Music and a "spectacle of strangeness"

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Abstract: This paper examines Ben Jonson's The Masque of Queens (1609), and The Wonder of Women, Tragedy of Sophonisba (1604-6) by John Marston, considering the topic of the nature and status of stage directions related to the hags in Jonson's play, and how they make their entrances and exits from the stage and to hell. In Tragedy of Sophonisba, I examine the way the entries and the music of this play were performed by youths alongside the dramatic techniques of the play, and address the question of whether Marston's hags flew or not while they scatter on stage to the accompaniment of the music. In sum, I explore how Jonson and Marston present the visual spectacle of their witches on stage, how Jonson's masque and Marston's play represent witchcraft and how their witches fit in this masque and play. What binds Jonson's masque and Marston's play together is the use of music and dance through which the hags appear on stage. Both Jonson (in all the nine Charms - list of spells) and Marston (Act III. i & IV. i) explore the nature of witchcraft through music and dance: Jonson's hags disperse on stage and the manner of their dance is full of a 'spectacle of strangeness' while Marston's characters are led away to seduction with a musical accompaniment. In each play I will concentrate on the matter of authorship and the status of stage directions in the printed text, and whether the stage directions (only those involving the supernatural characters) in this masque and play were originally written by the author himself or were revised or supplied by editors.

Keywords: Ben Jonson's The Masque of Queens, John Marston's the Wonder of Women or the Tragedy of Sophonisba, a "Spectacle of Strangeness"

1. Introduction

In order to consider the ways in which the stage directions in *The Masque of Queens* direct the movements of Jonson's hags, one must first examine the status of the printed text through which these stage directions are transmitted. *The Works of Benjamine Jonson,* printed by William Standby in 1616 in London, includes a collection of plays and poems and has a unique place in the history of printing, in its presentation of dramatic texts in a single volume with its own aesthetic design.[1] Jonson was aged 43 when the 1616 Folio was printed and it was a turning point in his life; he was the first English writer for the stage who published his own collected works in folio.[2] Jonson was

responsible for two general classes of revision in the Folio: he made changes in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and italicization, as well as a number of added stage directions and many changes of word of phrase.[3] However, it appears that Jonson did not supervise the printing of the section of the Folio which contains the masques and entertainments. Herford and Simpson argue that 'The [Folio] text of the entertainment and masques is often carelessly printed, and the Latin and Greek quotations in the notes are especially bad. Jonson cannot have read the proofs'.[4] The exception is the *Masque of Queens* which, as Donovan notes, was printed from the holograph in the British Library.[5]

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[1] Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen, *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), p. 11.

[2] Sara Van Den Berg, 'Ben Jonson and the Ideology of Authorship', in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio,* ed. by Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), pp. 111-137 (p. 111).

[3] Kevin J. Donovan, 'Jonson's Texts in the First Folio' in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio,* ed. by Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), pp. 23-37 (p. 25).

[4] *Ben Jonson*, ed. by Percy C. H. Herford and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1941), vii, p. 72. The text of both folios (1616 and 1641) seems to have been revised prior they were reprinted.

[5] Donovan, 'Jonson's Texts in the First Folio', p. 36. The masques first printed

Building on the work of Andrew Gurr, Richard Cave compares the 1616 Folio of Jonson's *Works* with the 1623 Folio of Shakespeare's. He notes that while 'Shakespeare's plays were printed from copy that in various ways was designed primarily for actors' use', Jonson's were 'the product of careful editing, even rewriting and expansion, and designed for a readership'.[6] Shakespeare was not responsible for revision and stage directions in the First Folio but Jonson was for his own Folio. This distinction is important here as it suggests that all the stage directions are written by Jonson himself. The stage directions are relatively few in Shakespeare's Folio. However, Jonson's are even fewer in number. One can find a very small number of bracketed stage directions which are printed in italics and set between the lines of the text and the surrounding dialogue.

Besides the 1616 folio, *The Masque of Queens* exists in an autograph manuscript (British Library Royal MS 18A xlv), a presentation copy to Prince Henry, and a quarto edition (1609) and both are derived from the same original.[7] However, this does not mean that the original text did not undergo any revision. On the contrary, it underwent significant alteration before it was sent to print.[8] Therefore, the quarto probably represents Jonson's final thoughts, and is adopted as the copy-text in the recent Cambridge edition. 9 Regarding the title page, 'the Quarto title corresponds verbally with that of the holograph'.[10] However, there are changes made in the description of the House of Fame: '"in the vpper part of wch were discouered the twelve Masquers" (1.361) is changed to "in the top of which" in the Quarto'.[11] This chapter considers why it was written and how it was staged at the Court.

1.1. Ben Jonson's the Masque of Queens

I will investigate how *The Masque of Queens* represents witchcraft and the position that witches or hags occupy in the play, in other words, how the witches fit in the play's plots, and how they are justified. Ben Jonson was commissioned by Queen Anne to write the masque with the designer, Inigo Jones, for herself and her closest companions at the Court in 1608-9. *The Masque of Queens* was danced in the Banqueting House at Whitehall on 2 February 1609.[12] It was written in honour of King James I and his eldest son Prince Henry (1594-1612). The masque can be considered as another art performance that the King's Men made their own through scenic spectacle. It became the favourite form of royal entertainment, especially after King James I came to power.

Masques were designed to impress the audience through their use of extravagant costumes and scenery. Court masques by Ben Jonson, as he asserted in his prologue, set out to be the mirrors of man's life.[13] Masques by the great architect and designer, Inigo Jones, were meant to be 'nothing else but pictures with Light and Motion', achieved through a spectacular combination of costumes, decorations, music and dances.[14] Jeffrey Mark argues that what makes 'the masque in its more mature development is the conception of the spectacle in the mind of the poet, the artistic machinery used - poetry, music, apparel, scenic effect, and dancing - being brought in as the situation demanded'.[15] Essentially a collaborative effort, the costumes and the innovative machinery were Inigo Jones's while the rest of the dramatic devices were Jonson's himself. With his designer, Jonson used a *machine versatilis* (turning machine) which they had used in the earlier masques for the *Scena ductilis*, 'or system of sliding flats, which enabled the rapid change of scene as the antimasque of witches disappeared, to be replaced by the spectacle of the House of Fame'.[16] The costumes of the queen and her fellow ladies were rich and elegant. Jones's scenic design was as important as Jonson's words. Jonson pleased with Jones's stage machinery as he wanted to stage his work as an occasional performance. Orgel argues that 'for Jonson, one of the most compelling aspects of Jones's theatre was the way it could make the stage's illusion merge with the court's reality'.[17] Not only *The Masque of Queens,* but all of his other masques, are about the court. Jonson tries to show his art of poetry in the world of the court. Through his use of poetic language, Jonson attempted to convince his spectators of the visual splendour and attractiveness of the masquers. Jonson wanted to present his masque not only through poetic language, but to engage the imagination of his audience to act on the visual

in the Folio are *Prince Henries Barriers*, *Oberon*, *Love Freed from Ignorance*, *Love Restored*, *A Challenge at Tilt*, T*he Irish Masque at Court*, *Mercurie Vindicated*, and *The Golden Age Restored* which contain 'no cast lists, few stage directions, virtually no descriptions of scenery, no mention of Jonson's collaborators'. Joseph Loewenstein, 'Printing and "The Multitudinous Presse": The Contentious Texts of Jonson's Masques', in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio,* ed. by Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 168-191 (p. 186).

