A Quarto “Marked for Performance”: Evidence of What?

LESLIE THOMSON

I

Finding previously unconsidered evidence of Elizabethan and Jacobean staging practices is rare, but at the Folger Library in July 1992 I came upon the catalogue card for the play The Two Merry Milk-Maids; or, The Best Words Wear the Garland (1620; STC 4281), by J. C. At the bottom of the card is an entry for copy 2, and the notation, “marked for performance.” This incomplete, annotated quarto, in the Folger collection since 1982, has been studied by no one. The Folger information sheet describes copy 2 when received; it has since been repaired and bound:

Sm. 4to., thirty-eight leaves only (D3–4, E–N⁴, O1) of 58 (lacking A² B–C⁴, D1–2, O2–4, P⁴); two leaves torn in margin, L2 to N4 damaged at top outer corner with loss of text, O1 half defective and loose, other minor wear and staining; in a cloth box.

The significance of this fragment is also indicated:

Prompt copy, annotated for production in at least two hands, probably for a pre-Restoration staging, but possibly for the 1662–3 revival; at any rate the original prompter’s text for a professional theatre. This is one of the earliest printed quartos of any English play with extensive prompt-annotations, if indeed it is not the very earliest.²

That this annotated quarto has remained unnoticed, or worse, ignored is not surprising: much modern work on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama gives at best only superficial consideration to the known evidence of what happened to a play in the playhouse. Perhaps such evidence is one form of the reality mankind cannot bear too much of. Certainly, though, the many clues and fewer hard facts provided on
the marked pages of such texts are the closest we will likely get to the actual circumstances of performance for the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. On that basis alone this Milkmaids quarto warrants attention since a bookkeeper's concerns, reflected in his annotations, are our most direct source of information about how a performance was organized. Questions about whether or not a printed text has theatrical provenance can be better answered with knowledge of what really did and did not interest bookkeepers, whose markings are thought to have sometimes been reproduced in printing. More generally, the relatively few theatrically marked playbooks can help us understand staging signals in the many more unmarked plays of the period; a playwright might well have written in a language of the tiring house, for players and bookkeepers rather than general readers.

Perhaps because there are so few, each of the extant playtexts marked for performance raises its own special questions—consequently offering new, often enigmatic, clues. This Milkmaids fragment presents a number of such puzzles, such as why was a printed quarto annotated, and why by two bookkeepers? Why is one bookkeeper's work more detailed than the other's? Why are some things cued, but others not? Are the annotations sufficient for performance? How many versions of the play are present? For what venue or venues was the play written and annotated? While insufficient context and the lapse of four hundred years make answers to these questions elusive, there is considerable evidence for informed speculation. But these pages are also important for what is not written on them. If they think about the bookkeeper at all, modern editors and textual critics of Elizabethan and Jacobean plays expect far more of him than is warranted by any extant playtext marked for performance. One value of this Milkmaids fragment is that it repeatedly calls modern assumptions into question.

Given how often an editor of a Renaissance play is faced with "missing" entrance and especially exit directions, a bookkeeper's treatment of these basic elements provides a way of understanding what was more and less likely to get into a playtext, regardless of provenance. This annotated quarto bears out the logical assumption that bookkeepers were most concerned with what they could control from the tiring house—such as entrances—and with what was not the players' responsibility—such as large props, music, and entr'acte entertainment. The numerous costumes manageable by the actors and actions initiated after they are on stage seem not to have concerned the bookkeepers. But certain kinds of scene and business do receive their attention. Luck has perhaps determined that a surviving annotated quarto
should be of a play containing scenes set in a study, a courtroom, and a bedroom; also possible, however, is that having all three kinds of scene helped make *Milkmaids* popular, as it was. Since study, trial, and bed scenes are among those often thought to have been staged in a "discovery space," that none of the three here appears to have been so staged is telling—either about general practice or particular conditions, or both. Other provocative questions are raised by the numerous cuts to the text, seemingly by both bookkeepers. Possibly the play's length and/or the venue determined these changes, but the significant result is at least two and maybe three versions of one play—and evidence of particular relevance to discussions about the different versions of Shakespeare's plays.

Arguably this quarto marked for performance is important just because it exists. A number of annotated manuscript playbooks from before 1642 survive, but very few such printed quartos. Because playing companies customarily used scribal manuscripts, the question of how this quarto came to be annotated is worth asking. The death of Queen Anne and the consequent loss of patronage for the Queen Anne’s Men was probably the main impetus behind the printing of *Milkmaids* in 1620. Christopher Beeston—in charge of the company from 1612—moved to the Phoenix theater and Prince Charles's Men in 1619, but some of what had been Queen Anne’s Men stayed at the Red Bull, becoming the Company of the Revels of the quarto title page. As well, a Queen Anne’s Company continued to travel the provinces long after her death. Any of these players would presumably have considered the play their property and could have performed from the quarto, although once printed the play could have been performed by any company, especially outside London. In the final section of this study I survey the external evidence of *Milkmaids*' continued popularity in the seventeenth century.

This *Milkmaids* fragment—most of act 1 and virtually all of act 5 are missing; seventy-seven of ninety-eight pages remain—is, as indicated, annotated in "at least two hands." In fact, besides the two main bookkeepers' hands, probably three other hands are discernible on the often extensively marked pages. The italic script of the bookkeeper which I call A is more controlled, more flowing than that of Bookkeeper B, which gives the impression of a man writing quickly, with accuracy of staging his primary concern. B’s handwriting is also neater at some points than others, suggesting that he worked on the text at different times. For whatever reasons—personality, circumstance—Bookkeeper B provides more detail than A. Of the other three hands, C made several relatively minor alterations to dialogue
and may be responsible for other scribbles in the margins; Hand D is also present in marginalia, largely indecipherable because of both its illegibility and page cropping. Hand E appears only in one inverted group of three words unrelated to the play (H4; fig. 1). The annotations of Bookkeepers A and B and what they might have to tell us are the focus here, but the Appendix includes all the legible handwritten evidence.

As the ensuing discussion will perhaps indictate, the longer I have worked with the fragment the less certain I have become about what it is evidence of; consequently, I am reluctant to offer any certain conclusions concerning specifics. But overall, this evidence clearly shows that early seventeenth-century bookkeepers were not prompters in the post-Restoration sense of the word. Quite probably, and surprisingly from a modern point of view, the markings on the pages of this quarto would have been sufficient for performance, which is the view underlying this analysis. And while the emphasis here is on annotations by two bookkeepers on the pages of one quarto of a now obscure play by an unknown author, I have frequently noted what should be apparent: that everything written on the pages of this and other annotated playbooks is more broadly relevant to the study of Elizabethan and Jacobean staging practices.

II

The most basic difference between the two bookkeepers is where on the page each writes his cues, a detail that helps to indicate which of the two men came first to the printed playtext. Almost as often as not, the annotations of one bookkeeper are incomplete because the pages have been cropped since he wrote. The annotations of the other bookkeeper are never cut away. It might be argued that both men marked the pages before cropping but the work of one was not affected only because he wrote further in from the outer margins than the other. But one cue suggests otherwise. To the left of the printed text on G1 one bookkeeper wrote “Exit,” then just below and further to the left, “Raymo” and below it, “nd.” The most plausible explanation is that he reached the edge of the page before the end of the name. Just above this, closer still to the margin, in the other bookkeeper’s hand is “Dorilus,” the “s” almost gone. Since, of course, cropping made the pages smaller not larger over time, the work of Bookkeeper A has partly disappeared, and that of Bookkeeper B has not. More evidence for the priority of A is found at the beginning of 2.2 (F1’),
she merry Milke-maids:

Fre. What Oh? where lies the Crampe?

Smir. Oh, Oh.

Fre. With that the moody squire thump't his breast, and rear'd his eyes to heaven for revenge.

Speak sweet Hieromino.

Smir. First take my tongue, and afterward my heart.

Fre. Good both being out, now let us have the story.

Smir. Kick with disgrace, and turn'd out of the Court.

Fre. Excuse Smirke.

Smir. To Landmaster and Lackies made a scorn, and to all other people quite forlorn.

Fre. On, time more, and I will crown thee Februar Lawiate.

Smir. The Cattlers, Colliers, and the Carriers curst me. The Porters pul'd me, and the Pages pur'ret me.

Fre. Why this tis to be a squire Smirke before your time. And your boy to be a Gentleman before you have him.

Smir. O that I had bin so happy to have list'd and cleft wood the country, preach'd at the Buttery barre into the Ploughmen, and there have vide my authority in Folio, when all the servants of the house shud be drunke at midnight.

Cal. Primiage.

