



HENGIST, KING OF KENT; OR
THE MAYOR OF QUEENBOROUGH

BY
THOMAS MIDDLETON

Edited from the Manuscript in the Folger Shakespeare Library

BY
R. C. BALD
Professor of English in Cornell University

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FOREWORD

IT is strange that of the major English dramatists contemporary with Shakespeare Thomas Middleton, who at several points touched the master, has been the most neglected by modern scholarship. The only real attempt at a careful edition of his works was made by Alexander Dyce in 1840, for Bullen's text of 1885-6 is little more than a reprint of Dyce's; and both editions are by present-day standards unsatisfactory. It will, I am sure, be generally agreed that a definitive edition of the works of this highly important dramatist is a crying need.

And yet before such an edition can successfully be attempted much detailed research by individual scholars must be undertaken, and carried to completion. A glance at the meagre bibliographies cited by Sir Edmund Chambers (*The Elizabethan Stage*, iii, 437-44) under the name of the playwright and the titles of his separate works will reveal how little has been accomplished. Indeed, almost every aspect of Middleton's life and literary career calls for further and assiduous investigation. The bibliographical problems associated with his original editions have been scarcely touched. The details of his biography remain for the most part unexplored; not until 1931 were such elementary facts as the date of his birth (1580) and the university at which he matriculated (Oxford) disclosed. The history of his long connection with the stage and of his labors for various theatrical companies is, in spite of the efforts of Dyce and Bullen, distressingly obscure. The canon of his works, dramatic and non-dramatic, is far from determined: for example, it is a question whether he had a hand in *Blurt Master Constable* generally accepted as his on the authority of Kirkman; *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the important pseudo-Shakespearian *The Puritan*, and other dramas have been with plausibility attributed to him; his share in certain of the Beaumont and Fletcher plays is still speculative; in the case of his non-dramatic works, frank skepticism has been expressed as to his responsibility for *The Wisdom of Solomon Paraphrased*, 1597, *Micro-Cynicon*, 1599, *The Ante and the Nightingale*, 1604, and *The Blacke Booke*, 1604, and the suggestion has lately been made that he was concerned in the plague pamphlet *The Meeting of Gallants at an Ordinarie*, 1604. Finally, the chronology of those plays known to have been written by him is very doubtful; the only serious attempt to deal with the subject was made as recently as the present year, with

results that are confessedly tentative. Yet it is likely that such problems as I have mentioned are no more insoluble than those that have been successfully attacked by scholars in the case of other great Elizabethan dramatists, and we have every reason to believe that research, well-directed and painstakingly executed, will yield equally gratifying results.

The present edition of *Hengist, King of Kent; or The Mayor of Queenborough* by Professor Bald (who has already in his edition of *A Game at Chess* made a notable contribution to Middleton scholarship) will, I am confident, materially advance the cause for which I am pleading. Reproducing as it does a seventeenth-century manuscript in the Folger Shakespeare Library that gives a much fuller, and a much better, text than that supplied by the quarto of 1661, it considerably enhances the literary value of the play. Moreover, in its editorial equipment it furnishes a careful record of all the significant textual variants to be found in another and slightly later manuscript in the possession of the Duke of Portland and in the first quarto of 1661, traces in detail the sources and analogues of the story dramatized, deals with the early stage history of the play, and establishes a new date of composition.

Concurrently with this edition of *Hengist*, the Folger Shakespeare Library is issuing in facsimile, with a modernized and fully annotated text, Middleton's recently discovered and hitherto unreproduced poem *The Ghost of Lucrece*, 1600, important as a continuation and imitation of Shakespeare's famous poem. The Introduction deals not only with *The Ghost* itself but also with all the early non-dramatic works of the author, which are in certain ways interrelated. Incidentally, in a footnote, it prints a freshly discovered document relating to the poet and his family—an indication that much more can probably be found if due effort is made.

In setting forth these two volumes the Library hopes to ring the bell that will call the scholars together to labor in this much-neglected and important field of Elizabethan research.

JOSEPH QUINCY ADAMS

CONTENTS

Introduction	
I. Date and Authorship	xiii
II. The Texts	xxiv
III. Sources	xxxvii
IV. The Play	xliii
Facsimiles	lv
HENGIST, KING OF KENT; OR THE MAYOR OF QUEENBOROUGH: TEXT	i
Notes	101
Appendix: The Early Development of the Hengist Legend	127