[6] Richard Cave, 'Script and Performance', in *Ben Jonson and Theatre: Performance, Practice and Theory*, ed. by Richard Cave, Elizabeth Schafer and Brian Woolland (London: Routledge, 1999), 23-32 (p. 24).

[7] W. W. Greg, 'Jonson's Masques: Points of Editorial Principle and Practice', *Review of English Studies*, 18 (1942), 144-166 (p. 147). The masques were first printed quarto, and then re-issued in the 1616 Folio except the autograph manuscript of *The Masque of Queens* which was specially written for Prince Henry in Jonson's clear and beautiful hand. Evelyn M. Simpson, 'Jonson's Masques: A Rejoinder', *Review of English Studies*, 18 (1942), 291-300 (p. 292).

[8] *Ben Jonson*, ed. by Herford and Simpson, pp. 271-272.

9 Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, ed. by David Bevington, Martin Butler, and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), iii, p. 287

[10] *Ben Jonson,* ed. by Herford and Simpson, p. 275.

[11] Ibid., pp. 270-271.

[12] Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 283. Whitehall was a chief residence for the English monarchy, 1530-1698 (p. 301).

[13] Quoted in Stephen Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 3.

[14] Ibid., p. 3.

[15] Jeffrey Mark, 'The Jonsonian Masque', *Music and Letters*, 3 (1922), 358-371 (p. 359).

[16] Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 283.

[17] Stephen Orgel, *Ben Jonson: Selected Masques* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 32.

appearance of his masquers and the grotesqueness of the antimasque.

1.2. Jonson's "Spectacle of Strangeness" and Witchcraft

In his introduction, Ben Jonson says that Queen Anne commanded him to 'thinke on some Daunce, or shew, that might praecede hers, and have the place of a foyle, or false-Masqu' (8-9).18 In response, he honours the Queen and presents twelve witches, 'not as a Masque, but as a spectacle of strangeness, producing multiplicitie of Gesture, and not vnaptly sorting wth the current, and whole fall of the Deuise' (13-14). His twelve hags produce a variety of gesture through their dance and costumes. Jonson cast the performers, as he mentioned in his introduction, as '*A Celebration of honorable, true Fame, bred out of Vertue'*. The antimasque is embodied as eleven hags, with their Dame, who emerge from Hell accompanied by infernal music. As Diana Purkiss argues, the hags of *The Masque of Queens* do not only represent witchcraft but embody popular beliefs about witchcraft; they embody the '*Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity*, &c of popular culture, and form an antithesis to the learned treatises from which Jonson quotes so liberally'.[19] According to Purkiss, *The Masque of Queens* encourages its spectator to denounce popular definition of witchcraft and the devilish as the result of 'superstition and credulity'. Jonson quotes from the learned demonological treatise, King James I's *Daemonologie,* especially in the dance of the witches, and in the description of the devil-goat which is worshipped by the witches. The hags do not necessarily represent what they perform. On the contrary, for instance, they dance a 'dance of antic', back to back and hip to hip which is contrary to the customary manner of dancing. The antithesis of courtly dance is defined here through the antimasque dance. This subverts conventions of the masque, presenting an alternative aesthetic of darkness and strangeness. Dance was a means by which to draw aristocrats into the court masque. Jonson's antimasque dance shows the decorum of the dancing body (or the decorum of female movement) while also providing entertainment in the manifestation of grotesque figures which are the antithesis of Renaissance standards of beauty.

In respect of costume and props, Jonson offers his audience a different type of witch, far from those offered by Shakespeare, Middleton or Marston. His witches are '*all differently attired: some with rats on their head, some on their shoulders; other with ointment pots at their girdles; all with spindles, timbrels, rattles, or other venefical, making a confused noise, with strange gestures'* (21-23). 'Venefical' here means 'one who practises poisoning as a secret art; a sorcerer or sorcerers; a wizard or witch'.20

Although Inigo Jones was responsible for '*the invention and architecture of the whole scene and machine'* (24),[21] Jonson himself created the witches' properties: '*I prescribed them their properties of viber, snakes, bones, herbs, roots and other ensigns of their magic'* (25-26). These magical devices are found in traditional English witchcraft. Cutts argues that the antimasque of witches, which had been danced by the King's Men in *the Masque of Queens* at Court, having been successful, was subsequently utilized on the Blackfriars stage. He also argues that the antimasque of witches first inspired Middleton's *The Witch* and was then transferred to the revised text of *Macbeth*.[22] Furthermore, the cauldron scene was repeated in some plays representing the witches making a sickening stew with a variety of similar ingredients that are read out over the cauldron. Both Shakespeare and Middleton were inspired by Jonson's *The Masque of Queens* to supply cauldron scenes in the revised version of *Macbeth* and *The Witch*. Shakespeare's contribution was the addition of having three apparitions rise up from the Cauldron (IV. i).

The masque is notable for its very high level of detail concerning witchcraft practices. Clark rightly argues that 'the completest presentation of the received opinions on witchcraft is Jonson's *Masque of Queens*, 1609, in which every detail is fully documented and substantiated by citations from the witch-lorists'.[23] Jonson took all the information he used for the witch scenes and documented it in his footnotes. This provides evidence for the historians or scholars who wish to examine the predecessors of this kind of spectacle. Jonson took the idea of the witches from Shakespeare but he did not think of his witches as sorceresses as Shakespeare's did; his hags do not prophesy for the characters and do not conjure their familiar spirits compared to Shakespeare's witches. Rather, Jonson's hags create a scenic spectacle on stage when they exit or enter the stage through dancing via a mundane curtain. The curtains were made of painted cloth and were usually hung in front of the rear of the stage. Through the stage curtains, the rear stage would be revealed or hidden.

The dances of the anti-masque were similarly plotted to contrast with the masquers, and served here as '"to make the spectators understand" the transformations and revelations that, dramatically, were the climax of the work, providing (as in *Neptunes Triumph*) not only a foil, but a medium and a means for the action'.[24] The anti-masque dances represent the movement of witches, and the ways in which they act and communicate. The dances are physically impressive and amusing, but function in a disruptive manner in the performance. Jonsons' hags

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18 Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 305.

[19] Diane Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and twentieth-Century Representations (*London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 202.

20　　　'Venefical',　　　*Oxford　　　English　　　Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy3.lib.le.ac.uk/view/Entry/222084#eid15964933>

[Accessed 21 February 2014]

[21] Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* p. 306.

[22] John P. Cutts, 'Jacobean Masque and Stage Music', *Music and Letters*, 35 (1954), 185-200 (p. 193).

[23] Arthur Melville Clark, *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931), pp. 241-242.