Fre. I, those were certaine dayes, but what wert thou do now?

Smir. Learne to grinde whipcord, and go hang my selfe.

Fre. But where didst thou leave my father?

Smir. At him condoling with two or three of his friends at the signe of the Lamentation.

Enter Callow.

Fre. The Salutation thou meantst.

Smir. In the Salutation one way, and the Lamentation the other—Here comes more abuse.

Cal. Me.

Figure 1. H4r Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
where a partially cropped “[L]odowick | [F]rederick & | [S]mirke” from Bookkeeper A cues the entrance of those characters at the top of the scene. But these words have been crossed through, presumably by Bookkeeper B, who cut from the beginning of the scene to the entrance of Julia two pages later, which he cues just above A’s deleted annotation on F1v. On the following page, Bookkeeper A’s cue, “Callow and R[anoff] | & Lady” has not actually been eliminated, but a cutline (probably B’s) runs down that page (F2r) and over the entrance cue—because he would not be looking at the page, B did not bother to delete the cue. While the amount of time separating the work of A and B cannot be determined, that a company would have employed two bookkeepers at once is most improbable; more likely, the differences between their annotations reflect different productions, times, venues, and probably also acting companies.

Two sets of annotations, then, offer the opportunity for numerous informative comparisons revealing bookkeeper idiosyncracies and common practices. From a modern editor’s and theater historian’s point of view, the general similarities are the most significant, since elements common to the work of both—whether of commission or omission—suggest a more widely used and understood bookkeeper’s language (although dialect might perhaps be a better word). An appreciation of the similarities is, however, fostered by looking at the differences, which are anyway more apparent on these marked quarto pages simply because one man wrote so much more than the other.

Besides handwriting, placement on the page, and quantity of annotations, what most regularly distinguishes Bookkeeper A from B is the location of each man’s cues for entrances and flourishes relative to the printed stage directions. Wherever there is opportunity to compare them, A’s cues come at the stage direction while B’s precede it by a dozen or more lines, a difference that might say a lot about how each bookkeeper perceived the text and organized the tiring house; as well, possibly the playhouse was the determining factor. Some of what seem to be the most interesting examples will be considered here, but the Appendix gives a more complete picture of the repeated differences, especially regarding entrance cues, a fundamental part of a bookkeeper’s staging language. Little reflection is necessary to realize that without the actors’ entrances there would be no play and, further, that entrances were the aspect of onstage action over which a bookkeeper had most control, however brief. Especially noteworthy, therefore, are the duplicate entrance cues on the Milkmaids pages.

An instance of double cues not complicated with other elements occurs where Bookkeeper A wrote “Callow | Ranoff[ff]” opposite the
printed direction for their entrance, and B wrote the same two words eleven lines earlier (H4r; fig. 1). If, as the evidence discussed above indicates, A’s cue was already there when B came to the text, why did he bother to duplicate it? Possibly he wanted to give himself and the players more time to prepare for their entrance and his cue is anticipatory, but one still is left wondering why here and not elsewhere? B does not duplicate all of A’s cues and occasionally adds one where A had not—and some printed directions were left unaltered by either.

On several occasions an added cue gives insight into a bookkeeper’s methods. Bookkeeper B wrote “Ready Smirk”—enclosed in the three-sided bracket he regularly uses—sixteen lines before Smirke’s entrance on the next page, where Bookkeeper A has written “Smirke”—between the horizontal lines that characterize his cues—just two lines before the centered, printed direction: “Enter Smirke with Baggs” (E1r–E1v). Note that Smirke’s entrance comes near the top of a page, so that a glancing bookkeeper would have had little time to prepare. Bookkeeper B’s “ready” is essentially a reminder to himself—evidence that this is indeed a playtext used (or at least intended) for performance. An additional reason for this anticipatory cue is that Smirke enters “with baggs”—B’s concern with props will be discussed later. At the bottom of F3v Bookkeeper B wrote, “Rea: | Raymond | Dutheess [sic] | Frederick”; the printed direction is the fourth line on the facing page. Just above it in the outer margin is A’s “Raymo[nd] | Dutch[ess].” Bookkeeper A omitted Frederick because he followed the text, which happens to be incorrect: Frederick speaks five lines after he enters. B added “Frederick” to the printed direction, possibly a sign that during a performance he read both his cues and the text.

Bookkeeper B’s characteristically early cue appears alone on H3r, where his “Ready | Bernard” comes about fourteen lines before the quarto direction. Curiously, this is the only time B uses “ready” when the character’s entrance is on the same page, calling attention to his usual practice which, as just suggested, seems to have been determined by an entrance coming at the top of a page, giving little time for preparation. Similarly, on I4r Bookkeeper B wrote “Ready Dorilus” nine lines before the character speaks at the top of the next page, although there is no printed direction for his entrance. Dorilus is “invisible” here, but like Frederick and Smirke earlier, he is not only audible but visible to the audience. B also made good a quarto omission by writing “Bernard” fully thirty lines before a speech-heading (K1v), so that in this bookkeeper’s production at least, Bernard
was to be silent on stage for some time before he spoke—an apparent instance of interpretive license on this bookkeeper’s part.

A final example of duplicate entrance cues shows both bookkeepers correcting an omission in the quarto. At the bottom of L1v Julia is alone on stage until others enter, but the quarto has no entrance direction for them. This is complicated by the fact that in act 4, scene 1 is followed by scene 3, and 4.1 is unusually long, with no other opportunity for a break. Possibly scene 2 should begin here. Certainly there is evidence elsewhere of inaccurate casting-off and crammed pages, which can support the view that the compositor neglected to mark a new scene. Against this, everything indicates that Julia remains on stage here: there is no exit direction, and when Dorilus enters he says: “Here’s my sister, but very sad me thinks.” Regardless of the reason for the omission, both bookkeepers added the information necessary in performance: at the bottom of the page, just where Dorilus speaks, A wrote, “Dorilus & [B]ernard & [Lan]doff”; further up the page B too wrote, “Landoff | Bernard | Dorilus.” Even though the first bookkeeper caught the omission, the second still added his earlier cue; whatever his reasons, B knew what he wanted and when.

It would be satisfying to report that such differences between the two can be found consistently through the fragment, but these bookkeepers did not work scientifically, and no amount of reasoning can fully explain what they have left us. Frequently, B failed to repeat entrance cues and was apparently content to use A’s, which sometimes differ from or supplement the quarto. For example, on D4v Bookkeeper A cued the entrance of Frederick and Dorilus and then of the Host just before the printed directions. He also wrote “Drawer” at the bottom of the page: although the character has no entrance in the quarto, he speaks four pages later (E2v). A’s cue is probably correct, or at least indicates who he wanted to respond to the Host’s “Some VVine you Knaues, some VVine” (D4v, l. 7). Also on this page, A cues the entrance of Bernard and Landoff, although the text has only “Enter Bernard”—which is itself potentially confusing since according to the quarto Bernard enters with Landoff at the top of the scene and has no intervening exit direction. Bookkeeper A’s cue draws attention to this confusion and to the probability that both characters exit when Frederick and Dorilus enter (D4v), then reenter here. These and other examples suggest what is apparent on the pages of the quarto: A’s predominant (indeed, almost exclusive) concern was with entrances, which might be an indication that his annotations are incomplete. If so, this bookkeeper attended first to the most basic kind of direction, itself confirmation of what seems logical procedure.
As logic dictates and these annotations attest, entrances are far more important to a bookkeeper than exits, which he cannot manage from behind the tiring house wall. Nevertheless, Bookkeeper B added at least seven exits omitted from the quarto. Usually the most likely explanation, it seems to me, is that when reading the text, B saw that the exit was missing and supplied it, more to confirm what was obvious than for use in performance: it would have been a reminder to himself that the character or characters were coming off stage, not a cue. For example, when Frederick speaks a rhymed couplet—which often signals an exit in plays of the period—B wrote “Exit” just beside the last word of the couplet, not out in the margin where he put his cues (F4v, l. 15). On the next page, however, B did write in the margin: “Exit” and below right, “Raymo nd” (G1v). Raymond does not speak here, but this tells us that in B’s production at least, he was on stage—he otherwise could have exited with Frederick at the couplet. The dialogue where B marked the exit actually signals the departure of another character: Dorigene says, “Iulia leaue me” and Julia responds, “I obey you Madame,” a clear dialogue exit cue. Together these pieces of evidence imply that Raymond accompanies Julia, with whom he is repeatedly paired in the plot. Perhaps the playwright forgot this exit, or maybe the compositor omitted it; whatever the reason, Bookkeeper B noticed the potential problem and made the necessary emendation. A more complex addition from Bookkeeper B comes where, after the centered, printed, “Enter Bernard,” he wrote, “Dorilus Exit Raymond” (G4v; fig. 2). Only by reference to the text does the meaning become apparent: Dorilus, who has exited with Dorigene at the beginning of Raymond’s soliloquy, now reenters with Bernard, as Raymond exits, finishing his speech with a couplet. B ensured that Raymond would be alone on stage for that soliloquy: whereas the quarto has merely “Exit” at Dorigene’s departing words, this bookkeeper added, “Dori | Dutchess” in the margin. Here and elsewhere when getting characters off the stage is especially necessary, and a direction has been omitted from the quarto, B consistently added it in the margin. Possibly he had some way of making sure it happened, or maybe it was a reminder to himself to tell the player before he went on.

