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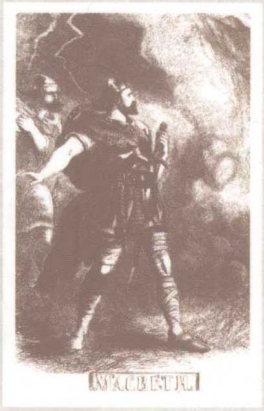


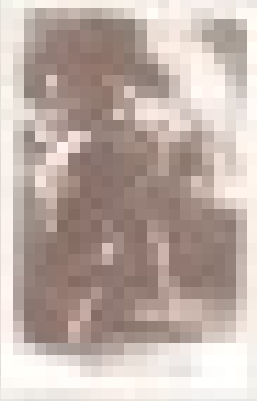

莎士比亚作品解读丛书 · 英文影印插图版

# 麦克白

主编 [英] 肯尼思 · 缪尔 (Kenneth Muir)

# *Macbeth*

中国人民大学出版社



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# GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

WHEN it was proposed, in 1946, to re-issue the Arden Shakespeare, little more was intended than a limited revision, bringing introductions and collations into line with the work of recent years and modifying appendices whenever additions were necessary or the material had been accepted into the common body of knowledge. In the main part of each volume the form of the original page was to be undisturbed, in order that the stereotype plates of those originals might still be used. This meant that practically no alterations could be made in the text, which was based on the Cambridge edition of 1863–6 (revised, 1891–3), and that any alterations in the commentary must be so arranged as to occupy the same space as the notes which they replaced.

It had been recognized from the first that in the case of a few plays it might be necessary to modify this restriction and it soon became clear that the first two volumes, *Macbeth* and *Love's Labour's Lost*, would prove more costly to produce if the stereotypes were retained than if they were abandoned. The two editors, therefore, who had gallantly endeavoured to preserve the original lay-out of the pages, found themselves freed from this necessity when their work was done or partly done, so that much of it had to be done again. As conditions became more stable, it became possible also to consider sparing their successors what they had experienced and at last to allow all editors to start afresh without tying them to the Cambridge text or to the lay-out of the original pages.

Thus a major change of policy came about by degrees, as the conditions of the years immediately after the war began to allow of it, and what had begun as a revision became a new edition.

This meant that publishers, editors, and general editor were faced with an entirely new responsibility: that of establishing the text of each play in place of a text which had hitherto been prescribed. Since we were unwilling to suspend activities until textual critics should be agreed that a text had been established as nearly authoritative for our day as that of the 1891–3 edition was held to be for its own, we decided to continue the work begun, in full awareness of the difficulties involved in publishing an edition such

as this at a moment when there is not yet full agreement on a generally acceptable text. Each individual editor would thus be responsible for the text of his play, as well as for the introductions, collations, commentary, and appendices.

The policy of the original edition in respect of introductions, commentary, and appendices remains what it has always been; the lines laid down by those scholars who first designed its form have proved their worth throughout the past half-century. The introductions, though the emphasis must vary with the nature of the given play, include, together with the results of the editor's own thought and investigation, a survey of as many as possible of those studies which throw light upon the nature of the play or the problems surrounding it. The general commentary, which we have kept in its original position, at the foot of the page, provides such brief notes as may be required for the elucidation of specific passages or textual problems or for general comment and comparison; these often, therefore, serve to illustrate the general account given in the introduction.

The policy in respect of text is of necessity neither so simple nor so consistent as that of the editors of the original series, who were enjoined to use as their base the Cambridge text of 1891–3, and in most cases did so willingly, believing it to be as nearly authoritative as could be. Much has happened in the last fifty years, through the great extension of palæographical, bibliographical, and textual scholarship; and our better understanding of (among other things) the nature and relations of Folio and Quarto texts has led us not always into more certainty, but sometimes rather into wholesome and chastened uncertainty. Each editor's text must now be his individual concern, since each play presents its own group of problems. Some of us may prove to have solved these in a way which posterity will repudiate. But an attempt will be made in every case to present the evidence for the editor's decisions fairly and to give at the same time representation to solutions other than that editor's own.