[24] Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque*, pp. 118-119.

appear grotesque, their physical appearance naturally corresponding to their moral influence, an interpretation that would no doubt have been approved by one audience member: King James himself. With the entry of the hags, Jonson presents a spectacle in which his hags meet together for their coven, and sometimes they also disguise and mask themselves in their usual ceremony. Furniss argues that 'in most cases the antimasquers perform a burlesque or evil imitation of the true rites' and 'in *Queenes* the antimasque is a Witches' Sabbath in opposition to the pious gathering of the twelve noble queens to honour King James'.[25] The witches are gathered to honour the Dame but the masquers to honour King James. The witches attempt to conjure a storm to overturn King James and Anne. However, the comic point here is that King James combats the black magic performed by the witches, and the Queen, possessing this power, is able to thwart the evil charm of the hags through her dramatic appearance in the masque. Strout argues that 'the witches representing vice are instantly vanquished by the sudden appearance of Heroic Virtue and the symbolic splendour of Queen Anne and her companions seated in the House of Fame'.[26] The antimasquers were played by professional male players but act as feminine in the way they dance. Ideal courtly femininity is thus identified by the hags through its antithesis. In order to provide 'a spectacle of strangeness', Jonson uses twelve boys, in antic attire and a female figure, to dance in the habit of hags, the opposites to good Fame. It is from the antimasque of witches and their dance that 'the strangeness and beauty of the spectacle' arises (585).[27] It is particularly interesting that *The Masque of Queens* contains the representation of feminine power set against an alternative femininity, rather than masculinity. The popular culture of the hags is inferior to the high classical culture of Queen Anne especially in the spectacle when the Queens' carriages are drawn by the hags. In other words, the display of witches, with their 'sinister' look representing the evil power of witchcraft, is dispelled by Queen Anne and her fellow ladies of fame to celebrate the power of King James. The hags are intended to be taken as emblems of feminine disorder or 'otherness', and this is presented through costumes, and the incantation and spells which they recite in their singing.

1.3. The Costume of Witches and Masquers

Costume as one of the staging techniques of the masque is used to draw the attention of the audience. The colour of witches' clothes was traditionally black. In terms of symbolism associated with colours, black traditionally represented 'the absence color- with darkness, constancy, gloom, woe, death', in contrast to the associations of 'white

with purity'.[28] In addition to this, the types of costumes worn by witches in Renaissance drama, particularly in Middleton's *The Witch,* are significant. In *The Witch* (Act 1, scene 2), Middleton does not provide specific information to his reader about Hecate's costume and props when she enters the stage: '*Enter Hecate & other witches*: (*with properties, and habbits fitting*). However, by looking at the image of *Mistress Turner's Farewell to All Women* (1615), reproduced in Gary Taylor's *Thomas Middleton: Lives and Afterlives*, we can see the costumes worn by Ann Turner and Lady Frances Howard, allowing us to visualize what Hecate and the Duchess, inspired by these real-life figures, may have worn on stage. In this image, Lady Frances Howard wears a long white-coloured gown with puffy sleeve's and a long headpiece flowing down along her arm. Ann Turner, in contrast, wears a long black cloak with a high, white starched frilled collar, a black scarf and black shoes. Although there is no any evidence in the text, but from this picture one could make the inference that Hecate wore a long black cloak with black scarf and shoes on. Nevertheless the costume of Ann Turner in this picture does not necessarily show the costumes of the witches since Ann Turner was not a witch but a 'cunning woman'. The similarity is the black colour. Her dress is also a long puffy gown and not an unshaped loose gown. The sorceress's costume was supposed to be a loose gown in black colour in order for them to look sinister and show their marginal status in society. Moreover, one might speculate on the Duchess's costume being that of a long, white-puffy sleeved gown with a headpiece. This kind of dress in the sixteenth century reflected the status of aristocratic women, because women wanted their clothing to show and emphasise their attractiveness and display their status in society. In other words, clothes were a means by which women could express their status in society and their relationship to other people around them.

The costume of Jonson's hags is simultaneously hideous and comic in performance. Unlike Shakespeare's and Middleton's Hecate, Jonson's Dame is '*naked-armed, bare-footed, her frock tucked, her hair knotted, and folded with vipers; in her hand a torch made of a dead man's arm, lighted; girded with a snake*' (77-79).[29] The Dame's costume is reminiscent of the Queens' dress. In other words, the witches' costumes stand for figures of transgressive femininity and the masquers for ideal courtly femininity. Jones chose this kind of costume for the Dame in contrast to the rich and beautiful costume of the masquers.[30] In the Renaissance period 'Strangeness' had other connotations, such as 'oddness', 'eccentricity' and 'peculiarity'.[31]

[25] W. Todd Furniss, 'Jonson's Antimasques', *Renaissance News*, 7 (1954), 21-22 (p. 22).

[26] Nathaniel Strout, 'Jonson's Jacobean Masques and the Moral Imagination', *Studies in English Literature*, 27 (1987), 233-247 (p. 238).

[27] Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* p. 329.

[28] M. Channing Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), p. 15.

[29] Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 308.

[30] For the description of the masquers' costumes see *The Masque of Queens,* lines (405-412).

[31] 'Oddness', *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/view/Entry/130412?redirectedFrom=oddness#eid> [Accessed June 2013]

Jonson probably used 'strangeness' for 'odd'. Jonson wanted to show the hags as representing the opposite of the courtly courtesy of the masquers. There is also an aspect of 'wonder' to Jonson's concept of 'strangeness', as he wanted to present a supernatural spectacle through the antimasque of the hags for those who were curious about the wonder and mystery of magic. Corbin and Sedge argue that 'the full resources of music, dance and spectacle of the court masque , with the elaborate stage-machinery of Whitehall and extravagant costuming (...) gave Jonson an opportunity to demonstrate in the anti-masque the potential of witchcraft material to embody the concept of chaos and disorder'. 32 Jonson reproduces the witches' Sabbath on stage and stylizes it into a formalized ritual. In contrast to Marston's *Sophonisba*, Jonson concentrates on the banquet and the honour given to the Dame rather than the mass sexual orgy that featured in the Continental witches' Sabbath. Both the anti-masque event and the masque event are used to demonstrate the concept of popular belief in witchcraft and at the same to provide an opportunity to the company to perform more witchcraft spectacles through the elaborate and sophisticated stage-machinery.

There is an idea of 'conventional beauty' in the visual appearance of the masquers and grotesqueness of the hags. The masquers look pale and light, dressed in rich and elegant clothes whereas the hags appear grotesque and alarming. Besides these characteristics and appearances which are given to the masquers, the anti-masquers are by contrast more amusing. In other words, the respective appearances of the masquers and the hags present a contrast between ideal beauty and transgressive ugliness. The descent and triumph of the masquers can be considered as the climactic moment, whereas the secondary climax is in the grotesque dance of the anti-masque.

