Leatherhead. In that play’s epistle to the two Universities, J satirizes the 'poetasters in this time' who take 'too much license'; he dares not deny the charge so often levelled by Puritan critics of the stage 'that now, especially in dramatic, or, as they term it, stage poetry, nothing but ribaldry, profanation, blasphemy, all license of offense to God, and man is practised.' By contrast, J wants to 'raise the despised head of poetry again,' the office of the comic poet being 'to imitate justice and instruct to life.' Yet the ending of Volp enforces a distinction between a comic poet like J and a mercenary mountebank like Volpone only with notorious difficulty. [...] Some authority, however qualified its moral credibility is present in the earlier plays to pass judgment on cozeners like Volp and Face, but in BartFair ... this authority is absent...."

McDONALD (1988 [8–9]): "In dedicating Volp to the two universities, J differentiates between his own and others' view of 'dramatick, or (as they terme it) stage-poetrie' [52], an analysis that Sh. probably would not have disputed. [...] But J and Sh. would have certainly disagreed on whether a poem should mean or be. [...] J's famous left-handed compliment, that Sh. ranked with the ancient masters despite inadequate classical learning, points to the celebrated difference in their response to classical literature. J advertises his allegiance to the ancient poets repeatedly ... [e.g.,] in the philosophical assumptions that govern the dedicatory letter to Volp."

465

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EVANS (1989 [307]): "... often read as an epitome of J's most enduring assumptions about the nature and purposes of art, the epistle also seems to reflect quite specific and contemporary concerns. [...] The epistle goes out of its way to deny—repeatedly—that Volp is aimed at anyone in particular; the extent and intensity of its denials are striking, and raise the possibility that J may have been rebutting specific charges. [...] In a sense, J's very vehemence undermines any certainty about his sure intentions or about how his words may have been received. The dedication raises more questions than it settles. Whether or not J intended any personal satire, his epistle seems concerned to answer such charges. At times it seems to preempt, point-by-point, the kinds of attacks leveled against him in the BL MS <Lansdowne 1198>.

[309] "The epistle, in short, sheds no certain light on the issue of whether J satirized Sutton, although that issue itself casts back an interesting and provocative glow on the epistle. It provides an intriguing contemporary context for what might otherwise see a timeless statement of general poetic principles."

PARKER (1999 [63n]): "The didactic view of art in this Epistle derives ultimately from Horace but more immediately from Minturno. Its techniques of self-defence are indebted to Erasmus' Epist.Apol, and had been deployed earlier in the suppressed ApoDial to Poet (1601). Many of the same points are repeated in the Prol."

PARKER (1999 [64n]), re: n. 43–49: "... the immediate source would appear to be Minturno (1599 [8]): 'What can or must appear more splendid than to contemplate the means by which you can instruct boys in every discipline; or exhort men to every virtue, to keep older men in the most honourable condition, or, if they begin to grow childish, to call them back to their former strength, or educate the people with wonderful delight, to carry them along to wherever you wish, and to pull them back from wherever you like. But to my mind, there is nothing more strange than that one man only out of such a great multitude of men, like a god—or certainly the interpreter of gods, as arbiter of nature, doctor of divine and human affairs, and master of morals, accomplishes alone, or with a few others, what by nature all men seem able to do....'"

Other writers who have commented on the Epistle in relation to Volp or otherwise include Rf. GODWIN (1815 [401]).

For further commentary related to the Epistle's application within the play, rf. app. Technique, s.v. "The Catastrophe."

4. The Commendatory Verses

LANGBAINE (1691 [298]): the play's "value is sufficiently manifested by the Verses of Mr. Beaumont and, Dr. Donne."

H&S (1937 [5:3–4]): "Following the precedent of the Sej quario, J prefaced the play with verse tributes from his friends. Very appropriately Donne, Chapman, Beaumont, and Fletcher were among the eulogist of this great play. There was [4] shrewd critical insight in Edmund Bolton's comment that J had rehandled the ancient drama 'Tanquam explorator' ['as an explorer'] (Parker, trans., 71n) and Donne's tribute—'Tam nemo veterum est sequitor, vt tu / Illos quod sequeris nouator audis' ['for no one is a follower of the
ancients like you (who) hearken as an innovator after those whom you will follow” (Parker, trans., 72n)]. They saw that he was no blind copyist of the classics.”

BENTLEY (1945 [1:87]): “Even when J’s friends refer to the fate of his plays in the theater, as in the commentary verses for Sej and Volp, they seldom say anything specific about the performance of particular roles.”

5. The Persons of the Comedy

Few critics have overlooked the fact that J purposely assigned Italianate names to Volp’s Venetian characters. Likewise most of the characters successfully fulfill the specific animalistic natures and dehumanized actions suggested by their bestial designations. Identifying and interpreting the significance of this technique, esp. where is concerns Bonario, Celia, and the Would-bes, is a late feature of the play’s critical tradition.

JACKSON (1968 [65-67]): “To the construction of such correspondences was far more than word-play: it was part of the truthful framework into which his plays were built. Names do not so much expose the nature of the characters as show that exposure is inevitable. [...] [...] The most significant <of recognitions> bring out the effect on the action of an unalterable cast of mind.”

[66] “Volpone’s incomprehension of his role’s limited potentialities is made plain as he interprets his name.… [...] In short, the names are no comparison, but a complete identification. [...] The picture darkens when we realize that Voltore is a vulture, Volpone is a fox; they cannot escape the meanings of their names even if they try. [...] In a play like Volp … this predestination results, if not in tragedy, at least in tragic rather than comical satyre. [...] […] J’s names, although they do represent the entire potentiality of each of his characters, do not necessarily represent the entire potentiality of man. [...] From this point of view, the naming of Volp is optimistic: the relegation of all malefactors to an animal level postulates a higher human plane which they fail to reach. [...] The high standard is upheld and represented by Celia and Bonario in Volp … <who> become not less but more than individuals, almost a copy of the divine pattern graciously granted to man. [...] In Volp the heavenly illumination does finally penetrate society and its judgment: man’s animal elements are rejected, his spiritual worth reaffirmed.”