UNA ELLIS-FERMOR

*London, 1952*

# PREFACE

THE original Arden *Macbeth*, edited by Henry Cuningham, first appeared in 1912. The present edition owes much to its predecessor, many of the notes being used with little or no change; but there are substantial alterations. The introduction is new; the text (for which Mr Cuningham was not responsible) has been revised, and several hundred small alterations have been made in it—most of them consisting of a return to the First Folio; nearly all the notes contain alterations, and many are entirely new; and the appendices are new. There are, in fact, so many alterations that it was not possible to print from the old stereos.

Mr Cuningham disagreed with the General Editor of the series, and was not allowed to print his own text: he was thereby constrained to make a number of protests in the notes, which are happily now superfluous. Some of the differences between the present edition and Mr Cuningham's are caused by a change of attitude to the authenticity of the text. In 1912 it was still possible for Mr Cuningham to say:

> It is admitted by all competent scholars that the text of *Macbeth* has been more or less vitiated by the interpolation or additions of some dramatist other than Shakespeare.

But it is now generally agreed that such interpolations and additions are at least fewer than Mr Cuningham imagined.

It may be as well to mention one or two points about the present volume. First, the relevant parts of Holinshed's *Chronicle* are printed in the appendix, but, in order to save space, other parts have been curtailed. Secondly, the sections of the Introduction devoted to Date and Interpolations contain criticism necessary for the understanding of the final section, which is devoted to interpretation. Thirdly, though many of the annotations deal with questions of poetic imagery, I hope I have not lost sight of the fact that *Macbeth* is an acting play.

I am indebted to previous editors of the play, especially H. H. Furness, Jr (1903), Sir Herbert Grierson (1914), and Dr J. Dover Wilson (1947). I am grateful to many of my colleagues for assis-

tance on different points, and particularly to Mr Harold Fisch who has checked the collations and criticized the introduction. Professor P. Alexander has generously given me advice on textual matters; Professor R. Peacock supplied me with useful information; Mr Roy Walker lent me the MS. of his valuable study, *The Time is Free*, and gave me permission to make use of it in my notes; Mr J. M. Nosworthy sent me some unpublished notes; and, above all, Professor U. Ellis-Fermor has been all that a General Editor should be. I should add that Cleanth Brooks's essay in *The Well Wrought Urn* arrived too late for me to use it, though we agree on a number of points.

KENNETH MUIR

*University of Leeds*
*Christmas, 1950*

## NOTE TO TENTH EDITION

TWENTY years have elapsed since the publication of the Seventh Edition. I am greatly indebted to many colleagues, strangers, and friends for valuable suggestions, especially to the late John Dover Wilson. In the Ninth Edition passages from Buchanan and Leslie replaced those from Stewart. As the present edition has been reset, I have been able to introduce many changes. For the correction of many typographical anomalies, misprints, and minor errors my thanks are due to Miss Newland-Smith, the scholarly and indefatigable reader for the Broadwater Press.

K. M.

*Liverpool 1971*

## NOTE TO 1984 REISSUE

THIS is the last revision for which I shall be responsible and I am glad of the opportunity of updating the work of my comparative youth. I have rewritten most of the introduction, altered many notes, and added others. I am grateful to the General Editor for his valuable suggestions and to many friends and colleagues.