The costumes are used here for two different types of women: the grotesques (the hags) and the noble women of aristocratic society (the masquers). The costume worn in the masque became a colourful spectacle during performance in the royal courts and public theatres. One can say that Inigo Jones gave the masque its great popularity through the elaborate costume design he made for the masquers and the hags. The masquers were presented according to a courtly decorum. Jones did not have complete autonomy in designing the costume of the masquers, but had to consult with them for every detail. The final look of their outfit would be according to their taste and how they wanted to be shown. On the contrary, Jones could easily design the costumes for the hags and had much more freedom in doing this. Jonson describes each character's elaborate costume in stage directions which shows Jonson's high poetic figuring of femininity in its antithesis.

1.4. Stage Directions of the Hags and Masquers

In *Macbeth,* the three witches and, in *The Witch,* the five witches are supervised by a witch leader, Hecate. In the *Masque of Queens,* the eleven witches are led by a witch leader, the Dame. The witches in Middleton's play fly, as do those in *Macbeth* (after the King's Men took over the Blackfriars and the interpolation of the Hecate scene in *Macbeth*), but they do not in *The Masque of Queen*'s. Jonson has an entirely different style of dramaturgy in placing his hags on stage. *The Masque of Queens* shows a turn away from popular public theatre and audiences who were more interested in the colourful spectacle of masques. The stage directions of the masquers and hags show their costumes and the way they enter and exit the stage. Jonson's hags exit and enter the stage through dancing via an ordinary curtain:

> *His majesty then being set, and the whole company in full expectation, the part of the scene which first presented itself was an ugly hell which, flaming beneath, smoked unto the top of the roof (...) (15-16).*[33]

This stage direction is the signal that the entertainment begins when the monarch sits. The 'ugly hell' was a front curtain which had concealed the scene: 'the scene was painted on flats, and must have included a door or aperture through which the witches entered'.[34] However, Hag One says 'And the charm we use to say/That she Quickly anoint, and come away' (33-34), and Hag Eight says 'a purse to keep Sir Cranion in' (160-161).[35] In the witchcraft treatises all focused on the flying of witches through ointment, and 'anoint' here signifies the hag's magical power 'to confer the power of flying'.[36] Ben Jonson, like Middleton and Shakespeare, mocks the supposed power of 'ointment' but it is nevertheless used as one of the theatrical and magical effects. In order to make their journey at night by the virtue of an ointment, Ate uses the word 'anoint' to go riding:

> Sisters, stay, we want our Dame;
> Call upon her by name,
> And the charm we use to say,
> That she quickly anoint, and come away. (40-4)

Here 'anoint' is used to make the audience imagine how it creates, with the help of magical power, scenic spectacles transporting characters from the stage to the heavens or vice versa. However, the masquers descend on chariots. The stage directions read as follows:

> *In the heat of their dance on the sudden was heard a sound of loud music, as if many instruments had made one blast; with which not only the hags themselves but the hell into which they ran quite vanished, and the whole face of the scene altered, scarce suffering the memory of such a thing. But in the place of it appeared*

32 Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge, *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays: The Tragedy of Sophonisba, The Witch, and The Witch of Edmonton* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 3.

33 Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 305.
34 Ibid., p. 305.
35 Ibid., p. 306 & 312.
36 Ibid, p. 306 & 342.

a glorious and magnificent building figuring the House of Fame, in the top of which were discovered the twelve masquers sitting upon a throne triumphal erected in form a pyramid and circled with all store of light. From whom a person, by this time descended, in the furniture of Perseus, and expressing heroic and masculine virtue, began to speak (319-326).[37]

And after Heroic Virtue appears the stage direction reads:

Here the throne wherein they sat, being machine versatile, suddenly changed; and in the place of it appeared Fama bona, as she is described (in Iconology. di Cesare Ripa) attired in white, with white wings, having a collar of gold about her neck, and a heart hanging at it: which ORUS Apollo, in his hierogl. Interprets the note of a good Fame. In her right-hand she bore a trumpet, in her left an olive-branch: and for her state, it was as Virgil describes her, at the full, her feet on the ground, and her head in the clouds. She, after the music had done, which waited on the turning of the machine, called from thence to Virtue, and spake this following speech (405-412).

'*Iconolgy.* Di Cesare Ripa' is an Italian manual, first published in 1593 and again a decade later, which includes a collection of allegorical figures and classical symbolism in alphabetical order. It is likely that Jonson drew some of his complex iconography from '*Iconology*' for *The Masque of Queens*. The descent of the masquers is a reference to Virgil's *Aeneid* Book II (178-180).[38] The stage direction in this context includes some technological terms, such as 'throne' and 'machine versatile' [39] through which the witches could have flown, but they did not. There is an explicit Italian influence here since Jonson refers to 'machine versatile' which also shows the technological achievement of late Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture. Classical Italian architecture was fashionable and in high demand in the English theatres. Jones and Jonson's architectural style was influenced by Andrea Palladio, Vitruvius and Sabbattini.[40] Jones benefited from Palladio's

splendid and stylistic design features which had a great effect upon English architectural neoclassicism. Architecture and poetry are significant for Jonson as he associates them with the idea of immortalizing heroic virtue. For example, Jonson describes the House of Fame as, '*a glorious and magnificent building figuring the House of Fame*'. This shows a kind of architectural imagery in which Jonson demonstrates the greater versatility of poetry which suits with the decorum of the masque in honouring King James I. After the House of Fame appears, the stage direction reads:

At which the loud music sounded as before, to give the Masquers time of descending (429)[41]

In the Cambridge edition, the full description of the twelve masquers is given while they descend with music and each represents a famous woman from a variety of treatises published throughout the sixteenth century.[42] In the stage direction above one can notice 'descend' and 'chariot' in the entrance of the masquers. According to Bevington, Butler, and Donaldson, the masquers were sitting at the upper level of the turning machine: 'as it turned it revealed the figure of Good Fame, and, by hiding the queens, allowed them to descend unseen to take up their places in the chariots which brought them on stage through a door in the bottom of the structure'.[43] The speech of Good Fame allowed time for the descent of the queens while music covered the noise of the turning machine.

According to Orgel, the audience 'are moved into the world of the dance through the operation of Inigo Jones's machinery, and, judging from our one witness, they were quite conscious of what went on behind the scene'.[44] Jonson could produce the best masques with the assistance of Jones's machine versatile and this resulted in the humorous comedies. In the *Masque of Queens*, the 'bright Beuie' of masquers is revealed on a throne along with Heroic Virtue, 'who then descends to introduce them, making it clear that the brightness of the scene derives ultimately from him, as their fame is the result of their virtue'.[45] The masque's entertainment begins with the appearance of the monarch's seat on the throne. The

[37]Ben Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 317. See also *The Works of Ben Jonson,* ed. by W. Gifford, vii, 117-158 (p. 142). *The Works of Ben Jonson: With Notes, Critical and Explanatory, and a Biographical Memoir*, ed. by William Gifford (London: John Camden Hotten,[1872]), iii, p. 56.