DESSEN (1986 [136]): “My purpose is not to allegorize … but rather to suggest how moral abstractions that [137] leap out at us from printed speech prefixes can become considerably less abstract when conditioned by the realities of stage performance.”

Other critics who have commented on the significance of the names J assigns to his characters include: BRADBROOK (1955 [123]), et al.

6. The Argument

The play’s Argument, which ADAMS (1979 [3n]) glosses as “a capsule summary of the plot,” is set in an acrostic that uses, per HARP (2001 [4n]), “the first letter of each line [to form] … the title.” REA (1919

LANGBAINE (1691 [298]): “... the Argument is form’d into an Acrostick, like those of *Plautus*, which are said to be writ by *Priscian*, or some other Eminent Grammarian.”

CHETWOOD (1756 [20]): “... the title *Volpone* is formed into an Acrostick, like some of those of *Plautus*, (which Manner in writing is supposed to be invented by *Priscian* the Grammarian,) and our Author calls it the Argument.”

WHALLEY (1756 [2:273n]): is an acrostic; and seems to have been written in imitation of those acrostical arguments, which have been invented by some later grammarians, and prefixed to the comedies of *Plautus*.

GIFFORD (1816 [3:167n]) repr. Whalley directly and cites Priscian (fl. 500 CE) as one of the “later grammarians.”

REA (1919 [145]) notes that acrostic arguments “are not by *Plautus*, but probably by some grammarian of the 2nd c. Their form leads to excessive brevity, and a consequent roughness of expression, which J has imitated to some extent.”

H&S (1950 [9:686]) note that J may have been “copying those found before all the plays of *Plautus* except the Bacchides.”

REA (1919 [145]), followed by PARKER (1999 [83n]), draws attention to apparent contradictions in J by noting the poet’s “usual scorn for such ingenuities in verse,” as expressed in *ConvDrum* 435–39: “& said of that Pangyrat who wrot Panagyriques in acrostics, Windowes crosses, that he was homo Miserimæ patientiae ["a man of the most wretched endurance"], he scorned Anagrams & had ever in his mouth *turpe est, difficiles amare Nugas. et stultus labor est ineptiar* [Martial, *Epig* 2.86.9–10: “It is humiliating to undertake difficult trifles; and the effort spent on idiotic tasks is foolish”].” Trans. provided by PARFITT (1988 [611]), who notes similar passages in J, *Epig* 43, “An Execration Upon Vulcan,” lines 32ff.

ANDERSON (1975 [48]): “Volpone is the representative of a new attitude towards the world, and the Arg. that precedes the play, in its acrostic spelling out of Volpone’s name, indicates the domination which he and his values will have on the society in which he lives.”

7. The Prologue

HYDE (1949 [109-10]): “There is every indication that J’s satirical comedies were eagerly awaited, eagerly seen and eagerly torn to bits. This negative popularity however was cold comfort to a vain man of great ability, and there is proof in his prologues beginning with *Volp* (produced in 1605) that he had finally and grudgingly surrendered to many of the ‘ill customs of the age.’ He then and there attempted to [110] drop the role of a militant crusader for that of a more conventional playwright primarily eager for applause. In the new role he began to write prologues that were much more like other men’s, and much less stimulating.”

SALE (1951 [183]): “the Prol. to *Volp* is not exactly modest.”

468
ANDERSON (1975 [48]): “... also emphasizes the instructional as well as the entertaining nature of this comedy....”

BEVINGTON (2000 [74]): “J speaks of himself ... as surrounded by enemies. Some accuse ... that ... he can write nothing but satire. These same carping critics ‘flout’ him for taking ‘a year’ to write each play, thus accusing him of being too labored. J replies testily that he wrote Volpone in only five weeks. [...] Clearly he is sensitive to the charge that his writing smells of the lamp and the study, in contrast to Sh.'s more ‘natural’ flow of language.”

G. Literary and Cultural Influences

1. Literary Influences

a) Thomas Middleton, Michaelmas Term (1605–6)

FREEBURG (1915 [144–45]): “It has been suggested that Middleton received his inspiration from Volpone... but no evidence has been offered to show that Volpone preceded Michaelmas Term. FLEAY (1861 [2:91; 1:372]), on the other hand, presents fair evidence that Michaelmas Term was acted in 1604, and Volpone in 1605. But there is no need of seeking a source in Volpone. The spy scene in question might have been suggested by a number of earlier spy plays. As for the device of a disguised person reporting his own death, that too, was already old when Michaelmas Term was played. The dramatic prototype of such false report is found in the Electra of Sophocles.... [145] In Eng. drama similar false reports of death had been made by disguised persons in The Blind Beggar of Alexandria (1596), in Antonio and Mellida (1599), in The Malcontent (1601), in The Two Maids of Moreclacke (1603), and in The London Prodigal (1603–5). Thus we see that neither Middleton nor J had to go far afield for this spy situation.”

CHATTERJI (1968 [362–63]): “It will have been noticed that within the course of this discussion comparative references to Volpone keep recurring and perhaps it is desirable that the threads be tied up in a final knot. The basic theme of both plays is the cupidity of the rogues who try to cozen others for material gain, their sin ultimately recoiling on themselves. Both Volpone and Quomodo base their ethics on craft and wit. [...] Deception by means of some kind of disguise is practiced in either case. The relation of Volpone to Mosca parallels that of Quomodo to his ‘spirits’....” [362] “Volpone and Quomodo are equally self-conscious and jubilant over their plots, and ultimately it is their mirth that leads to their undoing. They pretend death to observe the reactions of others and over-reach themselves by their disguises.... [...] Retributive justice is meted out to them in final court-scenes. [...] By this analysis, it seems probable that Middleton knew Volpone and consciously imitated some of its features which remain curiously unassimilated in his own play. The 1616 Folio states that Volpone was acted in 1605; even if this is to be taken as early 1606, by J’s reckoning, Middleton could still have seen the play while working on his own. In fact, the influence of Volpone may even be regarded as part-evidence for dating Michaelmas Term.”