As suggested earlier, the unusual presence of two annotators on these quarto pages would seem to indicate preparations for different productions, perhaps for different venues, an inference supported by their cuts to the quarto text. These bookkeepers seem to have felt they could remove large chunks of a play, no doubt for practical reasons; but in making the cuts each man also created his own version.
the merry Milke-maids.

Deprive vs not thy presence at the Court,
For I will live to studie a requitall,
And the Duke with me, that shall know thy worth,
And finde it in thy deeds, thou entertaine thee,
And in his bosome fixe thee a true friend:
Thou shalt not go vnfeele thou promise me,
I may receive and welcome thee at Court.

Dor. Since you command me, Ic not faile to offer,
My seruice to my Soueraigne and you.

Dor. With teares, of joy I love thee.

Ray. What blood haue these two creatures? Cold as I am
My aged head wrapt like the Alpes in Snow,
Yet if the Diewell Luft, had warm'd me on,
Respects shud never quench the heat in me.

There is a sparke alreadie in my bosome,
And I do feele it working towards my heart,
Which when it once hath reacht, and kindled
Into a flame, no premeditation
Of the offence, shal blow it out again.
The Duke has entertained a jealousie,
And imploys me in the discoueries,
Which makes effectual to my purposes,
Mischiefe is brooding in my braines, and the event:
Shall worke my pleasures or their discontent.

Enter Bernard.

But now I thinke on't, every man is so
After his height of dalliance, I did heare
You had admittance: And I faith how find you here.

Dor. You haue my land Sir.

Ber. Yes, in my pocket, a large hose youlde say
Can hold so many Akers: But impart,

you

Figure 2. G4 Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
Certainly these cuts, and the methods used to accommodate them, say a good deal about how each man did his job. A particularly informative example comes at the beginning of the second act. There is a line down the inner margin from the top of the act to the seventh line on the next page (E2r; fig. 3; E3r). To accommodate the cut, B replaced the quarto’s initial direction with cues for the entrance of the eleven characters needed for his revised start to the scene, which comes at the quarto entrance direction, “Enter the Duke, Duchess, a Bishop, Lord Raymond” (E3r). This cut deletes the implication that the marriage between the Duke and Duchess has just occurred, a change supported by another emendation: “a Bishop” was crossed through, removing him from the scene.10 Just at the quarto direction, A wrote “Julia Dor[gene] | traine D[uke] | Landoff,” which rectifies the quarto’s omission of Julia. I think that this is one of the few cuts by A, and when B marked the text he accommodated the cut by beginning the scene as A had, but adding more characters to the initial entrance procession—perhaps because he had more actors to work with.

At the beginning of 2.2 (F1r), the most complex series of cuts begins. As noted earlier, evidence for which bookkeeper came first to the text is the deletion of A’s “[L]odowick | [F]rederick & | [S]mirke” in the left margin between 2.1 and 2.2. The quarto entrance direction at the top of scene 2 reads, “Enter Lodwick, father to Dorigene; Fredericke, a Lady, and Smirke,” which—minus the Lady—A’s cue supports. Bookkeeper A’s deleted cue, along with his cue for the entrance of Callow, Ranoff, and the Lady on F2v (omitted in the quarto), show that his version included the beginning of the scene. Just above the deleted cue, in B’s hand, is “Ready | Julia,” but the quarto direction for her entrance does not come for two pages (F2v). This evidence can be combined with an erratic cutline fading in and out down the inner margin from the beginning of the scene, down the next page, to the quarto direction for Julia’s entrance. Certainty is impossible, but perhaps the stronger line down the outer margin of F2v (running over A’s cue), was made by B to confirm what the lighter line barely signals.11 Also problematic is a deleted “Stet” in B’s hand beside a cut at the top of F2v.12 The ink of both word and deletion looks the same; possibly B changed his mind because retaining this passage would have kept the Lady in the scene. Overall, Bookkeeper B’s cuts here have two practical results: they shorten the scene and remove Lodwick, Frederick, the Lady, and Smirke from it.13

The consequence of all the cuts taken together is a much shorter play, or part of a play. The full fragment is about 2,400 lines; by a
Figure 3. E2c Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
rough count, the cuts total 400 lines or about seventeen percent of
the fragment. The whole play is long at about 3,600 lines, making it
probable that cuts would have been made for any performance. While it is tempting to look for pragmatic or censor-dictated reasons
for at least those cuts which eliminate jibes at the court and courtiers,
as the Appendix will show, by far the majority are of repetitious or
extraneous material—and, as noted, of characters.

The cuts and entrance cues are frequently present on these quarto
pages in combination with signals for music and entr’acte breaks,
making the evidence an even more complex web to untangle. As in
some manuscript playbooks marked for performance, calls for music
in the text are supplemented by a bookkeeper’s note at several points
on these Milkmaids pages. On one occasion where the Duke calls for
music, the printed direction, “A flourish of Cornets” is supported by
Bookkeeper A’s “flourish” just above in the outer margin (D37). On the
next page, at the end of 1.3, he wrote “flourish” again, to accompany
the departure of the Duke. Bookkeeper B’s sometime practice of du-
plicating A’s cues is apparent here with “flourish” in B’s hand coming
just above A’s partially cropped cue. This time there is no printed call
for music, only “Exeunt Duke with his Train” (E4v) which, in the
quarto, comes five lines after Bookkeeper A’s cue. Or it would come
this late if these five lines had not been cut so that the cue comes at
the end of the Duke’s speech—not, it should be noted at the stage
direction: significantly perhaps, the dialogue, not the printed direction,
seems to have determined where these men marked the text. As with
almost everything on these pages, cues for a flourish at the Duke’s
departure do not appear consistently, although there seems to be some
kind of rationale operating: when a flourish occurs, it accompanies
public but not private occasions.

Musical entertainment between acts is generally thought to have
been usual in both auditorium (or indoor) and arena (or outdoor) the-
aaters after about 1608, when the King’s Men began performing at both
Blackfriars and the Globe. This Milkmaids quarto provides clear
evidence that act-breaks required special preparations. Near the end
of act 1, Bookkeeper B wrote “Act | Ready” in the outer margin
midway down the page and then, three lines from the bottom, “Knock
Act” (E2v; fig. 4). This is not a cue for knocking in support of onstage
dialogue; is the only time the words appear; and is, in fact, unique,
occuring in no other annotated playbook. Coming where it does,
just before the first entr’acte and only there, the cue seems to have
been intended by B as a reminder to himself to call the entr’acte
performers when they were needed for the first time. At the end of
the merry Mike-maid.

what I say, I will maintaine, what I maipaigne, I will say ; and the very Bells themselfes shall ring it out.

Deu. Tis true indeed my Lord, your Sister's made Duchesse of -- and she married vs to the Duke.
The Newes doth come to Towne with euerie Man; and no man daies, but constantly affirms it for a Truth.

Deril. O that it were so; by my Fathers Soule
I wud be fre as that is, and as happie.
For I wud laugh this Woman from my heart,
And she shud be no more to me, then her I know not;
I wud be so much Man, and something more.
For I wud wish to enjoy her as a Man,
Lose her in mind, and find her in my bloud,
And I doe feele such turnings in my thoughts.

Fre. Why now you are your felice : Yet I'd advise you to goe to Court, and see her.

Deril. See her, I and speake to her, and call her Woman,
There were no Treason in't, were

Fre. Not any.

Deril. Good; then let vs goe : for what Ile doe till I come there, I know not, or if I did, I wud not vetter it.

Ber. Why Assembly, will you be found an ignorant Spirit? how hap I knew not this?

Land. You imploy'd not me to enquire of it.

Fre. Gentlemen, as I understand my felice, I am a Lord,
I donnot know, I may be an abus'd Coxxcombe;
But howsoever, there are good Tokens of it.
Mine Hoft, what have I chalkt in sundry and severall times?