[38]He is a Roman poet. The relationship of *The Masque of Queens* to Virgil is a relationship of likeness, 'the likeness to Virgil is … by Jonson's alignment of himself as author with the poets depicted on the House of Fame, including Virgil, whose "support" of Aeneas/ Augustus is architecturally figured….' Jonson places himself in a line with the great epic poet, Virgil. Therefore, 'Virgil' is used here by Jonson to reproduce structures of authority. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, *Jonson, Shakespeare and Early Modern Virgil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 140

[39] 'Machine versatile' means 'turning machine'.

[40]Inigo Jones made an informative trip to Italy where he learned about the Italian art and architecture. Jones introduced the Italian scenery and designs into Court Masques in England which was first exploited by Nicola Sabbattini, who was a Renaissance Italian architect and designer. Sabbattini describes contemporary theatrical techniques in his book entitled *Pratica di fabricar*

scene e machine ne' teatri, (1638) meaning (Manual for Constructing Scenes and Machines in the Theatre). His book was considered the most influential work on stage machinery and spectacular tricks in Italian theatre in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century in which most of the early pantomimes were relied on. However, Sabbattini's work was late for the performance of the Jacobean witch plays. A variety of magical effects or tricks might have been possible on the Jacobean playhouse if Sabbattini's elaborate staging machinery was at hand at that period. It is worth looking at his work and what would be used in the Restoration performances.

[41] Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, p. 322. See also *The Works of Ben Jonson,* ed. by Gifford, iii, p.61.

[42] Jonson, *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* p. 285.

[43] Ibid., p. 320.

[44] Orgel, *The Jonsonian Masque*, p. 174.

[45] Ibid., p. 302. John C. Meagher, *Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masque* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), p. 123. *The Works of Ben Jonson,* ed. by Gifford, vii, 117-158 (p. 142).

masquers appeared in '*a throne triumphal erected in form a pyramid and circled with all store of light*' (324), whereas the hags appeared through an '*ugly hell, which flaming beneath, smoked unto the top of the roof*' (16-17). Gombosi argues that 'the masque proper starts with a spoken or sung presentation or in-vocation, sometimes in the form of an incantation or transfiguration; after this the masquers, representing celestial beings, mythological persons or mere products of poetic fancy, descend from the upper stage, led by similarly motivated torchbearers, and dance their Entry or First Dance'. [46] The entrances of the masquers are usually accompanied by torch bearers and musicians and the masquers are introduced in a song by a mythological character. In performances of the time, Strout correctly identifies that 'the masquers descended from the performing area to join with the court in celebratory dances further reinforced the complacent notion that masques presented a dressed-up version of the actual, not a morally improving version of the ideal'. [47] Because the masquers' costumes and make up were richly designed by Jones, the audience did not need to imagine their figure only through Jonson's words, but visually the masquers appeared as real courtiers as well. Having performed *The Masque of Queens* at Whitehall can be considered as another aspect used by Jonson in order for his masquers to be seen as real by the audience rather than ideal. Masquers are first revealed on a throne in a cloud but then descend to the stage to dance. One can find a correlation between the dance and the order of nature in 'the heavens': the masquers appeared in the heavens and then descend in clouds to dance. The masquers descend in cloud and music while the hags appear from an ugly hell to a loud music.

Harris importantly argues that the Banqueting House possessed neither mechanical traps nor an extensive 'hell' area beneath the stage. [48] In the cauldron scene, the hags make spells and end their ritual with a dance and then vanish. However, the hags do not descend on a chariot to dance. The hags make their entrances and exits through the mundane curtain upon which a hell-mouth scene is painted. Thus, they do not fly because the devices enabling flight and mechanical traps were not available at that time; they made the scenic spectacles on the stage only through drawing the mundane curtain. In contrast to this idea, Coghill argues that the reason Jonson banished the hint of flying from his moral *Masque* for the royal entertainment was precisely because he heard about Middleton's more popular and vulgar plan in *The Witch*, with Hecate's song and dance in the air, which he believed to be distasteful. [49]

This argument depends on an earlier date for *The Witch*, which is by no means certain. In this case, according to Coghill, Jonson's witches did not fly not because of technical limitation but because he wanted to distinguish his dramaturgy from that of the popular stage and to avoid the charge of plagiarism. He took the idea of witches from Shakespeare, but did not think of his witches as sorceresses. Instead, he saw his witches as 'personifications, allegories, like something out of Prudentius, to present various moral turpitudes, which he names, such as ignorance, Credulity, Suspicion' (15-16). [50] Shakespeare's Folio witches did not fly but his witches are presented more as sorceresses than Jonson's since they possess agency in the play to predict the future of the characters. None of Jonson's witches flew, despite the references in *The Masque of Queens* to hags riding on goats and in chariots at their coven. The eleven witches enter the stage and then Ate joins them and begins her invocation. Ate says to her fellow witches when they invoke Hecate to participate with them:

> You, that have seen me ride when Hecate
> Durst not take chariot, when the boist' rous sea, (195-196)

Another play of Jonson's, *Every Man in His Humour* (1616), provides significant evidence of the playwright's attitude to stage technology. In the prologue Jonson says:
> Nor creaking throne come down, the boys to please;
> Nor nimble squib is seen, to make afear'd
> The gentlewomen, nor roll'd bullet heard
> To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum. [51]

This is particularly interesting in its rejection of stage special effects. There are other examples of Jonson's purported 'anti-populism', but this one suggests that Jonson saw flying or suspension as pandering to vulgar tastes, and thus that he may have avoided using the technology of flying machinery to stage the visual spectacle of his hags. By referring to the 'creaking throne', from the collection *Jonsonus Viribus* (1638), Jasper Mayne praises Jonson in that 'no hard plot/ Call'd downe a God t'untie th'unlikely knot'. [52] Jonson did not want to rely on the *deus ex machine* device to resolve his plots, and moreover perhaps that he avoided a literal 'calling down' of a 'creaking throne'. However, this assessment contradicts the evidence that, as Campbell correctly argues in his *Masque of Queens* Jonson was 'consciously experimenting with the *Machine Versatilis* (…) as well as with other stage mechanisms'. [53] Although he did not reject technology wholesale, then, he seems to have avoided

[46] Otto Gombosi, 'Some Musical Aspects of the English Court Masque', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 1 (1948), 3-19 (p. 3).

[47] Strout, 'Jonson's Jacobean Masques and the Moral Imagination', p. 235.

[48] Anthony Harris, *Night's Black Agents: Witchcraft and Magic in Seventeenth-century English Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), p. 167.

[49] Nevill Coghill, '*Macbeth* at The Globe, 1606-1616 (?): Three Questions' in The *Triple Bond:Plays, Mainly Shakespearean, in Performance* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), pp. 223-39

(p. 229).

[50] Ibid., p. 229.

[51] *The Works of Ben Jonson: with Notes, Critical and Explanatory, and a Biographical Memoir*, ed. by William Gifford (London: Albert J. Crocker and Brothers, 1870), i, p.2.

[52] Ben Jonson, *The Works of Ben Jonson,* ed. by W. Gifford, 9 vols (London, 1816), p. 382.