GEORGE (1971 [19]) regards the “double-crossing of Quomodo by Shortyard” as related to Volpone.

PASTER (2000 [9–10]), re: the possible performance date of 1605 for Michaelmas Term, notes that “accepting this date, however, has implications for analysing the evident similarities in plot and

469
characterization between *Michaelmas Term* and J’s *Volp*, whose composition probably dates to late Feb or early Mar 1605 and whose first production certainly took place by the end of that month. [...] But while several points of comparison between the two plays do seem manifest, the question of which play has priority is less clear. Those arguing in favor of *Michaelmas Term*’s priority might ask how many new plays the Paul’s Boys—who from late 1606 played only intermittently and are clearly in decline—would have commissioned from Middleton any time later than the middle of that year. Those in favor of *Volp* might note that *Volp* [10] has been cited as an influence on two other Middleton comedies—*A Mad World, My Master* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. The resemblances adduced in both cases are far more general, hence less persuasive, than the two counterfeit deaths in *Volp* and *Michaelmas Term* but still point towards Middleton’s indebtedness to J rather than the other way round. [...] The more general resemblances ... could simply result from the playwrights’ common use of the generic furniture of comic convention. Or they could result from Middleton’s borrowing from J details for these two plays as J had borrowed *Michaelmas Term* in writing *Volp*. Such was the heady dialogism of early 17th-c. dramatic composition.”

For analysis related to these two plays and their various similarities and differences, also see *Chatterji* (1968 [pass.]), *Paster* (2000 [15–16]).

b) Thomas Middleton, *A Mad World, My Master* (1604–6)

*Hallett* (1971 [24–25]) identifies a series of similarities between *Volp* and Middleton’s play, e.g., the courtesan “Frank Gullman ... counterfeits an illness and dupes three sets of visitors who come to the sickroom—Sir Bounteous Progress, Inesse and Possibility, and Harebrain. Here, too, the visitors are present because of some personal interest or folly and here, too, they are unable to detect the deception”; “Gullman requests her accomplice, Penitent Brothel, to disguise himself as a physician so that he can solicit gifts from the gulls who appear at her bedside”; “the list of cures compiled by Penitent for the purpose perhaps was inspired by the similar list compiled by Lady Would-bee for Volpone”; “Gullman, who has been acting as bawd for Penitent Brothel, has devised the sickroom scheme primarily for the purpose of persuading Harebrain to allow his wife to visit her. Harebrain, like Corvino, has all the stock characteristics of the jealous husband, including that of keeping his wife behind the locked and guarded doors of his house, and the problem facing Gullman is to get Mrs. Harebrain to a place where Penitent can meet her. Thus, by pretending to be ill, Gullman persuades Harebrain to send his wife to her house, ostensibly to comfort her in her last moments.” [25] […] “When Harebrain is summoned by Gullman to her bed chamber for a last farewell, he finds that the ‘expiring’ virgin is naming her heirs. The future cuckold is duly impressed during his call at the sickroom ...”; “Harebrain begs his wife to visit the sickroom of Gullman but Mrs. Harebrain refuses to go, arguing that if a woman is but seen on the streets alone, her virtue is called into question. She states that she will undertake the trip only if Harebrain accompanies her and thus Harebrain, like Corvino, delivers his wife personally to the waiting lover”; “in both plays, the conversation between the invalid and the lady is overheard by an eavesdropper.” “There are important differences between the two actions,” namely: “the roles of Volpone and Mosca are reversed in *A Mad World*”; “Mrs.
Harebrain is not an unsuspecting victim of the scheme. "Nevertheless, the parallels between Middleton's and J's are too many and too exact to be merely accidental. Middleton has obviously borrowed the basic idea of the sickroom device from J. The date scholars have assigned to A Mad World tends to confirm the relationship."

c) John Marston, The Dutch Courtesan (1605)


d) Cyril Tourneur, The Revenger's Tragedy (1607); The Atheist's Tragedy (ca. 1611)

Ornstein (1960 [112–13]): "The apparent imitations of Volp in The Atheist's Tragedy support my belief that The Revenger's Tragedy was also influenced by J's play. The same dark, cynical, satiric spirit broods over Volp and The Revenger's Tragedy. Both plays center on the conflict between a pair of cunning, knavish minds. They have similar allegorical characters, ironic reversals, and uses of disguises and deceptions. Like Volpone's, Vindice's disguises reveal more of the inner man than they hide, since a mastery of deception requires some natural affinity for the assumed role. 'I have considered,' J writes in Disc, 'our whole life like a Play: wherein every man, forgetful of himselfe, is in travaile with expression of another. Nay, wee so [113] insist in imitating others, as wee cannot (when it is necessary) returne to ourselves....' Here in sober commonplace is the moral 'lesson' of Volp and The Revenger's Tragedy."

[124–25] "The attempted rape fortuitously prevented <in The Atheist's Tragedy> is, I think, a reminiscence of Volp, as is [125] D'Amville's glorification of his gold at the beginning of the fifth act. Like J's hero, D'Amville finds an unlooked-for justice in a court of law, where true judgment is meted out despite the frailties of human wisdom."

e) Thomas Killigrew, Thomaso, or The Wanderer (1663)

Langbaine (1691 [313–14]): "He has made use of Ben Johnson considerably, for not only the Character of Lopus, but even the very Words are copied for Johnson's Fox, where Vulpone personates Scoto of Mantua: as the Reader will see by comparing Act 4. Sc. 2. of this Play, with that of the Fox, Act 2. Sc. 2...."