K. M.

*Liverpool 1984*

# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| Barker | H. Granville-Barker, *Prefaces to Shakespeare*, 6 (1974). |
| Bradley | A. C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904). |
| Brown | *Focus on Macbeth*, ed. John Russell Brown (1982). |
| Bullough | Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, VII (1973). |
| Curry | J. C. Curry, *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns* (1937). |
| Greg | W. W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio* (1955). |
| Kittredge | G. L. Kittredge, '*Macbeth*', in *Sixteen Plays of Shakespeare* (1946). |
| Paul | H. N. Paul, *The Royal Play of 'Macbeth'* (1950). |
| Rogers | H. L. Rogers, *'Double Profit' in Macbeth* (1964). |
| Rosenberg | Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of Macbeth* (1978). |
| Spurgeon | Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery* (1955). |
| Walker | Roy Walker, *The Time is Free* (1949). |
| Wilson | *Macbeth*, ed. J. Dover Wilson (1947). |

| | |
|---|---|
| *CHEL* | *Cambridge History of English Literature.* |
| *CSP* | *Calendar of State Papers.* |
| *EC* | *Essays in Criticism.* |
| *ELH* | *English Literary History.* |
| *ELN* | *English Language Notes.* |
| *ELR* | *English Literary Renaissance.* |
| *MLN* | *Modern Language Notes.* |
| *MLR* | *Modern Language Review.* |
| *NQ* | *Notes and Queries.* |
| *NV* | New Variorum edition of *Macbeth*, ed. H. H. Furness (1963). |
| *PMLA* | *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America.* |
| *RES* | *Review of English Studies.* |
| *SQ* | *Shakespeare Quarterly.* |
| *SS* | *Shakespeare Survey.* |
| *TLS* | *The Times Literary Supplement.* |

| | |
|---|---|
| N | See additional note. |

# INTRODUCTION

## 1. TEXT

*The Tragedie of Macbeth* was first published in the First Folio of 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, and seventeen years after the play was first performed. The text follows *Julius Caesar* and precedes *Hamlet*. As it is mentioned in the *Stationers' Register* as one of those 'as are not formerly entred to other men',[1] it may be assumed that there was no quarto edition. Acts and scenes are indicated in Latin,[2] but there is no *dramatis personae*. It is by far the shortest of the tragedies, occupying only 21 Folio pages (compared with 30 for *Othello* and 31 for *Hamlet*). There is evidence, as we shall see, that there have been cuts in the text, as well as interpolations.[3]

The text was printed from the prompt-book, or more probably from a transcript of it prepared for the printers. It contains such indications of prompt-book origin as duplicated stage directions[4] and instructions for noises off (e.g. *Ring the Bell* and *Knock*)[5]; but there are also 'descriptive touches' in the stage directions 'to suggest the author'[6] and some vague touches characteristic of an author's manuscript which somehow got transferred to the prompt-book.

The textual problem is closely linked to the question of alterations made for different performances. The 1623 text contains passages which could not have belonged to the version performed in 1606; both differ from the version witnessed by Simon Forman in 1611; some critics believe[7] there was an earlier version dating from Elizabeth's reign; and almost all critics believe that one 1606 performance was at Court, and probably shortened for that reason.

1. S. Schoenbaum, *Records and Images* (1981), p. 221.

2. There are some inconsistencies, however. The first three scenes of Act II are virtually continuous, whereas the battle scenes of the last act are not divided.

3. See below, p. xxxii. 4. E.g. I. vi. S.D., I. vii. S.D.; V. viii. 34.

5. II. ii. 64; II. iii. 79. 6. Greg, p. 393. 7. See below, p. xvii.

It has been suggested that[1] the editors sent to the printers the version included in the First Folio because James I would have preferred it to the hypothetical longer version. But this was not the version performed at Court in 1606, and it seems more likely that when Hecate and the extra witches were introduced into the prompt-book, cut passages were discarded and were therefore not available in 1623.

The possibility that some whole scenes are missing from the extant text is discussed below.[2] Here it is necessary only to refer to the frequent mislineation, mainly in the second scene of the play, due possibly to the dislocation caused by cuts.[3]

It should be mentioned, however, that not everyone subscribes to these views on the text. Richard Flatter believed that the play showed no signs of editorial interference and that Shakespeare's Producing Hand may be discerned in it;[4] and D. A. Traversi warned us against the assumption that difficulties in the text can be explained by omissions:[5]

> The verse of *Macbeth* is often, at first reading, so abrupt and disjointed that some critics have felt themselves driven to look for gaps in the text. Yet the difficult passages do not look in the least like the result of omissions, but are rather necessary to the feeling of the play.