[53] Lily Bess Campbell, *Scenes and Machines on the English Stage during the Renaissance*(Ann Arbor: Barnes and Noble, 1960)*,* p. 171.

making his witches fly because he did not want to be seen to be copying other playwrights' works or because he found flying hags vulgar and cheap spectacle. Jonson considered himself a playwright in the classical tradition and wanted to show the visual spectacle of his hags through words rather than technology. If we look again at the prologue, we can see that Jonson names 'creaking throne' alongside 'thunders', which might be taken as an attack on the clumsiness of stage devices and machinery for flying of that period; their noise distracts viewers from the effects of the drama. In *The Masque of Queens*, despite the references and elaborate stage directions of witches and masquers flying in a chariot, there is no evidence to suggest that they did fly. Neither the Banqueting House nor the Globe possessed any flying machinery, although it might have had the apparatus necessary for a kind of suspended flight above the stage.

In sum, the collected evidences suggests that the hags enter and exit through a door or aperture painted on a front curtain concealed by the scene and the masquers are simply suspended above in their chariots. The reason that Jonson uses the word of 'chariot' in the stage directions of the masquers is to give the symbolic significance of the use of space. It also suggests the origin of the characters linked to their flying powers. The hags cannot be seen to come from above because that is the origin of heavenly virtue. Instead, they enter and exit back to the '*ugly hell*'. The space of Whitehall here has been divided into two parts according to the status of the characters: 'heavens' or 'above' where the monarch and the queens (courtly high class people or aristocrats) appear from; 'hell' or 'down stage' where the witches (low class people) enter and exit from.

In *The Masque of Queens*, the hags appear on stage through music and dance through which Jonson explores the nature of witchcraft and spreads his hags on the stage. Music in *The Masque of Queens* helps the changes of the scenery and the movements of the masquers and hags. Ben Jonson is not the only Jacobean dramatist who includes music and dance in his play. John Marston is another whose hags make their exits and entrances through dance and music. Then music leads the characters into seduction as music is seen as a marker of evil in these plays. I have discussed here how Jonson's witches are linked to the hell from which they enter and exit the stage. Likewise, Marston's mythological characters are also linked to the same theatre space, such as 'hell', 'canopy' and 'vault'.

1.5. John Marston's the Wonder of Women, Tragedy of Sophonisba

John Marston's *The Wonder of Women*, *Tragedy of Sophonisba*, (1604-6) was first performed by the Children of the Revels in the Blackfriars. The investigation here will focus on the way the entrance and exit music of this play was performed by youths alongside the dramatic techniques of the play such as the stage action, the entries and exits scenes, dialogue and ritual. Concentration will be on Act Three when Syphax attempts to seduce Sophonisba

by reporting that Massinissia is dead, and on the role of music in this play and how music and witchcraft come together. This investigation of *Sophonisba* is important as it shows how Marston uses the theatrical space of Blackfriars with the help of music to stage his supernatural scenes in comparison with Ben Jonson, and how witchcraft practises intersect with issues of staging conditions and theatrical trends.

1.6. An Introduction to the Play with its Performance and Authorship

Marston's *Sophonisba* is comparable to Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. It is a tragedy based on two dramatic elements: the military sources relating to the war between Carthage and Rome, and classical witchcraft which is attributed here to Erictho, the witch. In the play, Massinissa (king of the Massylii) falls in love with Sophonisba, the daughter of Hasdrubal and marries her. Massinissa and Hasdrubal are sent to war in Spain. Syphax (king of the Maseasyli, rival for Sophonisba with Massinissa) is defeated by Massinissa and Scipio (General of Rome). Syphax then allies his army with Scipio's and pillages Carthaginian territory. The Carthaginians take Sophonisba to Rome during the time that her father and Massinissa are absent fighting for Carthage. Massinissa offers a cup of poison to Sophonisba and asks her to die like a true Carthaginian princess as he cannot free her from the Romans.

The quarto edition and most of the other surviving copies give the full title as: 'The Wonder of Women Or The Tragedie of Sophonisba, as it hath beene sundry times Acted at the Blacke Friers. Written by John Marston'. The tile indicates that the play was performed at the Blackfriars but it does not mention the name of the company who performed it. The text of *Sophonisba* appeared in print five times, once independently and four times in collections of Marston's plays. The first edition is a quarto printed in 1606 by John Windet; the second edition is an octavo containing six plays by Marston printed for William Sheares in 1633.[54] It is significant that *Sophonisba* derived from Marston's manuscript, since, as Jackson and Neill argue, 'each play of Marston's undoubted sole authorship seems to have been first printed from a manuscript in his own hand'.[55] *The Wonder of Women* or *The Tragedy of Sophonisba* was entered in the Stationers' Register on 17 March 1606 by Eleazer Edgar, five days after *The Fawn* had been entered.[56] However, Caputi argues that 'despite the Stationer's entry, *Sophonisba* was neither produced nor

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[54] John Marston, *John Marston's The Wonder of Women or The Tragedy of Sophonisba: A Critical Edition*, ed. by William Kemp (New York: Garland, 1979), p. 34.

[55] John Marston, *The Selected Plays of John Marston*, ed. by Macdonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. xviii.

[56] Anthony Francis Caputi, *John Marston: Satirist* (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), p. 269.

published until the spring or summer'. [57] *The Wonder of Women* was first performed in 1605-1606 and published in 1606. [58] As a result of the contemporary scandal of *Eastward Hoe*, at that time the Queen's Revels Children had lost royal patronage. As Caputi argues the play was 'acted by the children after they had ceased to enjoy the Queen's patronage early in 1606'. [59] It is important to note that the focus here is on stage directions (involving supernatural characters only) which were originally written by Marston himself rather than scriveners, or members of the theatre companies. In addition to this, stage directions in this plays are the same in modern editions and modern editors do not alter them.

Sophonisba is written entirely in verse, like the other Blackfriars plays, and is divided into acts and scenes. Ingram succinctly argues that 'the extravagance of the play is probably more obtrusive to the reader than the viewer'. [60] This is persuasive because *Sophonisba* is not only theatrically effective, but its words and the action of the characters are as well. The play is also full of precise stage directions with a wealth of musical effects. The intention of this chapter is to explore these areas of the play in more detail, which have not so far been subject to thorough investigation by critics.

1.7. Witchcraft and Music in Sophonisba

In this play, Marston borrows a witch from classical tradition (Erictho, from Lucan's Pharsalia, Book VI) and adds to her depiction the beliefs and practices of the seventeenth century into the play. The Erictho scenes (Act 4, scene 1 and Act 5, scene 1) are central to Marston's argument. She is an emblem of lust and a lewd woman and has the power to deceive Syphax through the plot device of a bed-trick. In Act 4, Syphax is caught by the bed-trick and he sleeps with the witch Erictho taking her to be Sophonisba. Thus, Syphax has the role of a succubus, and Erictho as a devil seduces men, using deceit in order to satisfy her lecherous desires.