Gildon (1699 [83]), per Langbaine, notes: "... Thomaso: or, The Wanderer, in Two Parts, a Comedy, fol. The Author has here borrowed, not only a story from Fletcher's Captain, but several things from Johnson's Fox."

H&$ (1950 [9:703]): "Thomas Killigrew, Thomaso, Part I, 4.2, in Comedies and Tragedies (1664), 360–61, has quoted freely from Volpone's speech to the crowd in his Lopus the Mountebank. He borrows with only slight alteration lines 75–86, 151–70, 173–85, 228–98; these are put on the lips of a mountebank at Madrid."
d) George Ruggle, *Ignoramus* (1615)

Evans (1994 [93–94]), re: similarities between George Ruggle's *Ignoramus* (1615) and Poet, DevAss, and Volp: “Ruggle’s presentation of a possessed lawyer is strongly reminiscent of J’s own depiction of Voltore in [94] Volp 5.12.21–35. It is possible, in other words, that Ruggle himself borrowed from J, which would have given J all the more reason to return the compliment <via DevAss>.”

2. Cultural Influences

a) Character-based Nicknames: “Volpone”

Ward (1875 [2:363]): “Everybody knows how, at a critical stage of events in the reign of Queen Anne, Dr. Sacheverell in his notorious sermon pointed an attack upon the Whig leaders as representatives of revolution principles, by alluding to the Lord Treasurer Godolphin under the nickname of the Old Fox or Volpone.” If they don’t, the first and fullest study of this phenomenon, which accounts for dozens of non-theatrical allusions, is Noyes (1934). Ward cites as his source, Stanhope, *History of England under the Reign of Queen Anne* (1870 [405]).”

Ward (1875 [2:363n]): “Thus we read in the hearsay account of the fall of Clarendon given in Ludlow’s *Memoirs*, ed. Firth (1894 [2:407]): ‘The young man [Charles II’s son, the Duke of Richmond] unwarily took the bait, and, exclusively relying upon what the old Volpone [Clarendon] had said, married Miss Stewart.’”

H&S (1950 [9:686–87]), who add, “Later it [i.e., the name ‘Volpone’] was bandied about as a political nickname, e.g. of ‘this old dissembler,’ James Ley Earl of Marlborough, Lord Treasurer, 1624–28, who did not pay the judges and tricked them when they asked for their pay; Whitelocke, *Liber Farnelicus*: ‘he was wont to be called “Vulpone,” and I think he well deserved it now as ever’ (Camden Society, p. 108).”

Sacheverell described the Whig ministers on 5 Nov 1709 as “wily Volpones” in the famous sermon, ‘On the Perils from False Brethren,’ preached in St. Paul’s in reference to the nickname of Sidney, Earl Godolphin, also Lord Treasurer (p. 22) Francis Gwyn of Ford Abbey had referred to [Sidney] under this name in a private letter to Harley (Historical MSS. Commission, *MSS. of the Duke of Portland* [1894], 3:x and 3:567). Thomas Burnet wrote to George Duckett on 6 Oct 1712: ‘I must tell you, I disapprove of the name Harlequin [for Harley] because it has been used before, and likewise of the word Volpone for the very same reason.... call him Mosca, who out-tricked Volpone himself, and got all his wealth into his hands, vid. Ben Johnson’s Fox’ (*Letters, 1712–1722*, ed. Nicol Smith, 10).”

b) Character-based Nicknames: “Sir Politic Would-Be”

Ward (1875 [2:363n]): “More curious, as implying a knowledge of the play beyond its leading personage, is the following passage in Mrs. Hutchinson’s *Memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson*, ed. Firth (1885 [2:17]): ‘Mr. Millington seemed very well to approve of them [the Committee at Nottingham which was always at odds with the Governor], and protested again to the Governor the faithlessness of his heart to him, excusing his intimacy with his enemies upon a zeal he had to do him service, by discovering their
designs against him, and called himself therein <sic> Sir Politick Wouldbe; but the Governor disliking his double-dealing...."
The following alphabetical catalogue functions as both a traditional bibliography and a legend to the various sigla used throughout this critical variorum. Each sigilum consists of the author, editor, or printer's last name in small caps followed by the date of earliest publication or composition in parentheses, e.g., DONALDSON (1985). Each entry provides the full publication information for the work, followed in some cases by bracketed notes. Page numbers for each quotation or reference have been cited in square brackets through this edition's notes and appendix, e.g. DONALDSON (1985 [617]). Please note: in order to present the most chronologically accurate representation of Volpone's critical tradition, it has been necessary in some cases to include both the original publication date of each work in parenthesis together with the volume/page information available from successive reprints. These unusual cases are represented in the entries for given works. When it has not been possible to consult or double-check the earliest printing of a given work directly, additional bibliographic information regarding reprints and reissues has been subjoined to the entry using the abbreviation repr.; bracketed page numbers associated with these works derive from the latest printing listed in the entry. In its current presentation, the variorum has yet to make full and equal use of the critical materials listed in this bibliography; the bibliography itself, however, provides a near-complete catalogue of the primary and secondary works written in English that have been devoted to Ben Jonson's Volpone.

**ACTORS' BILL (1638)**  "Actors' Bill for Plays at Court, 1638"; rf. ADAMS & BRADLEY (1922 [259]), who describe this as "[from a bill for Court performance presented by the King's Men. The MS is slightly defective at the top, and words have been supplied, in brackets, from a similar bill presented by the King's Men in 1637."