Here, surely, Professor Traversi was mistaken; but he wrote at a time when it was necessary to protest at the prevailing textual pessimism.

According to the standard work on the printing of the First Folio,[6] nine of the *Macbeth* pages were set by Compositor A, and twelve by Compositor B. A number of corrections were made in proof, but only two are of any consequence: *Roffe* was corrected to *Rosse* (IV. iii. 213) and 'on my with' to 'on with' (IV. iii. 154). As Hinman pointed out, the proof corrector did not usually refer to copy, his aim being merely to eliminate 'obvious typographical

1. Greg, p. 395.

2. See below, p. xxiv.

3. Not all the mislineation is the result of cuts. The last eleven lines of II. ii are printed as fifteen in the Folio. The stage directions necessitated the splitting of lines into two and this confused the compositor about lineation.

4. Richard Flatter, *Shakespeare's Producing Hand* (1948). His theories might have been more convincing if they had been applied to good quartos.

5. D. A. Traversi, *Approach to Shakespeare* (1938), p. 89.

6. Charton Hinman, *The Printing and Proof-reading of the First Folio* (1963). See I. 10–12 for an account of these two compositors and their characteristic habits. A was more accurate than B.

infelicities'.[1] In *Macbeth* he allowed twenty or more obvious errors to stand, and doubtless others which were not so obvious.

In most cases it is impossible to determine how these errors originated. Simple omissions, like that of 'break' (I. ii. 26), could be blamed on either the transcriber or the compositor. There are some misreadings, probably by the compositor (e.g. *Or* for *Are* (I. iv. 1), *sowre* for *sure* (II. ii. 56) and *Soris* for *Forres* (I. iii. 39), as well as a number of misunderstandings: e.g. *Heire* for *hair* (I. iii. 134). Dover Wilson thought[2] that 'Gallowgrosses' (I. ii. 13) could be explained as an actor's blunder strangely reproduced by the transcriber; and perhaps 'Barlet' (I. vi. 4) could be a blunder of the same kind. But it is impossible to suppose that an actor would say 'Can' for 'Came' (I. iii. 98).

## 2. DATE

In Simon Forman's manuscript[3] *The Bocke of Plaies and Notes therof per Formans for Common Pollicie* (i.e. affording useful lessons in the common affairs of life) there is a description of a performance at the Globe in the spring of 1611, as Forman states:

> In Mackbeth at the Glob, 16jo, the 20 of Aprill [Sat.], ther was to be obserued, firste, how Mackbeth and Bancko, 2 noble men of Scotland, Ridinge thorowe a wod, the[r] stode before them 3 women feiries or Nimphes, And saluted Mackbeth, sayinge 3 tyms vnto him, haille Mackbeth, king of Codon; for thou shalt be a kinge, but shall beget No kinges, &c. then said Bancko, what all to mackbeth And nothing to me. Yes, said the nimphes, haille to thee Bancko, thou shalt beget kings, yet be no kinge. And so they departed & cam to the Courte of Scotland to Dunkin king of Scots, and yt was in the dais of Edward the Confessor. And Dunkin bad them both kindly wellcome. And made Mackbeth forth with Prince of Northumberland, and sent him hom to his own castell, and appointed mackbeth to prouid for him, for he wold Sup with him the next dai at night, & did soe. And mackbeth Contrived to kill Dunkin, & thorowe the persuasion of his wife did that night Murder the kinge in his own Castell, beinge

1. Hinman, *ibid.*, p. 227. Owing to the normal method of type-setting, a compositor could be ignorant of the context and so fall into error: e.g. 'Lady Lenox' in II. i. 10 S.D., instead of 'Lady Macbeth as Queen, Lenox'.

2. Wilson. p. 89. I do not agree with him that *stuffed* (v. iii. 44) and *rooky* (III. ii. 51) should be blamed on Burbage's faulty memory. See notes to these lines.