E 2 Hoft. Chalke

Figure 4. E2r. Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
act 1 is a complicated mix of cues by both bookkeepers, open to several interpretations. Just below and partly to the left of the last line of dialogue, B wrote "Florish," probably for the entrance of the Duke in his revised beginning to act 2; the same explanation likely applies to Bookkeeper A’s "[h]oboyes," at the beginning of the act.\(^\text{17}\) To the left of this cue is "Longe" from Bookkeeper A, which might be the second word of a cropped "Act Longe,"\(^\text{18}\) indicating that Bookkeeper A’s version also had an act-break—but only here; there is nothing like this from A between the other acts. Since it seems improbable that there was only one break, perhaps the "Longe" is the important thing, or maybe this is another sign that A did not complete his task. Bookkeeper B, however, inserted the word Act between acts 2 and 3, 3 and 4, 4 and 5. As well, thirteen lines before the end of act 2 he wrote, "Rea Act" (H1\(^\text{v}\); fig 5), and fifteen lines before the end of act 3, "Act Ready" (K2\(^\text{v}\)). Someone cut eight of these lines, but if consistency means anything here, B is probably not the one, since he twice cued the entr'acte at about the same distance from the act-end. To take this argument a step further, on N3\(^\text{v}\) Bookkeeper B’s "Act Read[y]" comes twenty-six lines before the end of act 4, which seems to break the pattern, except that here again there are cuts—of about nine lines—making it reasonable to speculate that in this case they are by B.\(^\text{19}\)

As noted earlier, particularly interesting and possibly most informative concerning questions about staging and venue are those annotations supplied for the three set-piece scenes in the fragment: study, courtroom, and bedroom. At the top of 3.2, the printed stage direction has a character enter "in his study," and just before the end of 3.1 Bookkeeper B wrote, "Ready | A Table | bookes"; immediately below this comes a mostly cropped entry from A: "[t]able | [Lan]doff & | [sp]iritt" (I1\(^\text{v}\)). The props were most likely readied behind the tiring house wall and brought out to fulfill the stage direction, "Enter Landoffe in his study, a spirit to him."\(^\text{20}\) There is no indication in these directions, the dialogue, or annotations that the scene was performed in a recessed area, or "discovery space." This does not, of course, mean that such scenes were never staged in a recessed space, or that this one never was; but it might suggest that such staging was not automatic—if, that is, venue-dictated restrictions were not the determining factor.

The courtroom scene, which follows next, seems also to have relied only on signifying props brought out on stage, as the quarto direction implies: "Enter the Duke, Judges, Raymond, with others, the forme of a Court" (I3\(^\text{v}\)).\(^\text{21}\) In the outer margin of the previous page, just before
A pleasant Comedie of
For his beard, it was not a mile to be pluckt off,
For in time it wud be bin scalded.

Lan. Come, you are a Noice, did you think you could
Proceed in my owne Art, but I should know it?
I was that Asmody appear'd to you,
When you kept such a thundring with words
That were of as much effect to call or move
Spirits, as mountaines: But my Dorilus,
My loving Pupill, for whose good I cannot
With all the Art I haue, labour enough.

Doril. O, your zeale Sir hath bin ever showne.

Lan. Presume upon me, for I do pretend
There will be need of me, and of my art
Ere it be long; And vnlesse it please.

My Pupill Bernard, here to turn me off;
Ike eu'n in to my liberty againe.

Ber. You may do as you please Sir, but if you do,
I shall forget you are my Master, and make account
I haue my servant Asmody againe.

Lan. Do so, and command me as you haue done,
Ike eu'n in your will obedient
As your owne limbs, and how soere things fort;
In spight of Fortune we doe haue a little sport.

ACTUS TERTIVUS.

Scena Prima.

Enter Duke, L. Raymond as one doute: Ducheffe, Dorilus
bare before her leaning on his shoulder and giving much
grace unto him.

Musicke.

Dor. Sir, I haue a suiter to you.

Duke. Speake it.

Dor. To know this Gentleman, and if not for my sake,

Figure 5. H1* Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
the end of scene 2, Bookkeeper B wrote, “Ready | Sennet | [flourish deleted] | table | Duke | Barr,” and above the printed direction just quoted, “A Table | A Barr | A Sennet” (I2’; fig. 6)—a combination of cues implying that B’s “ready” had a specific, anticipatory meaning here, and thus probably elsewhere. Immediately below Bookkeeper B’s annotation is A’s: “[ho]boyes | Judges | Ranoff | s[?] Carolus | and Raymond”—the music cue being separated from the rest by a horizontal line above and below it. A’s cue replaces the printed entrance for Ferdinand and Carolus, who have been cut from the scene as discussed earlier. It would therefore seem that the cut is A’s, and that in his version at least the action began with the trial.22

Page cropping has obviously eliminated at least one word of Bookkeeper A’s cue here, giving weight to the inference that more, including “Duke,” has disappeared since his entrance is signaled in the printed direction and A’s “hoboyes” probably accompanied it. B’s two cues for props and sound indicate that his version probably but not necessarily retained the beginning of 3.3. Further, the deletion of “flourish” might be explained by the cue for a sennet: perhaps B’s call for the flourish was done from habit, in anticipation of the Duke’s entrance, but in the case of a courtroom scene a sennet was the required signal. At the Duke’s exit from the scene, the same bookkeeper wrote, “Rea Senn | et” (split to avoid running into dialogue), seventeen lines before his “Sennet” at the bottom center of the page (K1’). This complex of evidence offers yet another element of interest. As the trial begins, the judge calls for the prisoner and the stage direction reads: “Enter Dorigen plac’d at the Barre” (I3’); in the right margin Bookkeeper A wrote, “Enter Du[check] | & Guard,” making it clear to himself (and to us) that she was accompanied.

The theatrical treatment of bed scenes is a particularly vexed issue since the extant evidence is contradictory and inexplicit. The bed scene in Milkmaids sheds welcome light on questions of staging, but also poses some problems of interpretation because much of the scene was cut. At the beginning of 4.1, Bookkeeper B enclosed “Ready Bed” in his customary bracket just to the right of the quarto’s centered initial entrance direction (K3’; fig. 7), but the bed scene is not until 4.3. Just before the end of 4.1, thirteen pages after the first cue, B wrote “Bed Ready | Duke” in the margin (M1”; fig. 8; the Duke is not in the bed). Possibly the bed was made “ready” behind the tiring house wall and pushed forward when needed, as suggested in other plays, annotated or not. But the separation between “Ready Bed” and “Bed Ready” (Does the word reversal signal a practical difference?) is unique. On the one hand, this evidence suggests that the bed had to
A pleasant Comedie of

Ber. It may be fote for any thing that I know, but that
Now I feele the fingers, thou maift hold it vp at the Bar
And nere be burnt if the hand Ie warrant thee.

Doril. Why? I fee thee plaine as I did before,
And every thing else.

Ber. But that I haue confidence in my Master and
his Art, I wud never looke to fee thee againe.

Lul. Looke you Julia your Muftere, comfort her,
And take the worke vpon you:
Ille to my blew coate againe, and instantly wait on you.

Ber. All your best wifhes, Fairell. Enter Jul.

Jul. O Sir they lyce in you.

Ber. O you speake myfike to the melancholy,
Health to the fike.

Jul. For next vnto the delivery of my Muftere,
My brothers welfare is, which you promised.

Doril. Why fitter I am well? next vnder Heauen.

I praye this Gentleman.

Jul. That is his voyce, where are you brother?

Doril. Here fitter iuff before you.

Jul. Before me?

Doril. Yes, in the very mouth of you, as a man wud fay

Jul. Trust me I cannot fee you.

Doril. Trust me I'm glad of it, Ille take the bolder and
and the lowder, they fhall heare me.

Ber. This I perceue dooes somewhat trouble you.
But let it not, it halbe for a good,
Which though it cannot change, may ftre your blood.
So they are hot in preparation, and people making to
behold the Arraignement.

Exeunt.

Scena tertia.

Enter Ferdinando, Cornelius.

Ferd. Fortune is a good huwife, the plies her wheel wel

Alas
thi
merry Milke-maids.

Fre. What's this? A ring; that 'tis and trust me,
A very pleasing one vnto the eye,
Some Lady lost it; for whose sake I wear it,
Vntill I find a challenger, it may be,
Twas lost a purpose and here dropt for me.

Exeunt

ACTUS QUARTVS.
Scena Prima.

Enter Fredericke.

Fre. Am I mad or drunke or the people, both: and blind
too I think. For let me come vp to them neuer so neere,
talk neuer so loud, gripe them neuer so hard; they see
me not flare and gape; as if I were in the aire, and
ask, where are you. If we were out of favour, I should
neuer wonder at it, but being Restord, and in greater
grace then euer, it somewhat troubles me: zfoote, and
a Lord cannot be acknowledg'd, what will be come of
poore Gentlemen; here come a couple, and sober; as I
take it. He try if they have not lost their eye-sight.