AGATE (1938) James Agate, “Volpone; or The Fox by Ben Jonson”; this 1938 review was later collected in James Agate, Brief Chronicles, 1943; repr. BB&B (1962 [446–48]).


ANON (n.d.) Suggested by, or the source of a line in, SUCKLING (1937); this undated epigram has been reprinted in BROOKE & PARADISE (1933 [528]).


ANON (1683) Anonymous, Remarks Upon E. Settle’s Narrative. London: Printed and are to be sold by A. Banks for the Author, 1683; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:184]).

ANON (1692?) Anonymous, From the Text Printed below a 1692? Engraving Titled The Lawyers Arms, in Catalogue of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum, Division I, Political and Personal Satires, 1876; as quoted in in BENTLEY (1945 [2:220]); rf. NOYES (1934 [164–65]).

ANON (1700) Anonymous, text from an account used in the Morley v. Davenant suit, C10 364/8; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:264]); rf. HOTSON (1928 [378]).


ATKINSON (1928a) J. Brooks Atkinson, “[Rare Ben: How Zweig’s Adaptation of Volpone Transforms Jonson’s Text—Latest Intelligence of the Poets’ War of 1600] or [Theater Reviews],” NYT (22 Apr 1928): sec. 9:1:1.


BAKER (1715) Four Select Plays. viz. The Silent Woman. Volpone, or the Fox. Cataline’s Conspiracy. The Alchemist. By Ben. Johnson. To which is Added, Timon of Athens, or The Man-Hater. By Mr. Shadwell. London: Printed for J. Baker, at the Black Boy in Pater-Noster-Row, 1715. [Notes: The front t.p. of this 12mo collection would seem to complete the defective Dobell copy cited in H&S (1950 [9:152]).] Moreover, the separate t.p. for Volp lists the same publishing information that first appeared in the 1710 printing, namely “London: Printed and Sold by H Hills in Black-Fryars, near the Water-side.” The microfilm version of the British Museum copy available in TEC (shelf-mark 1607/4312) and the FSL copy (PR 2602 [1710?] Cage) would appear to be identical; cf. HILLS (1710?).

BAKER (1764) [David Erskine Baker, The Companion to the Play-House: or, An Historical Account of All the Dramatic Writers (and their Works) that have Appeared in Great Britain and Ireland, from the Commencement of our Theatrical Exhibitions down to the Present Year 1764. 2 vols. London: Printed for T. Becket and P. A. Dehondt; C. Henderson; and T. Davies, 1764.


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Majesty's Servants. With the Allowance of the Master of Reveis. The Author B. J. Simul et jucanda, et idonea dicere vitae. Horat. London: Printed and Sold by the Booksellers in Town and Country. H&S (1950 [9:153–54]) cite contemporaneous advertisements to support an approximate publication date of Nov 1738; the Folger copy of Volp (PR2622 1739a Cage) has the same t.-p. and pagination, and may in fact derive from this collection.


Bradford (1648) Thomas Bradford, "Here is a Chimist which from a rude masse...," in Robert Baron, Cyprian Academy, 1648; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [292]).


Brome (1661) Alexander Brome, "Song XXV, 'The Prisoners. Written when O. C. attempted to be King,'" Songs and Other Poems, 1661; repr. BENTLEY (1945 [2:114]).


CHALMERS (1799) George Chalmers, A Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-Papers: Being a Reply to Mr. Malone’s Answer, which was Early Announced, but Never Published: with a Dedication to George Steevens, and a Postscript to T. J. Mathias. London: London, T. Egerton, 1799.


CHETWOOD (1756) W. R. Chetwood, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Ben. Jonson, Esq. Poet Laureat to King James the First, and King Charles the First ... to which are Added, Two Comedies, (Wrote by Ben.


COLLIER (1699)  Jeremy Collier, *A Defence of The Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage, &c., being a Reply to Mr. Congreve’s Amendments, &c. and to the Vindication of the Author of The Relapse*, 1699; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:254]).


COLMAN (1771)  George Colman the Elder, *Volpone; or The Fox. A Comedy, As Altered from Ben Jonson, and Performed at the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden. Regulated from the Prompt-Book, By Permission of the Managers, By Mr. Wild, Prompter*. London: Printed for John Bell, 1778. [Notes: This altered version appeared in vol. 19 of the collection *Bell’s British Theatre, Consisting of the Most Esteemed English Plays. Printed for John Bell*. The play reprints George Colman the Elder’s condensed version, whose efforts to control the both the play’s running time and indecency have been indicated in the left margins by inverted commas. Scenes have also been transposed in the first act and some lines have been reassigned at the conclusion. Rf. H&S (1950 [9:154]). This version was first performed in 1771, hence the parenthesis used for this entry.]

COMPANY BILL (1630)  From Folger MS. 2068.8, and described by BENTLEY (1945 [2:43]) as “a bill for the presentation of plays by the King’s Men at Court, 30 Sept 1630–21 Feb 21 1630/31.” Rf. BENTLEY (1941–68 [1:27–29]).


CORNWALL (1838)  Barry Cornwall, ed., *The Works of Ben Jonson, with a Memoir of His Life and Writings*. London: Edward Moxon, 1838. [Notes: repr. text and sds of GIFFORD (1816), minus textual notes; adds a Glossary (mostly drawn from Gifford).]


COTTER & HAMILTON (1749)  Volpone, *or, the Fox. A Comedy. As it is Acted at the Theatres. By Ben. Johnson. Simul et jucunda, et idonea dicere vitae. Horat. Dublin: Printed for Joseph Cotter, under Dick's Coffee-House in Skinner-Row, and Joseph Hamilton, in Christ-Church-Lane, Booksellers, 1749*. [Notes: This 12mo ed. of Volp receives no mention in H&S (1950), but may be found in TEC (shelf mark: 640. h. 18[6]; RP Reel No.: 3948; RP Reel Location No.: 5). The ed. omits the ded. and epist., but includes an opening "Preface" and Henry Springer's "To the Memory of the Author" at the conclusion (87–88). Neither text receives mention in CRAIG (1990).]