3. Ashmolean MS. 208. Facsimile in S. Schoenbaum's *Records and Images* 1981).

his gueste. And ther were many prodigies seen that night & the dai before. And when Mackbeth had murdred the kinge, the blod on his hands could not be washed of by Any means, nor from his wiues handes, which handled the bloddi daggers in hiding them, By which means they became moch amazed and Affronted. the murder being knowen, Dunkins 2 sonns fled, the on to England, the other to Walles, to saue themselues. They being fled, they were supposed guilty of the murder of their father, which was nothinge so. Then was Mackbeth crowned kinge, and then he for feare of Banko, his old companion, that he should beget kings but be no kinge him selfe, he contriued the death of Banko, and caused him to be Murdred on the way as he Rode. The next night, being at supper with his noble men whom he had bid to a feaste to the whiche also Banco should haue com, he began to speake of Noble Banco, and to wish that he wer there. And as he thus did, standing vp to drincke a Carouse to him, the ghoste of Banco came and sate down in his cheier behind him. And he turninge About to sit down Again sawe the goste of banco, which fronted him so, that he fell into a great passion of fear and fury, vtterynge many wordes about his murder, by which, when they hard that Banco was Murdred they Suspected Mackbet.

Then Mack dove fled to England to the kings sonn, And soe they Raised an Army, And cam into scotland, and at dunston Anyse ouerthru Mackbet. In the mean tyme whille macdouee was in England, Mackbet slewe Mackdoues wife & children, and after in the battelle mackdoue slewe mackbet.

Obserue Also howe mackbets quen did Rise in the night in her slepe, & walke and talked and confessed all, & the doctor noted her wordes.

Forman gives an impossible date since 20 April did not fall on a Saturday in 1610; his account of the play was apparently mixed with memories of Holinshed;[1] the indelible stains of blood were presumably suggested by Macbeth's speeches after the murder and Lady Macbeth's in the sleep-walking scene; he makes a bad mistake in supposing that Macbeth was created Prince of Northumberland (or Cumberland);[2] he makes no mention of the cauldron scene although, as an astrologer, he should have been interested in the prophecies in this scene. Nevertheless there is no

1. E.g. '3 women feiries or Nimphes'. See J. M. Nosworthy, 'Macbeth at the Globe', *The Library*, II (1947–8), 108–18; Leah Scragg, 'Macbeth on Horseback', *SS 26* (1973), pp. 81–8; Peter Thomson, *Shakespeare's Theatre* (1983), pp. 137–9.

2. Northumberland is mentioned in III. vi.

reason to believe that the play witnessed by Forman was substantially different from that performed before the King five years previously. Forman was inaccurate in his account of other plays and he may have recorded his impressions after a lapse of days or weeks.[1]

Although this performance, in 1611, is the first of which we have a definite record, we can be fairly certain that the play was in existence four years before, because of echoes of it in contemporary plays. In *Lingua* (1607), there are possible echoes of II. i, and what seems to be a parody of the sleep-walking scene. There are references to Banquo's ghost in *The Puritaine* (IV. iii. 89):[2]

> and in stead of a Iester, weele ha the ghost ith white sheete sit at vpper end a'th'Table . . .

and in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (v. i. 22–8),[3]

> When thou art at thy Table with thy friends
> Merry in heart, and fild with swelling wine,
> Il'e come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
> Invisible to all men but thy selfe,
> And whisper such a sad tale in thine eare,
> Shall make thee let the Cuppe fall from thy hand,
> And stand as mute and pale as Death it selfe.

*The Puritaine* was published, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* probably acted, in 1607. Allowing for the necessary interval for the writing, performing, and publishing of the former play, it is fairly certain that *Macbeth* was being performed in 1606. It is also certain that the reference to the King's Evil (IV. iii) and to the two-fold balls and sceptres of Banquo's descendants (IV. i) must have been written after the accession of James I in 1603.