Enter Ferdinando, and Cornelia.

Cor. But that youjustify it so vehemently,
I shud not a beleue'd it: Lo!

Ferd. Againe, and sent to prison, her father
Banish'd the Court againe, and all his honours,
Tooke againe from him, and from's sonne,
And all againe as it was, and if not worse,

Ferd. Nay then my admirations at an end. I remember
no body wud know me last time. But these are a couple
of honest fellows, and yet they serva Lord, if any body
have use of their eyes thene will. By your leave Gentle-
men, did you see the yong Lord Fredericke.

Cor. Wher's he that ask that question?

K3
Zfoote

Figure 7. K3° Reproduced by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.
a pleasant Comedie of
are some gaudlies sure abroad, lets make

not to wipe it.
Cal. Ha, ha, ha.
Ran. Why do you laugh my Lord? ha, ha, ha.
Smi. Nay, Ile put it too, for my ha, ha, ha, ha.
This is a three mans laughter.
Cal. But why do you laugh my Lord? ha, ha, ha.
Ran. ha, ha, Pray why do you laugh my Lord?
Cal. For nothing, for nothing, come prithie lets goe.
Ran. I pray lets goe, ha, ha, ha.
Smi. I am glad I have made you merry.
Fre. Where art thou? So deare I love thee for this peec of knavery that I could Kiss thee, pritty let me kiss thee.
Smi. No, no, kissing, I do bristle too much.
Fre. Ile give thee another Ring.
Smi. No no, no more Rings, I shall thine my felle an Alderman, and grow proud then.
Len. Come let him alone with it.
Smi. If you know any Ladie that deales in compleccion you may doe me a kinde of to acquaint her that Smirke the Seruingman is tur'd a Painter.

Scene Tertia.

Enter Frederick, Cornelius and Carolus.
Cor. How now Carolus, how do's my Lord?
Caro. Troth surely, as a Lord may do in his case.
Fre. Why how I't man.
Caro. Wicked, wicked, extreme wicked, he cannot say his Prayers.
Fre. Why is he speechleasse.
Cor. What a Pox is that to the purpose, has he made his will,
Caro. Yes.
be brought into readiness between acts, in this case during the *entr’acte*, at least for the production prepared by Bookkeeper B. On the other hand, one wonders how the actors maneuvered around the “ready bed” if it was brought into the space behind the tiring house wall so long before it was required. Perhaps, however, the earlier notation was put there by B as a reminder that the bed would have to be brought forward later.

Just below Bookkeeper B’s cue for the bed and Duke, there is “[Rajymond | [s]olus” from A (M1v; fig. 8). A vertical cutline begins here, at the top of 4.3, and continues down subsequent pages to the entrance of the Duke some hundred lines later (M3v). The top left of M3v is torn away and what remains is difficult to read, but apparently the revised scene began here, and the cut was accommodated by changing Raymond’s request, spoken to five or more characters—“Then all the rest I pray depart the roome”—to merely, “depart the roome,” presumably addressed to Carolus, who has dialogue until that point, but not after (M3v). Like the other major cuts, this one appears to have been made by Bookkeeper A and followed by B. Given this, it is curious that, as cut, the scene could have been played without a bed, with dialogue doing the job. Since B cued the bed, this was clearly not the case in his version, and certainly without the bed the scene would have been less interesting visually. But the alterations show that the bed could be eliminated, maybe when the venue made using one impracticable—the most likely reason for cutting an otherwise good piece of theater. There is, however, another possible explanation for the deletion of this extensive section of act 3: two of the characters—Ferdinand and the Lady—who were removed from the play elsewhere by both bookkeepers, were eliminated here by the cuts.

III

On the assumption that at least Bookkeeper B’s annotations reflect performance, some things not on these pages as well as several relatively minor additions and emendations provide another angle from which to examine a bookkeeper’s role in the production of a play. As noted earlier, on a number of occasions Bookkeeper B (never A) supplied an exit omitted from the quarto, but he did not do so every time one is missing. The reasons for this can only be guessed, but some of the evidence—or nonevidence—suggests possibilities. Bookkeeper B was particularly concerned to add exit cues when the stage had to be
cleared for a soliloquy (usually from Raymond), suggesting perhaps that such exits were a recognized staging problem, requiring more than just dialogue and/or a rhymed couplet to cue them. But on the three occasions when an act ends without an exit cue in the quarto, Bookkeeper B adds nothing. Acts 1 and 2 end with both a couplet and dialogue signal (figs. 2, 4), perhaps considered sufficient combined with the end of an act. Significantly, I think, in the quarto, act 4 ends with neither couplet nor exit cue, and while B has not supplied the latter, it appears that someone has made the last two lines into a couplet by deleting the final letter of the last word: “be | me,” which makes more sense in the context. Notably, only at the end of act 3 is there an “Exeunt” in the quarto (K3r; fig. 7), and here the circumstances are curiously different since Frederick both ends act 3 and begins act 4. If, as seems to have been the case, one act did not run into the other because there was an entr’acte, this would not be a problem; but the old convention that the same character did not end one scene and begin another might nevertheless explain the quarto’s only act-ending exit direction.

Incorrect speech-headings have been thought an indication that a playtext has no theatrical provenance, the argument being that a bookkeeper would change such errors when preparing a play for performance. But if a bookkeeper was primarily concerned with what happened before an actor went on stage, who spoke what would have been of little interest—unless dialogue cued an entrance, prop, or sound for which he was responsible, a view which this Milkmaids fragment confirms. On the first page of act 4 the penultimate speech has the heading “Ferd.,” but this is wrong: Frederick is speaking here (K3r; fig 7). Neither bookkeeper corrects the error. Likewise, elsewhere in the quarto speech-headings for Dorilus and Dorigene (abbreviated “Doril.” and “Dor.”) are frequently confused and never corrected. On K4r, however, A correctly added “Fre:” before “Why do you not draw?” But bookkeepers, being human, doubtless also made mistakes, and on K3r again is what at first seems an instance: whereas the printed direction is “Enter Ferdinand, and Cornelius,” Bookkeeper A wrote, “Ferdin[d]|Carolus.” In the list of characters, both Carolus and Cornelius are described as “Courtiers, and Servants to Lord Raymond,” and Carolus appears only in 4.3 (M1r; fig. 8), which has been cut, probably by A as discussed earlier. Furthermore, this bookkeeper paired Ferdinand and Carolus on H2r, where he wrote their names in the margin beside “Enter a Guard.” And when later the quarto calls for an attendant, Bookkeeper B wrote “Cornelius” and A wrote “Carolus” in the margin (M4r); since neither character
enters, the actor playing Cornelius in B’s version and Carolus in A’s would seem to have played several minor parts. In other words, what looks like an incorrect entrance cue from Bookkeeper A on K3r is probably not. Note, moreover, that both bookkeepers use the characters’ names, never the players’ names. That this is not atypical but consistent with what is found in other theatrically annotated playbooks indicates that common practices did exist, despite considerable differences—as the work of even these two bookkeepers demonstrates.

Finally, as suggested at the start of this section, the treatment of props says a lot about a bookkeeper’s function. Bookkeeper B’s annotations, or their absence, on these pages show that he was concerned with only a certain category of props. He noted the need for wine, a table and books, a bar, and a bed—all large and/or the responsibility of no single actor. And there is no indication that these props were removed from the stage. Presumably they were, at the end of an act or whenever practicable; but Bookkeeper B, who calls for these props to be ready, supplied no cue for their removal—more evidence that what happened on stage was not a bookkeeper’s concern. Also not acknowledged are the many other hand-held props, referred to in printed stage directions and/or dialogue, which an actor would have brought on stage with him. These include Smirke’s bags and “pots of colour,” the Duke’s sword, Bernard’s rapier, and the various weapons of Dorigene, Callow, Raymond, and Julia; Dorilus’s garland, Bernard’s bonds, several disguises, and the ring that bestows invisibility on its wearer.26

The liberal use of perhaps and possibly, infer and speculate through this analysis speaks for itself: there is much that cannot be known about why these annotations are as they are and not otherwise—or not as we might have them be. Judged by the standards many modern editors and critics have imposed on Elizabethan and Jacobean playtexts, this one is not only incomplete, it also contains confusing discrepancies. But when this Milkmaids quarto is seen in the context of the other playbooks with theatrical provenance, it becomes apparent that seventeenth-century bookkeepers played by their own rules. If these annotations are incomplete, then the others are too, and probably for the practical reason that the performance of a play was the result of active collusion, cooperation, and communication between players and bookkeeper. Not only was a company actor responsible for playing his character or characters, of necessity he also participated in decisions and changes made during preparation and performance. Bookkeepers generally did not record such changes, probably
because doing so did not occur to them: opportunity was doubtless limited even if they thought of it; but a more likely reason was that they knew the play would be performed that time only by that group of players—what would be the point of adding information which had become irrelevant even as it came into existence? The difficulty of interpreting this evidence, therefore, is that not all of it is here; some was improvised. But what is here should act as a reminder that we know less than we think about the Renaissance playtext, annotated or not, and we assume more than we should about the meaning of "marked for performance."