Cranefield & Feder, trans. See CRANEFIELD & FEDERN (1967).


CUMBERLAND (1787) Richard Cumberland, "Of Eupolis, his Fragments Compared with Certain Passages in Ben Jonson [Essay no. 74]." in The Observer: Being a Collection of Moral, Literary and Familiar Essays. 5 vols. London: Printed for C. Dilly, 1786 (vols. 1–3); 1788 (vol. 4); 1790 (vol. 5); repr. 2nd ed., 1787 (vols. 1–3); 1788 (vol. 4); 1790 (vol. 5), 3:126–35.


488

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Davison (1602) [Francis Davison], A Poetical Rhapsody, Containing Diverse Sonnets, Odes, Elegies, Madrigalls, and Other Poesies, both in Rime, and Measured Verse. 1st ed. London: Printed by V. S. for John Baily, 1602; repr. as A Poetical Rhapsody, 1602-1621, ed. Hyder Edward Rollins, 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1931. [Notes: A Poetical Rhapsody is a poetic miscellany without a single author; the proverb in question appears as an anon. epigraph on the t.p. of the 1st ed. The present attribution of these verses to Francis Davison simply follows Rea (1919 [175]) as a matter of editorial convenience.]


Dennis (1720) John Dennis, “The Character and Conduct of Sir John Edgar ... 1720”; rf. Dennis (1695).
DENNIS (1722) John Dennis, "A Defence of Sir Fopling Flutier, a Comedy Written by Sir George Etheridge, 1722"; cf. DENNIS (1695).


DIGGES (1635) Leonard Digges, "Upon Master William Shakespeare, the Deceased Author, and his Poems"; composed in 1635, printed in Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare (1640); as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [188–89]).


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DRYDEN (1677) John Dryden, “Prologue to Charles Davenant’s Circe,” in Charles Davenant, Circe,
A Tragedy as it is Acted at His Royal Highness the Duke of York’s Theatre. London: R. Tonson, 1677; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [406]), who assign the date 1684.


EVELYN (1662) John Evelyn, Diary of John Evelyn, to which are Added a Selection from his Familiar Letters and the Private Correspondence between King Charles I and Sir Edward Nicholas and between Sir

493

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F2 (1640) Ben Jonson, The Workes of Benjamin Jonson. 2 vols. London: Printed by Richard Bishop, and are to be sold by Andrew Crooke, 1640. [Notes: The Second (Jonson) Folio].

F3 (1692) THE WORKS OF BEN JONSON, Which were formerly Printed in Two Volumes, are now Reprinted in One. To which is added A COMEDY CALLED THE NEW INN. With Additions never before Published. ——neque, me ut miretur turbâ laborâ : | Contenus paucis lectoribus. | LONDON, Printed by Thomas Hodgkin, for H. Herringman, E. Brewster, | T. Baffet, R. Chifwell, M. Wotton, G. Conyers, M DC XCI. [Notes: The Third (Jonson) Folio].


FANE (1675) Sir Francis Fane, "Epilogue," Love in the Dark, or, The Man of Bus'ness, a Comedy: Acted at the Theatre Royal by His Majesties Servants. London: Printed by T.N. for Henry Herringman, 1675; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [380]).


FEALES (1732) The Three Celebrated Plays of that Excellent Poet Ben Johnson. Viz. The Fox, a Comedy. The Alchemist, a Comedy. The Silent Woman, a Comedy. To which is added a Compleat Catalogue of All the Plays that were ever Printed in the English Language, to the Year 1732. London, Printed for W. Feales, at Rowe's Head, over-against Clement's-Inn Gate. Where may be had Variety of Plays. [Notes: The t.p. for Volpone: Volpone: or, the Fox. A Comedy, First Acted in the Year 1605. By the King's Majesty's Servants. With the Allowance of the Master of Revels. The Author B. J. Simul et jucunda, et idonea dicer vitae. Horat. London: Printed for J. Walthoe, G. Conyers, J. Knapton, R. Knapton, D. Midwinter and A. Ward, A. Bettersworth and C. Hitch, B. Linot, J. Tonson, W. Jemy, J. Osborn and T. Longman, R. Robinson, T. Wotton, and B. Motte. And sold by W. Feales, at Rowe's Head, over-against Clement's-Inn Gate. 1732. The 12mo copy reproduced in TEC (shelf-mark 11763.ppp.48; reel no. 8583, reel location no. 4) lacks the J. Van der Gucht engraving noted by H&S (1950 [9:153]) and bound in the FSL copy (PR 2602 132 Cage); however, though its pages have been trimmed, the microfilm copy includes handwritten notes that reflect a previous owner's interest in the legendary circumstances surrounding the play's publication and performance history. As far as I can determine, the owner's notes would seem to date from the middle decades of the eighteenth century considering the book's publication in 1732, the style of handwriting, and an explicit reference to the birth of George III (1738). Legible portions of the notes written on the t.p. and its verso read as follows: (1) beneath the "FOX" of title are two lines "said to be drawn for M. Sutton [founder of the Charter House]"; (2) beneath "COMEDY" in the title reads "but not true"; (3) to the right of "The Author B. J., the writer has add "the day George 3 was born [i.e., 4 June 1738] ...; the next two lines are both clipped at the left margin and somewhat illegible. Regarding the "Catalogue" appended to this work, asterisks indicate "Acting Plays"
like Volpone still current in the London theaters. Feales also appended and advertisement to the back pages for *The English Theatre, The Fox* would have been in the third part of vol. 4.]