As Peter Ure puts it, Erictho is 'not a "cunning woman" of the mother Bombie sort, nor an Elizabeth Sawyer, nor a daemon with a Christian and neo-Platonic ancestry like the Weird Sisters, but a goetist with affinities to Ovid's and Seneca's Medea'. [61] Erictho is the most disgusting and horrid figure in early modern drama. In Marston's description of Erictho, 'A loathsome yellow leanness

spreads her face/ A heavy hell-like paleness spreads her cheeks' (IV. I. 97-122). [62] However, (unlike Ben Jonson's Dame), he does not gives us any clue about what she wears. Reed describes Erictho as 'a monster shaped and exaggerated by the distorted brain of the author' and her language and some of her actions 'are so unnatural as to lack all verisimilitude'. [63] Reed here, in the phrase 'by the distorted brain of author', is referring to the Roman author Lucan rather than Marston regarding the characteristics of Erictho. Marston bases his dramatization of Erictho heavily on that of Lucan. For example, Lucan refers to Erictho's anger in the following extract:

> Wroth was the Hag at ling's ring Death's delay,
> And wonder' Hell could dare to disobey;
> With curling Snakes the senseless Trunk she beats,
> And curses dire at ev'ry lash repeats;
> With magic Numbers cleaves the groaning Ground,
> And thus barks downwards to th' Abyss profound,
> (Lucan, Book VI, 1103-1108) [64]

Marston thus offers us a picture of a classical witch in Erictho who tricks the villain to satisfy her repulsive lust. In Erictho, we have some classical allusions such as references to the gods. Erictho is moreover different from the Hecate of both Middleton and *Macbeth*, Mother Bombie, and The Wise Woman of Hogsdon in that she is not visited by humans in the play requesting spells and incantations.

As a stage witch, Erictho is depicted with eerie horror, being accompanied with music as she deceitfully seduces Syphax. In other words, Marston associates witchcraft with music in a bed trick scene. Music in the play supports the development of the plots and actions in general. For instance, music has a vital role in the bewitching of Syphax and leading him to have intercourse with the demon Erictho. The way the entrance music of this play was performed by children had an influence on the text. Marston uses a number of other dramatic techniques beside his use of music, such as the technique of dumb-show, stage action, entrances and exits, dialogue and ritual. Dumb-show here acts as prologues and conveys information about the events and the characters to the audience. [65] Dumb show in Jacobean drama became increasingly associated with the Masque, though it was used in other ways. For example, Middleton in his *Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613) exploits dumb show with

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[57] Caputi, *John Marston: Satirist*, p. 269.

[58] John Marston, *The Wonder of Women or, The Tragedies of Sophonisba: As it hath beene Sundrie times acted at the Black Friers* (London, 1606)

[59] Caputi, *John Marston: Satirist*, p. 270. See William Kemp, in his introduction to *John Marston's The Wonder of Women*, or *The Tragedy of Sophonisba*, analyzed all the work related to the "composition, press-work and proof-reading" of this Quarto. John Marston, John Marston's *The Wonder of Women , Or The Tragedy of Sophonisba: A Critical Edition*, ed. by William Kemp (New York: Garland, 1979)

[60] R. W. Ingram, 'The Use of Music in the Plays of Marston', *Music and Letters*, 37 (1956), 154-164 (p. 157).

[61] Peter Ure, *Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama: Critical Essays* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1974), pp. 78-79.

[62] John Marston, *The Plays of John Marston: Edited from the Earliest Texts with Introduction and Notes*, ed. by H. Harvery Wood, III (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1938), ii, p. 46.

[63] Robert R. Reed, *The Occult on the Tudor and Stuart Stage* (Boston: ChristopherPub. House, 1965), p. 163.

[64] Marcus Annaaeus Lucanus, *Lucan's Pharsalia,* translated into English verse by Nicolas Rowe, (London, 1614), p. 57.

[65] Pearn describes dumb-show as 'a part of a play which presents by means of action without speech an element of plot which would more naturally be accompanied by speech'. B. R. Pearn, 'Dumb-Show in Elizabethan Drama', *Review of English Studies*, 11 (1935), 385-405 (p. 385).

tragedy for the purpose of narrating events.

Marston was aware of both the ability of the child actors and the particular conditions of the private theatre since he added a note at the end of the Epilogues to *The Tragedy of Sophonisba*:

> After all, let me intreat my reader not to taxe me for the fashion of the entrances and musique of this tragedy, for know it is printed only as it was presented by youths, and after the fashion of the private stage.[66]

This shows Marston's full awareness of the conditions of the private theatre. There are numerous musical directions in *Sophonisba*. Marston included songs and music in his play for the audience of the private playhouse. Blackfriars as a private playhouse had adopted the custom of inter-missions between acts in the days of the Children of the Chapel, as evidenced by stage directions calling for entr'acte music, and sometimes dancing, in several of the Children's plays, notably including Marston's *The Wonder of Women*, or *Sophonisba*, and Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.[67] Marston wrote plays for the companies of the children of St. Paul and the Blackfriars. The children were also expert in singing the musical songs because they were recruited from the Cathedral choir.

In *The Masque of Queens*, music serves to disperse the hags who had been dancing to a diabolical 'strange and sudden music', and the manner of their dancing is full of 'a spectacle of strangeness'.[68] Rather than being used to make the sound of the flying machines inaudible, Marston used music as a means to bewitch Syphax and have intercourse with Erictho (in the shape of Sophonisba), giving it a role in the plot. Ingram argues that the music in Marston's plays is generally regarded as a necessary evil: 'the action was often interrupted by a song no more significant to the character of his circumstances than the irrelevancies of modern musical comedy'.[69] I disagree with Ingram's point of view because music is used here with a brilliant effect with the aim of easing sadness and melancholy, and moreover because music throughout the play serves an important purpose in the plot, being a sign of 'deception'. The music in *Sophonisba* is heavily instrumented, requiring a remarkably full group: 'cornetts, recorders, choir, organ and at least two other instruments, viz. treble viol and bass

lute'.[70] Marston uses all these different types of instruments for different purposes in the plot. Music and dance were considered during the Renaissance period as efficacious to ease melancholy since it affects the mind and makes it nimble. Burton sums up his point of view regarding music when he says 'it is so powerful a thing that it ravisheth the soul, the Queens of the senses, by sweet pleasure (which is an happy cure) and corporal tunes, pacifies our incorporeal soul, and rules it without words, and carries it beyond itself, helps, elevates, extends it'.[71] In *Sophonisba*, Erictho promises to conjure up the spirits with music to produce sensuous pleasure:

> ERICTHO: Then when I shall force
> The ayre to musicke, and the shades of night
> To forme sweete sounds: make proude thy rais'd delight.
> Meane time behold, a charm to reare
> Whose potent sound will force our selfe to feare (IV.i, 177-181)[72]

In this context, 'make proud the rais'd delight' signifies extreme pleasure, and is also strongly suggestive of sexual excitement. 'Proude' in the *OED* means 'sexually excited; lascivious',[73] and is clearly used as a piece of sexual innuendo here. A few lines later Syphax points out the change made by the music after the stage direction which reads, '*Infernal music, softly'*:

> SYPHAX: Harke, hark, now softer melody strikes mute
> Disquiet nature: O thou power of sound
> How thou doest melt me. Harke, now even heaven
> Gives up his soule amongst us .
> Harke: she comes. (IV. i. 201-205)[74]

Erictho uses music in order to seduce Syphax and thus fulfil her own sexual desires. It is also by the power of music that Erictho transforms herself into the shape of Sophonisba. The stage direction before this conversation between Erictho and Syphax reads: '*A treble viol and a bass lute play softly within the canopy'* (IV.i).[75] The sound of the music comes from the canopy: a discovery space in the centre of the tiring-house where the sexual encounter takes place. 'Canopy' is one of the five words ('hangings,' 'arras,' 'traverses,' and 'curtains') that were used by the dramatists 'to designate textiles used as furnishings on the Elizabethan stage'.[76] 'Canopy', according to Smith's definition, probably means 'a covering suspended over a

[66] John Marston, *The Works of John Marston: The Dutch courtezan. The fawn. The wonder of women, or, The tragedy of Sophonisba. What you will*, ed. by Arthur Henry Bullen (J.C. Nimmo, 1887), p.316.