IV

This evidence does not, of course, exist in a vacuum; in fact, there is considerable external information which provides a contemporary context for at least the play, if not for these annotations. The author of Milkmaids, I. C.—that is, J. C.—is unknown. John Cooke, the putative author of Greene's Tu Quoque (Q1614), has been generally rejected as a candidate. Another man with these initials who has been suggested is John Cumber, a member of the company known from the title page to have performed the play. Although in his edition Harold Metz gives arguments for and against Cumber as author, he accepts him as a likely candidate (cv–cxii). But one wonders if an actor with no other known plays to his credit would have been as knowledgeable about playwriting as the author of Milkmaids. Indeed, more likely is that several writers were involved, especially given the play's rather repetitious fourth act and other inconsistencies. Regardless of authorship, as Metz notes, the play certainly reflects a sense of what would be popular and contains numerous metadramatic self-references couched in the language of the theater. Milkmaids is both a conventional and highly artificial piece of entertainment which invites the audience to share in its numerous visual and verbal in-jokes.

The Milkmaids' self-referential prologue is considered by most theater historians to be a key piece of evidence that the play's first venue was the Red Bull theater:

This Day we entreat All that are hither come,  
To expect no noyse of Guns, Trumpets, nor Drum,  
Nor Sword and Targuet; but to heare Sence and Words,  
Fitting the Matter that the Scene affords.  
So that the Stage being reform'd, and free
From the lowd Clamors it was wont to bee,
Turmoyl'd with Battailcs; you I hope will cease
Your dayly Tumults, and with vs wish Peace.
We stand a'hazard now: yet being prepar'd,
We hope, for your owne good, you in the Yard
Will lend your Eares, attentively to heare
Things that shall flow so smoothely to your eare;
That you returning home, t'your Friends shall say,
How ere you vnderstand't, 'Tis a fine play:
For we haue in't a Conjurier, a Deuill,
And a Clowne too; but I feare the euill,
In which perhaps vnwisely we may faile,
Of wanting Squibs and Crackers at their taile.
But howsoever, Gentlemen I swore,
You shall haue Good Words for your Money here;
Stuffe that will last, we hope, and dy'd in graine;
And as yee lik't, pray know the House againe.

The title page information that the players were the Company of the Revels, a Red Bull company, would seem to indicate that this theater was the play’s first home. But more probably the prologue was added to the play for performance at the Red Bull because, as it implies, Milkmaids was not the usual fare for that theater. In fact, during the time the play was first performed, the Company of the Revels and its predecessor, Queen Anne’s Servants, were using both the Red Bull and Phoenix theaters—perhaps explaining why the generally informative title page gives no venue. What seems more likely is that Milkmaids was written with the indoor venue in mind and, as the prologue indicates and tries to counter, would have been an unpleasant surprise for the Red Bull audience. The emphasis on “Sense and Words” is all too fitting for a play about that very subject—as its subtitle indicates: “The Best Words Wear the Garland.”

The play was, according to the title page, also performed “before the king”; that is, at court, a claim probably supported by a Revels account entry dated Christmas 1619–20. Obviously, for this to have been put on the title page the court performance must have occurred before the play was printed. That is, the playbook used for that and earlier performances was not the annotated quarto of which the fragment remains. A manuscript copy of the play would have been used for performances at court and elsewhere before the play was printed, and presumably such a manuscript would have been “marked for performance” as is the quarto fragment. Thus it is worth asking why it seems that none of these performance annotations were reproduced
in the printed text. Either the 1620 quarto was printed from a second, unannotated manuscript, or the compositor(s) ignored the staging cues while retaining descriptions of certain actions. Unless these two were differentiated by script or some other means, the second possibility seems the less likely. More probable is that the quarto was printed from a manuscript not used in the theater, which could have been given to the printer by the acting company while they still retained their licensed copy for performance.

As noted, the loss of Queen Anne’s patronage probably motivated the printing of Milkmaids in 1620. The address of “The Printer to the Reader” ([A2‘]), specifically indicates a need to protect the play, while again referring to its focus on language:

Every Writer must gourene his Penne according to the Capacitie of the Stage he writes too, both in the Actor and the Auditor. This had the happiness to please, as it was meant, the greater part, and of them not the worst. If there be discoverie made of the Conjuring Words, you’l find the Witchcraft: no true Spirit will be stir’d with ’hem; haply, a malicious. It was made more for the Eye, then the Eare; less for the Hand, then eyther: and had not false Copies trauall’d abroad (even to surbating) this had kept in; for so farre the Author was from seeking fame in the publishing, that hee could haue wisht it bound about with the Ring. Some good words here you shall finde for your Money, else it keepes not touche with the Title. Receiue it well, and though in this he give you no ill, yet hereafter he hath promis’d you better Language.

Milkmaids is a play to which several later theatergoers refer, providing a rare record of both performances and responses. If it is to this play that Edmund Gayton refers in a frequently quoted passage, later popularity is apparent:

I have known upon one of these Festivals, but especially at Shrovetide, where the Players have been appointed, notwithstanding their bils to the contrary, to act what the major part of the company had a mind to; sometimes Tamerlane, sometimes Jagurth, sometimes the Jew of Malta, and sometimes parts of all these, and at last, none of the three taking, they were forc’d to undresse and put off their Tragik habits, and conclude the day with the merry milk-maides. And unlesse this were done, and the popular humour satisfied, as sometimes it so forturn’d that the Players were refractory, the Benches, the tiles, the laths, the stones, Oranges, Apples, Nuts, flew about most liberally.30

According to G. E. Bentley, “Gayton presumably had in mind theatrical activities of the thirties and early forties, to which time his datable
references seem to apply, and with reason, for he did not receive his B.A. until 1629. He would appear to be speaking of the Red Bull or Fortune; most, if not all, the plays mentioned had once belonged to the repertories at those theatres, and he speaks of them elsewhere.”

The next references are dated July 1661 in the diary of Anthony à Wood, who saw this play and others in Oxford. On 5 July he wrote: “In the morning a comedy called ‘A Mad World, my masters,’ 6d. In the afternoone, a comedy called ‘The Milkmaids,’ 6d.” In passing, Wood mentions that women acted in these plays, and by a curious coincidence this information together with the evidence of the certain deletions in the fragment makes possible a reasonably firm conclusion.

A Richard Walden seems also to have seen some of these Oxford performances and been attracted to one of the actresses, Anne Gibbs. He wrote a book of verses with the dedication: “TO THE | Transcendently Foremost, | AND | (As far as can be concluded from the Topics | of Ommatology) | MOST HEROICALLY VIRTUOUS | Mrn Anne Gibbs.” Walden lists the plays in which she performed and her roles; in Milkmaids she was “A lady.” That is, she played the part excised from the play by both bookkeepers, as detailed above. For what it is worth, then, the fragment probably cannot be connected to performances in the yard of the King’s Arms, Oxford, in 1661.

The last topical reference to Milkmaids comes in lists of plays in “Sir Edw. Browne’s Memorandum Book, 1662.” W. W. Greg says, “It is uncertain by whom they were written, and it is evident that the entries were not all made at one time. I take it that they represent the plays which the writer himself saw, and that the sums of money entered are what he paid for seats for himself and friends.” Under the heading “Red Bull” are listed “Merry Milkmaids” and “a Mad world my masters,” each at one pound, six shillings. If, as Greg speculates, this entry was made in 1662, it testifies to some interest in the play during the year after publication of the second quarto of the play and in the same year as the first edition of The Wits. In this collection of drolls one finds “INVISIBLLE SMIRK, | OR | THE PEN COMBATANTS,” which, with some alterations, is 5.1 of Two Merry Milkmaids.

It is definitely satisfying and, I think, significant that an annotated quarto of a popular and repeatedly performed play should be available for analysis. Indeed, given the evidence on the pages of the quarto fragment at the Folger, this play may well prove as interesting to modern theater historians as it apparently was to seventeenth-century audiences, albeit for different reasons. Certainly this study only begins to consider what the annotations and cuts might tell us, not only
about early stages and staging, but also about how to perceive other, unannotated, playtexts of the period.