**FLETCHER (1647)** John Fletcher, *The Faire Maid of the Inne*; repr. in B&F (1647).


FRANCKLIN (1781)  Thomas Francklin, The Works of Lucian, 4 vols. London: Printed for T. Cadell, 1787; as quoted in HOLT (1905a [63]).


496


HALL (1640) S. Hall, “Things hid in wide-sleeve gownes, all you can see...,” in Samuel Harding, On Sicily and Naples, or, The Fatal Union. Oxford: Printed by William Turner, 1640; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [269]).


HICKERINGILL (1673) Edmund Hickeringill, Gregory, Father-Greybeard, with his Vizard Off: or, News from the Cabal in Some Reflections upon a Late Pamphlet Entituled, The Rehearsal Transpros’d. London: Printed by Robin Hood, 1673; as quoted and documented in BENTLEY (1945 [2:159–60]).


HOLT (1905) Lucius Hudson Holt, Volpone, or, The Fox, by Ben Jonson, Edited with Introduction, Notes, and Glossary. [Notes: Unpublished MS. ed. of Volpone submitted to Yale University in 1905 and housed in the Yale University Library. All quotations attributed to Holt’s ed. derive from the notes of Rea and other later eds.]


502


HOWELL (1618) James Howell, "To Dr Francis Mansell, since Principal of Jesus College in Oxford [20 Mar 1618]"; rf. HOWELL (1615).

HOWELL (1619) James Howell, "To My Father; from Amsterdam [1 May 1619]"; rf. HOWELL (1615).

HOWELL (1622) James Howell, "To My Cousin, Mr Will Martin at Brussels; from Paris [18 Mar 1622]"; rf. HOWELL (1615).

HOWELL (1629) James Howell, "To my Father, Mr. Ben. Johnson," 1629; rf. HOWELL (1615). [Notes: BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [153]) regard Howell’s works as “probably not genuine letters.”]


JOHNSON (1714) Volpone: or, The Fox. A Comedy. Written by Ben. Johnson. [The Hague]: Printed for T. Johnson, 1714. [Notes: this ed. was printed in The Hague according to H&S (1950 [9:152]) and published in vol. 12 in A Collection of the Best English Plays; this small 8vo ed. is available through TEC, shelfmark 1487.a.18(5).]


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KOEPPEL (1895)  Emil Koeppel, Quellen-Studien zu den Dramen Ben Jonson’s, John Marston’s und Beaumont’s und Fletcher’s. Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1895.


LC (1668/69) Lord Chamberlain, List of Plays Allotted to Thomas Killigrew on 12 Jan 1668/69, 5/12, p. 212; rf. NICOLL (1923 [315]), BENTLEY (1945 [2:138]).


LC (1667) Lord Chamberlain, Warrant of 29 Aug 1668, for plays acted from 10 Dec 1666 to 31 July 1668; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:126]); also rf. NICOLL (1923 [305–6]).


507


MARIOT (1622) John Marriot, “The Stationer to the Reader,” 1622; printed as a forward to George Wither, *Faire-Virtue*, 1622; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [126–27]).


MAYNE (1647) Jasper Mayne, A Late Printed Sermon Against False Prophets, Vindicated by Letter, from the Causeless Aspersions of Mr. Francis Cheynell, 1647; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2.72]).


MELVILLE (1683) James Melville, The Memoires of Sir James Melvil of Hal-hill: Containing an Impartial Account of the Most Remarkable Affairs of State during the Last Age, not Mention’d by Other Historians: More Particularly Relating to the Kingdoms of England and Scotland under the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots & King James. In all which Transactions the Author was Personally and Publicly Concerned. Now Published from the Original Manuscript. By George Scott, Gent. London: Printed by E. H. for R. Boulter, 1683.


Wotton, S. Birt, B. Motte, C. Corbet and G. Conyers. MDCCXXXIX. [Notes: a reissue of FEALES 1732 per H&S (1950 [9:153]). Rf. Folger PR 2622 1739; also, TEC (Reel no. 10639, reel location no. 8) notes the following of its copy, which is otherwise that of 1739 above: "Titlepage in red and black. Also issued as part of 'The Acting Plays of Ben Johnson.' London, T. Lowndes, (1770?)."]

MILDMAy (1638) Sir Humphrey Mildmay, Entries in his account book and diary for 27 Oct 1638; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:56]); also, rf. BENTLEY (1941-68 [2:678]).


MOUNTFORT (1691) William Mountfort, "Prologue," King Edward the Third, with the Fall of Mortimer Earl of March, 1691; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [422]).


MUFFET (1658) Thomas Muffet, Theatre of Insects; repr. in Topsell, The History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents. London: E. Cotes, for G. Sawbridge, 1658.


PEPYS (1665) Samuel Pepys, Diary, 1660–69; repr. The Diary of Samuel Pepys, ed. Robert Latham and
(1990 [240]).

(1940): 11–18.

PETER (1956) John Desmond Peter, Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature. Oxford: Clarendon


PHILLIPS (1675) Edward Phillips, Theatrum Poetarum, or, A Compleat Collection of the Poets Especially
the Most Eminent, of All Ages, the Antients Distinguish 't from the Moderns in their Several Alphabets, with
Some Observations and Reflections upon Many of Them, Particularly Those of our Own Nation, together
with a Prefatory Discourse of the Poets and Poetry in Generall. London: Printed for Charles Smith, 1675;
as quoted and documented in CRAIG (1990 [307–9]); rf. BRADLEY & ADAMS (1923 [378–79]).

PICCINI (1896) G. Piccini (aka Jarro), L’epistolario d’Arlecchino: (Tristano Martinelli) 1556–1631:


POOLE (1657) Joshua Poole, The English Parnassus: or, A Helpe to English Poesie. Containing A
Collection of All Rhyming Monosyllables, the Choicest Epithets, and Phrases, 1657; repr. BENTLEY (1945
[2:101]).