If these passages were interpolations, the play as a whole might have been written earlier. It has, indeed, been argued by several critics that the play was originally written in the reign of Elizabeth I and revised in 1606. J. Dover Wilson believed[4] that Shakespeare visited Scotland and there perused William Stewart's *The Buik of the Croniclis of Scotland*, though he later retracted his

1. Forman does not mention Hermione's survival, nor the Queen in *Cymbeline*. Although some scholars suspected that the Forman MS. was a Collier forgery, its authenticity was established by Dover Wilson and R. W. Hunt, *RES* (1947), 193 ff.

2. Halliwell (*NV*).

3. Clarendon (*NV*).

4. Wilson, p. xli.

view, propounded originally by Mrs C. C. Stopes,[1] that this was a source of the play. Apart from that, he argued that numerous obscurities in the Folio text were caused by cuts in the original play, and that George Saintsbury was right to maintain that portions of the play and in particular 'the second scene are in verse and phrase whole stages older than the bulk of the play'.[2] Wilson believed that the second scene of the play must have been written soon after the Hecuba speeches in *Hamlet*;[3] but the resemblance can better be explained as a deliberate attempt on Shakespeare's part to adopt a style suitable for 'epic' narrative on the model of Marlowe's account of the fall of Troy in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* and Kyd's account of the battle in *The Spanish Tragedy*.[4] Nothing can be deduced about the date when the *Macbeth* scene was written.

Arthur Melville Clark agreed[5] with Dover Wilson that the play was written in 1601, his main reason being that the play contained allusions to the Gowrie conspiracy of the previous year. None of these allusions is convincing and, even if they were, they could have been derived from the anonymous play, *Gowrie*, performed by Shakespeare's company in 1604.[6] If Clark had read H. N. Paul's *The Royal Play of 'Macbeth'*[7] he could hardly have thought that the Gunpowder Plot was less relevant to the play than the Gowrie conspiracy.[8]

A third critic, Daniel Amneus, has argued[9] for an even earlier date, 1599, for the composition of the play, partly because Shakespeare would not have dared to write a play which gave approval to a rebellion against a reigning monarch after he had

1. C. C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Industry* (1916), pp. 93, 102–3. The relevant Stewart passages were reluctantly included in my original edition of *Macbeth*, and afterwards withdrawn.

2. George Saintsbury, *CHEL*, v. 203.

3. Wilson, p. xl.

4. J. M. Nosworthy, *RES* (1946), 126–30.

5. A. M. Clark, *Murder under Trust* (1982), pp. 109–13, 120–4. It should be mentioned that through age and infirmity Clark was unable to see his book through the press. Presumably for the same reason he seems to have consulted no book or edition of the play published during the last thirty years.

6. Performed December 1604. As there were official objections to it, Shakespeare would not have been encouraged to associate his play with the Gowrie conspiracy.

7. But Michael Hawkins, 'History, politics and *Macbeth*', in *Focus on Macbeth*, ed. John Russell Brown (1982), pp. 185–8, argues that there is ambiguity in the political 'lessons' in *Macbeth* and that Paul is wrong to assert that it was written by royal command.

8. Paul, pp. 226–47.

9. Daniel Amneus, *The Mystery of Macbeth* (1983).

learned of James's strong views on the matter. Against this it may be urged that Macbeth was a usurper and that Malcolm, having been made Prince of Cumberland, could be regarded as Duncan's rightful successor. Amneus is on stronger ground when he lists nineteen unsolved problems connected with the play,[1] which, he thinks, are due to the cuts and alterations made in 1606. Some of these problems may rather be due to carelessness on Shakespeare's part—there are similar discrepancies in many of his plays. The report by Forman may be influenced by memories of Holinshed;[2] and it is surely improbable that in the performance he witnessed Shakespeare's fellows used the 1599, not the 1606, version of the play, the earlier version being nevertheless unavailable to the Folio editors.