Notes

I am grateful to John H. Astington, Peter W. M. Blayney, Andrew Gurr, and William B. Long for their helpful suggestions. A Bibliographical Society of America fellowship and a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant supported my research at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

1. The fragment was a fiftieth anniversary gift to the Folger Library by Dr. Mitsuo Kodama. It was on display (E3') at the Library from 19 April to 28 September 1983.

2. This information was provided to the Folger by the London booksellers Bernard Quartich Ltd., who had acquired it in a collection of 350 quartos.


The surviving annotated manuscripts with theatrical provenance are, in chronological order:

- Anthony Munday, *John a Kent and John a Cumber*, 1590
- Anon., *Thomas of Woodstock*, c. 1594–95 and revivals c. 1602–4 and c. 1633
- Anon., *Edmund Ironside*, 1590–1600
- Anon., *Charlemagne*, c. 1603–5
- Anon., *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, 1611
- John Fletcher and Philip Massinger, *Sir John van Olden Barnavelt*, 1619
- Anon., *The Two Noble Ladies*, 1619–23
- Thomas Dekker, *The Welsh Ambassador*, c. 1623
- Thomas Heywood, *The Captives*, 1624
- Philip Massinger, *The Parliament of Love*, 1624
- John Fletcher, *The Honest Man's Fortune*, 1625
- John Clavell, *The Soddered Citizen*, c. 1630
- Philip Massinger, *Believe as You List*, 1631
- Walter Mountfort, *The Launching of the Mary*, 1633
- Henry Glapthorne, *The Lady Mother*, 1635

This list is from William B. Long, "John a Kent and John a Cumber, An Elizabethan Playbook and Its Implications," *Shakespeare and Dramatic Tradition, Essays in Honor of S. F. Johnson*, ed. W. R. Elton and William B.
Long (Newark: Delaware University Press, 1989). Long and others would add the manuscript playbooks of *John of Bordeaux* (c. 1590–1600?) and *The Wasp* c. 1630?).


5. But not his only concern; four times he scrawled “Mattilda” perpendicular to the printed text at the outer edge of the page. While the name has no relevance to the play, presumably it mattered to the man who was Bookkeeper B. (See G4'; fig. 2).

6. The three words upside-down at the top of the outer margin: “farting shitting & pissing.”

7. All quotations from *Milkmads* are from Folger copy 2. In quoting the annotations, only the long “s” has been modernized; the sign for “and,” which resembles a large reverse comma, is represented by the ampersand. Line numbering is by page, not including the running title. The British Library copy of the full quarto is printed in the *Tudor Facsimile Text* series (ed. John S. Farmer, 1914).

8. All annotations are in the margins unless otherwise indicated.

9. On a number of pages the last line of dialogue and the catchword are on the same line, suggesting space saving to compensate for inaccurate casting off.

10. In the quarto, just before this, near the end of act 1, the Drawer says Dorigene is “made Duchesse of—and shalbe married vnto the Duke”; *shalbe* is crossed through, (E2'; fig. 4).

11. Also possible, but only barely I think, is that A made the lines through his own cues; if so, he made no changes to accommodate the cut.

12. As the Appendix list shows, on three other occasions Bookkeeper B wrote “Stet” beside what look like his own cuts.

13. The removal or reduction of parts seems to have been the motive for other cuts as well. A nine-line exchange between Ferdinand and Cornelius is reduced to three on E3' and their six lines are eliminated on E4'. The same characters, Ferdinand and Cornelius, are removed from the beginning of 3.3, where again it seems that A made the cut and B accepted it (I2'–I3'). In 4.3, these two are again eliminated, along with others (M1'–M3'; see the discussion of this scene below).


16. In the autograph manuscripts of plays by William Percy, the direction “Here they knocct up the consort” occurs between acts. It is not known if Percy’s plays were ever performed, or where—although Paul’s playhouse is a possibility. The past tense suggests performance somewhere, however, and Percy uses the term as if it will be understood. (For a concise introduction to the manuscripts and the disagreements about them, see Harold N. Hillebrand,

In the quarto of *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, there is the marginal direction “Knocke for | Schoole. Enter | The Dance.” Eugene M. Waith suggests “that in the margin of the manuscript, on one line, was ‘Knocke for Schoole’ or (‘Sch’), and below it ‘The Dance’, where ‘Schoole’ or ‘Sch’ was the speech-prefix and ‘Knocke for The Dance’ the direction. The compositor, misunderstanding, might then have interpolated ‘Enter”’ (*The Two Noble Kinsmen* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989] 3.5.134). In this edition, therefore, the schoolmaster is the one who knocks, making it an onstage action performed by a character.

17. Bookkeeper A wrote “[ho]boyes” again at the Duke’s entrance in 3.3, the courtroom scene discussed later.

18. Bill Long has suggested this possibility to me, citing the use of “Act Long” by Edward Knight, the bookkeeper of Massinger’s *Believe as You List*, between acts 1 and 2, 4 and 5. And see Gary Taylor, “The Structure of Performance,” 5.

19. What might be thought a cutline in the right margin beside the last four lines here is instead, I think, a sign that these particular lines are not to be cut. The cutlines are in the left margin.

20. The play begins with a *Faustus*-like study scene; perhaps the earlier play was echoed not only in the action of *Milkmaids* but in the staging as well.


22. This interpretation is supported by the only change to a speech-heading by one of the bookkeepers. On 14 Bookkeeper A deleted “Fer.” and replaced it with “I Jud.”

23. It looks as if Bookkeeper A cued the Duke’s entrance just below “Raymond solus”: at the edge of the page what seems to be “ke” appears, followed by “Julia” crossed through (M1; fig. 8).

24. Even when the Volpone-like Raymond, having been assured by Caro-ulus that the Duke and others have left, says, “Actie as fire I spring out of my graue then,” a bed would not have been necessary (N1, l. 27). The probable elimination of the bed here prompts the speculation that the bar was similarly deleted from A’s version of the trial scene, which he also shortened. Certainly, without such props the play would have been much easier to perform on provincial stages.

25. The Lady was cut from both bookkeepers’ versions; Ferdinand was not removed completely; he appears briefly in 1.3 and 2.1 and more extensively in 4.1; Cornelius was cut from A’s version.

26. Wilhelm Creizenach, in *The English Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: Lippencott; London: Sedgwick & Jackson, 1916), speculates that invisibility would have been indicated by a “robe for to goe invisibell,” as in Henslowe’s list of props for the Admiral’s Men. Creizenach says the robe’s “application would have been indispensible in such pieces as *The Two Merry Milkmaids* (pri. 1620), where the plot turns on a ring which renders
its wearer invisible" (387). Two comments: Malone’s list of Henslowe’s props is possibly inexact, and there is no playbook evidence that such a cloak was ever used in this or any other play of the time.

27. See Reynolds, The Staging of Elizabethan Plays, 7–9, for a summary of the evidence from contemporary references and lawsuits.


29. This generally accepted conclusion is based on the play’s title page and an entry in the Chamber Accounts: “To Robert Leigh in the behalf of himself and the rest of his fellows for one plaie presented by them before his Ma’y the second of January 1619 [1620] by warrass of the same date. . . .” (Dramatic Records in the Declared Accounts of the Treasurer of the Chamber 1558–1642, Malone Society Collections, Vol. 6, 1961 [1962]), 72.

30. Pleasant Notes upon Don Quixote (1654; Wing G415), 271.

31. The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941–68), vol. 3, 103–4. This reference is generally, and with some justification, taken as being to Milkmaids. It should be noted, though, that Beaumont and Fletcher’s The Coxcomb (c. 1608–10; S. R. 1647) has two actual—so perhaps not “merry”—milkmaids, Nan and Madge, who are on stage for approximately two hundred lines (not all theirs) over three scenes. (See 3.3, 4.3, 5.2 in The Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon, vol. 1, gen. ed. Fredson Bowers [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966]. My thanks to John Astington for drawing this to my attention.

32. Io Ruminans; or, the repercussion (Wing W287; 1662; A27), quoted by Metz, p. cxiv. Giving no source, Metz adds, “Canto VI briefly celebrates her performance in the part of A lady but tells us nothing of consequence about the play.” Bentley cites this work, but does not quote from it (JCS, 3. 104; 5. 1021, 1170); he refers to Montague Summers, The Playhouse of Samuel Pepys (London: Kegan, Paul, 1935), who quotes the same dedication as Metz and provides the information that the copy in the British Library is unique (144, n. 227).