Origins, History and Influence of a Dramatic Tradition. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul,
1975. 144–52.

POWELL (1729) Volpone, or, the Fox. A Comedy. As it is Acted in the Theatres. By Ben. Johnson. Dublin:
Printed by S. Powell for George Risk, George Ewing, and William Smith, Booksellers in Dame’s-Street,
1729. [Notes: This ed. of Volp appears in vol. 1 of Ben. Jonson’s Plays. in Two Volumes. Vol. I.
Containing, Volpone; or, the Fox. Catiline his Conspiracy. Bartholomew Fair. Sejanus his Fall. The
publishing info. is the same as above. The 12mo copy filmed by TEC (shelf-mark 11771.bb.8) lacks the t.p.
noted by H&S (1950 [9:153]) and bound in the copy housed at FSL.]

PRAZ (1958) Mario Praz, The Flaming Heart: Essays on Crashaw, Machiavelli, and Other Studies in the
Relations between Italian and English Literature from Chaucer to T. S. Eliot. Garden City, NY:

517

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RANDOLPH (1630)  Thomas Randolph, Aristippus, 1630; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:42]). [Notes: Regarding these allusions, BENTLEY (1945 [2:42]) notes that “[t]he first passage comes from Randolph’s Aristippus (1630), sig. C7’. The second passage does not appear in printed editions of the play but is found immediately following the first in the manuscript of the play (BM Sloan MS. 2531). See J. J. Parry, “A New Version of Randolph’s Aristippus,” MLN 32 (1917): 351–54.”]

RAWLINS (1678) [Thomas Rawlins, the Younger], Tunbridge-Wells, or a Days Courtship, 1678, act 1; as quoted in BENTLEY (1945 [2:172]).


ROWLANDSON (1612) S. R. [Samuel Rowlandson], "In Vulponem," The Curteaine-Drawer of the World, 1612; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [83]).


SCHEVE (1950) D. A. Scheve, “Jonson’s Volpone and Traditional Fox Lore,” RES n.s. 1.3 (Jul 1950): 242-44.

Scheve, trans. See SCHEVE (1950).


Skeat, tr. This translation of Marie’s fable, by W.W. Skeat, was printed in *The Academy*, July 23, 1887 (p. 56) and reprinted in Vol III, pp. 434-35, of his edition of Chaucer.


SPEED (1675) Samuel Speed, The Legend of the Thrice-Honorable, Ancient, and Renowned Prince, His Grace Humphrey, Duke of S. Pauls Cathedral Walk, in Fragmenta Carceris, 1675; as quoted in BRADLEY & ADAMS (1922 [377–78]).


SR (1635) The Resisters of the Company of Stationers of London; as documented in ARBER (1875–94 [4:342]).


STOCKDALE (1811) The Dramatic Works of Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher: The First Printed from the Text of Peter Whalley; The Latter, from the Text, with the Notes of the Late George Colman, Esq.

523

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4 vols. London: Printed for John Stockdale, Piccadilly, 1811. [Notes: reprints eighteen of J’s dramatic works, including two fragments, in vol. 1; reprints texts and notes of Whalley (1756).]


SUCKLING (ca. 1637) Sir John Suckling, “A Session of the Poets,” Fragmenta Aurea, 1646; as quoted and documented in CRAIG (1990 [177-79]).


TIECK (1816) Johann Ludwig Tieck, annotated personal copy of GIFFORD (1816); housed in the BM, shelfmarks C.182.a.1., 1346.l.9., 81.g.1–9., G.12935–43. REA (1919 [229]) notes that “This copy contains numerous notes in the writing of Tieck; but those on present play [i.e. Volp] are of no importance.”


TONSON (1709) *Volpone: or, The Fox. A Comedy. As it is acted at the Theatre-Royal, by her Majesty's Servants. Written by Ben. Johnson*. London: Printed for Jacob Tonson; and sold by Francis Fawcett, at the Blue-Anchor in the New-Exchange, 1709


Urie (1752) [Plays, viz. I. *Volpone*: or, the Fox. II. *The Alchemist*. III. *Epicoene*: or, the Silent Woman. By Ben. Jonson. Glasgow: Printed for Robert Urie, MCDCLIL] [Notes: The title of this ed. is based on an extrapolation of the information printed in H&S (1950 [9:154]) and reviews of the 1752 edition currently housed at the NYPL and the ed. listed under Urie (1766), which H&S describe as a reprint of the 1752 ed. The NYPL edition lacks a title-page and the tightly trimmed volume begins at Volp 1.1.11, which reads at the top of a tattered p. 5: “(But brighter than my [sic] father) let me kiss.” The NYPL describe their ed. as a 16mo, but H&S describe this ed. as an 8vo. There may be some disagreement on how to classify the size of this ed., but its pagination does not match up with the 1766 eds. housed at the Folger or available via TEC.]

Urie (1766) *Plays, viz. I. Volpone*: or, the Fox. II. *The Alchemist*. III. *Epicoene*: or, the Silent Woman. By Ben. Jonson. Glasgow: Printed for Robert Urie, MCDCLXVI. [Notes: a repr. of Urie (1752).]


Waite, trans. See PARACELSUS (1570–1572).


Whalley (1756a) Refers to MS. notes in Peter Whalley’s unfinished and unpublished revised edition of Whalley (1756), as consulted by Gifford prior to the preparation of his own edition.


Winstanley (1687) William Winstanley, The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets: or The Honour of Parnassus, in a Brief Essay of the Works and Writings of Above Two Hundred of Them, from the Time of

528


WOOD (1691–92) Anthony à Wood, Athenae Oxoniensae: an exact history of all the writers and bishops who have had their education in the University of Oxford; to which are Added the Fasti, or Annals of the Said University, 2 vols. London: Printed for Tho. Bennet, 1691–92.


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