More significant are the apparent changes with regard to the murder of Duncan. Lady Macbeth first decides to incite her husband to commit the deed; then she decides to use her keen knife herself; then she apparently proposes a joint murder, and finally Macbeth does the deed on his own. When Marvin Rosenberg carried out an experiment[3] on people who were ignorant of the play, they assumed at the end of the fifth scene that Lady Macbeth would herself carry out the murder.

Amneus argues ingeniously that in the original play Macbeth, not Malcolm, was made Prince of Cumberland—Forman's 'Northumberland' is a slip—and as this meant that he would succeed Duncan in due course, he decided not to murder him. He is later persuaded to murder Duncan in collaboration with his wife, and this murder took place on stage at 2 a.m. (cf. v. i. 33) not, as in the present text, soon after midnight. Amneus's theory is well-argued and the clues are marshalled with great skill; but from the nature of things it comes short of proof. It may be doubted whether Shakespeare could ever have intended Lady Macbeth to do the deed, whatever *her* intentions: it would have gone against the sources and against the poet's conception of the tragic hero. We may doubt, too, whether the murder ever took place on stage, or that this was altered to avoid giving offence to the King. The discrepancy between the times given for the murder would not be noticed by the audience. Shakespeare could not allow Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene to count *twelve* strokes. In any case the murder is a joint operation since Lady Macbeth drugs the possets of the grooms. Above all, I

1. Amneus, pp. 2–4.
2. Nosworthy. See p. xvi, n. 1.
3. Rosenberg. p. 242.

cannot believe that Shakespeare could have written the verse of *Macbeth* before that of *Hamlet* and *Othello*.[1]

There were cuts and topical additions in the version of the play performed in the summer of 1606; and, as we shall see, between 1606 and 1623 there were other changes, but for these Shakespeare was probably not responsible.

The play was therefore written, we may assume, between 1603 and 1606. The allusions to equivocation (II. iii. 9 ff.) and to the hanging of traitors (IV. ii. 46 ff.) were presumably written after the trial of Father Garnet (28 March 1606) for complicity in the Gunpowder Plot. The words 'yet could not equivocate to heaven' imply that the speech was written after 3 May, when Garnet was hanged. Equivocation had been mentioned in *Hamlet* (V. i), but in the spring and summer of 1606 it had become a burning topic. John Chamberlaine wrote to Winwood on 5 April:[2]

> So that by the Cunning of his Keeper, *Garnet* being brought into a *Fool's Paradise*, had diverse Conferences with *Hall, his fellow Priest in the Tower*, which were overheard by *Spialls* set on purpose. With which being charged he stifly denyed it; but being still urged, and some Light given him that they had notice of it, he *persisted still, with Protestation upon his Soul and Salvation, that there had passed no such Interlocution:* till at last being *confronted* with *Hall*, he was driven to *confess*; And being now asked in this Audience how he could salve this *lewd Perjury*, he answered, *that so long as he thought they had no Proof he was not bound to accuse himself: but when he saw they had Proof, he stood not long in it.* And then fell into a large Discourse of defending *Equivocations*, with many weak and frivolous Distinctions.

Garnet admitted that equivocation was justifiable only when used for a good object;[3] but he argued that if the law be unjust, then there is no treason.[4] He prayed 'for the good Success of the great Action, concerning the Catholick Cause in the beginning of the Parliament' and then denied that this referred to the Gunpowder Plot.[5] He claimed that he could not reveal the plot because he was told of it in confession, though, as James I pointed out:[6]

1. Not so much because of the metrical tests worked out in the nineteenth century and tabulated by E. K. Chambers, but because of the impression of most critics of Shakespeare's stylistic development. See *Shakespeare's Styles*, ed. P. Edwards, I.-S. Ewbank and G. K. Hunter (1980).
2. Winwood, *Memorials*, II. 205–6.
3. *CSP (Domestic)* (1603–10), p. 306.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
5. *State Trials*, I. 254.
6. *Political Works*, ed. McIlwain (1918), pp. 156–7.