34. See The Wits; or, Sport upon Sport, ed. John James Elson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; London: Humphrey Milford; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932). On the issue of whether these drolls were performed, see 37–38.

Appendix

I: Annotations by Bookkeepers A and B
The two bookkeepers’ annotations as they occur on the page. Line counts are of each printed line on a page excluding the running title; usually the annotation takes space beside more than one line. By signature, the sequence is: line(s), bookkeeper, annotation.
D3r 6–7: B: Ready | Wine
12–13: B: Stet
14–16: A: florish
D3v 8+: A: florish
D4r 13–15: A: Frederick | Dorilus
24–25: A: Host
31–32: A: Drawe[r]
E1r 5: B: Wine
20–21: B: Ready Smirk[e]
E1v 2–3: A: Smirke
E2r 13–16: B: Act | Ready
29–30: B: Knock Act
E2v 6+: A: Longe; B: Florish
–7: B: Duchess Dorilus Julia, Ferdinand
7: A: [hob]eyes
7–8+: B: Enter Duke | Raymond | Cornelius Bernard Landoffe | Cal-
lowe Ranoffe
E3r 7–11: A: Julia Dor[igene] | traine D[uke] | Landoff
E4v 12–13: B: florish
16–17: A: florish
F1v 14–16: B: Ready | Julia
F2r 15–19: A: Callow and [Ranoff?] | & Lady
F2v 2: B: Stet crossed through
12–13: A: Julia
20–23: B: Callowe | Ranoffe
F3r 24–29: B: Rea: | Raymond | Duthess | Frederick
F4v 1–4: A: Raymo[nd] | Dutch[ess]
4: B: Frederick
10: B: Exit Lady crossed through
F4v 15: B: Exit
G1v 5–6: A: Dorilus
8–10: B: Exit | Raymo | nd
G1v 12–13: A: [D]uke; B: Raym written over Land
G3v 4–5: B: Enter
8–9: A: Dorilus[s]
23–26: A: Ray[mond]
G4v 9–10: B: Dori | Dutchess
23–24: A: Bernard
25: B: Dorilus Exit [space] Raymond
H1v 15–16: A: Landoff
H1v 9–11: B: Rea Act
18–19: B: Ready Florish
24: A: [florish]; B: Act
27: B: Julia
27–28: B: Florish (to left of Julia)
H2r 7: B: Exeunt
24–25: B: Stet
30–32: A: Carolus | ferdina[nd]
H2v  2:  B: Exit
   12:  A: [J]ulia
H3v  11–14:  B: Ready | Bernard
H3v  4–5:  A: Frederick
       25–26:  A: Smirke
H4v  15–17:  B: Callow | Ranoff
       27–31:  A: Callow | Ranoff[f]
I1v  6:  B: Exeunt
       18–19:  B: Stet
I1v  8–11:  B: Ready | A Table | bookes
I2v  1–4:  A: Bernard | Dorilus
       7–9:  A:?: Bernard[d] | [solus?]?
I2v  6–7:  A: Julia
       19–26:  B: Ready | Sennet | florish deleted | table | Duke | Barr
       28–29:  A: [ho]boyes
       31–33 +:  A: Judges | Ranoff | s[?] Carolus | and Raymond
I3v  10–14:  B: A Table | A Barr | A Sennet
       17–19:  A: Enter Du[chess] | & guard
I4v  24–25:  B: Ready Dorilus
I4v  12:  A: printed Fer. crossed out and 1 Jud written to left
K1v  25–29:  A: En? | [?] | possibly J; page torn away
K1v  4–5:  B: Bernard
       16–17:  B: Rea Senn | et
       32 +:  B: Sennet (center bottom of page)
K2v  1–2:  A: Julia
       2:  B: Exeunt
       10–12:  A: Landoff
       22–24 4:  B: Frederi[ck]
       27–29:  A: Frederi[ck]
K2v  22–23:  B: Act Ready
       30:  B?: illegible change to speech-heading
K3v  3–5:  B: Act
       7–8:  B: Ready Bed
K3v  7–9:  A: [Call]ow & | [Ran]off
K4v  5:  Fre: speech-heading added to correct omission
       23–26:  B: Ready | Raymond | Julia
       25:  B: Exeunt
       29–31:  A: Julia & [Ray?] | mond
L1v  16–20:  B: Landof | Bernard | Dorilus
L3v  11–12:  A: frederick
       14–15:  B: [ex?]?
L3v  27–28:  A: [S]mirke
M1v  5–7:  B: [Ranoff] (top of name torn away)
       8–9:  A: Callow & [?]?
M1v  17–19:  B: Bed Ready | Duke
       20–22:  A: [Ra]ymond | [s]olus
       22:  B: Exeunt
"MARKED FOR PERFORMANCE"

M4'  27–29: B: Cornelius
     30–31: A: Carolus

M4'  16–19: B: [Dutches]s [?] & Lodwick

N1'  9–10: A: [?] Carolus
     13–14: B: Julia
     19: A: Julia

N2'  6–8: B: Lan[ndo]ff | Freder[ick] (top right of page torn away)

N2'  20–23: A: [G]uido

N3'  9–10: B: Landoffe

N3'  18–20: B: Act Read

N4'  10–11+: B: Act
     12–13: B: Enter; A: Smirk[e]

O1'  7–8: A: ferdina[nd]
     13–14: A: Carolus

II: Cuts, deletions, emendations
Cuts marked by lines around printed text or by lines in the margins. Also listed are emendations. Again, the line numbers are by signature.

D3'  1–5: 12–15 (to "then:"); Stet by B in outer margin
D4'  18–20 (to "after:")

E1'  5: "man" deleted

E2'  5: "shalbe" deleted; 9–10 ("by happenie") deleted, replaced with, then I were happy”; 13–16; 20: “it” deleted, replaced with “there.”

E2'  9–29

E3'  1–7; 8: “a Bishop” deleted; 19–25 (from “If I were”)  
E4'  18–23 (to “thee.”)

F1'  24–31

F2'  marked for deletion by line down outer margin; 27–32 marked for deletion down inner margin

F2'  1–7 and 8–14; Stet by B crossed through beside 1–7; 20–24 (“I haue Bolt”)

F4'  9–11 (to “Farewell;”) 15 (“Do’st thou Burgeon?” deleted); 30–32 (from “call’d,”)

G2'  5–8

G3'  16–17

G3'  21–24

G4'  4–5

G4'  14–15 (“by all that’s Righteous | Both in Earth and Heauen,” deleted)

H2'  24–25 cut; Stet from B in outer margin

H4'  24: a single line through “certaine”

I1'  15–30 ("putting another"); Stet from B in outer margin

I1'  2–8 (to "vnlikely”)

I2'  32–33

I3'  1–14

I3'  12–24; 31–32 ("thats: And what was it? / A garland”)

I4'  8–16

K1'  11–13 (to wickednesse."’); “thought tedions” (sic) deleted, replaced with “for proofe” (?) 18: “If she had bin a villaine” deleted
K1v 1–6
K2v 23–28 (to “Policy,“); 30–31
K3r 28–29: “and yet they serve a Lord, if any body haue use of their eyes these will.” deleted
K4v 28–31 (to “eyes”)
K4v 18: “which heere” deleted; “with hers” written above
M1v 23–31
M2v page marked for deletion by line down outer margin
M2v marked for deletion as previous page
M3v marked for deletion as previous pages
M3v 1: B added “my Lord”; 1–2: “My Lord” and “all the rest I pray” deleted; did B change his mind? or delete his addition in error?
M4v 13–17; 32: “Enter Dutchesse” deleted (the quarto is wrong)
M4v 5–6: “and as I’m one of the honest men I am glad to heare it.” deleted; 26: “God and all good men” deleted; “then may good Heaven” written above
N1v 14, 16
N2v 2–3, 9; “thinke of it.” deleted, replaced with “faire well sir & repent”; 10–22
N2v 11: “much” inserted between “so” and “hath”
N3v 8–9 (to “offenders”); 31: “Gods” deleted
N3v 23–26 (from “let’s”); 27: “I say” deleted
N4v 1–2: from "s" of "wants" to "Without"; 4–7; 8: “plying him with torments” deleted; 11: “n” of “men” deleted; 15–29
N4v 1?–16 (top left of page torn away)
O1v 11–12; 13–14 and more, but bottom third of page torn away
O1v 1?–20 (to “Diuels”; top left of page torn away)

III: Miscellaneous marginalia
Legible material in the margins not attributable to either of the two bookkeepers.

F2v 8–10: “in such | suspition” inverted in the outer margin (Hand C)
H4v 6–9: “farting | shiting & | pissing” inverted in the outer margin (Hand E)