[67] Irwin Smith, 'Their Exits and Reentrances', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 18 (1967), 7-16 (p. 7); Irwin Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse: Its History and Its Design* (London: Peter Owen, 1964)*,* pp. 223-225. See also W. W. Greg, 'Act-Divisions in Shakespeare', *Review of English Studies*, 4 (1928), 152-158 (p. 155).

[68] *The Works of Ben Jonson,* ed. by William Gifford, 3 vols (London: J. C. Hotten, [1872]), iii, 44-62 (p. 56). See also John C. Meagher, *Method and Meaning in Jonson's Masques*, p. 67. *The Jonsonian Masque*, ed. by Stephan Orgel, p. 137.

[69] Ingram, 'The Use of Music in the Plays of Marston', p. 154.

[70] John Manifold, 'Theatre Music in the Sixteen and Seventeenth Centuries', *Music and Letters*, 29 (1948), 366-397 (p. 386).

[71] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith (New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1948), p. 479.

[72] Marston, *The Selected Plays of John Marston*, p. 459.

[73] `Proude' adj, A.II, 7, b, *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/search?searchType=dictionary&q=proude&_searchBtn=Search> [Accessed 24th February 2014]

[74] Marston, *The Selected Plays of John Marston*, p. 460.

[75] Ibid., p. 460.

[76] Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse*, p. 32.

throne or bed'.[77] In the above stage direction, 'Canopy' certainly means this kind of covering, something which is made clear in the following stage directions: '[Enter *Erictho* in the shape *Sophonisba*, her face veiled and hasteth in the bed of *Syphax*]',[78] and in the end of the last scene '[*Syphax* hasteneth within the Canopy as to *Sophonisbas* bed]'.[79]

1.8. Stage Directions in the Tragedy of Sophonisba

The elaborate stage directions, including some Latin, in *Sophonisba* seem to have been set from a holograph manuscript. Jackson and Neill argue that the stage directions provide evidence of 'an author's solicitude over the theatrical presentation of his play, and the prefatory matter (including the signed note "To the General Reader") likewise points to the Quarto's having been set from specially prepared holograph'.[80] The stage directions in all the Acts read 'enter' during the dances. For instance, in Act 1, scene 2, during the bridal ceremony the stage direction reads:

> Enter four Boys, anticly attired, with bows and quivers, dancing to the cornets a fantastic measure…[81]

This stage direction provides us with information about the costume of the players. 'Anticly' means 'grotesquely' in the *OED*.[82] Scott argues that the child actors in *Sophonisba* are not given 'a grotesque or satire role, but a heavily stylized one which lends an added dimension to the gravity of the plot, in the manner of the emblematic figure of, for example, the Bayeux tapestry'.[83] Scott fails to consider the above stage direction which shows that the child actors look grotesque since they are dressed 'anticly'. These boys here are not the supernatural characters but their costumes are still creepy and weird. Marston used highly elaborate stage directions, for example, in the prologue ('Cornets sound a march') is used twice which shows that Marston was concerned with the aural impact of the play. Again in Act 2, scene 1, the stage direction during cornets reads:

> Cornets. Enter two Ushers; Sophonisba, Zanethia, and Arcathia; Hanno, Bytheas, and Carthalon present Sophonisba with a paper, which she having perused, after a short silence, speaks.

Marston used these techniques as a device to handle

spectacle especially in Act 2 scene 1, in the elaborate bedding ceremony. Similarly, in Act 3, scene 1, the characters simply 'enter' during the playing of cornets and organs. The stage directions read

> *Cornets and organs playing full music, enter under the conduct of Zanthia and Vangue, the solemnity of a sacrifice; which being entered, whilst the attendants furnish the altar, Sophonisba sings a song; which done, she speaks.*

This Act concentrates on Syphax's attempts to seduce Sophonisba after it is reported that Massinissa is dead. Syphax summons up Erictho who promises him to gain Sophonisba by means of charms. After she makes the charms with the music played softly within the canopy, Erictho veils her face and enters in the shape of Sophonisba, heading to Syphax's bed. The act opens with 'Organ mixt with Recorders' which emphasizes Syphax's lustful speeches. The stage directions in Act 3, scene 1 read:

Figure 1. (Sophonisba, III.i)

Sophonisba (Erictho in disguise) descends and Syphax enters ready to go to bed with her. Syphax also descends after he seduces Sophonisba. The stage direction reads

Figure 2. (Sophonisba)[84]

The stage directions are the same in Marston's *The Selected Plays of John Marston* and the modern-spelling edition of *Sophonisba* by Bullen: [*She descends after Sophonisba*.[85] Sophonisba, Erictho in Sophonisba's shape, descends under the vault into offstage space when she realizes that Syphax is approaching:

Figure 3. (Sophonisba)[86]

Syphax also descends under the vault, not the heavens. The 'vault' is the rear-stage trap through which Sophonisba,

[77] Ibid., p. 343.

[78] John Marston, *The Plays of John Marston: Edited from the Earliest Texts with Introduction and Notes*, p. 50.

[79] Ibid., p. 50.

[80] Marston, *The Selected Plays of John Marston*, p. 397.

[81] John Marston, *The Wonder of Women or, The Tragedies of Sophonisba: As it hath beene Sundrie times acted at the Black Friers* (London, 1633)

[82] 'Anticly', *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy4.lib.le.ac.uk/view/Entry/8575?redirectedFrom= anticly#eid> [accessed 14th December 2013]

[83] Michael Scott, *John Marston's Plays: Theme, Structure and Performance* (London: The MacMillan Press, 1978), p. 99.

[84] Ibid., (III. I).

[85] John Marston, *The Works of John Marston*, ed. by A. H. Bullen, 3 vols (New York: George Olms Verlag, 1970), ii, pp. 231-316 (p. 281).

[86] Ibid., (III.i). Syphax "descends" through the vault in John Marston, *The Selected Plays of John Marston*, p. 448. "[*Descends through the vault*" in John Marston, *The Works of John Marston*, ed. by Bullen, p. 281. See also Corbin and Sedge, *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays*, p. 63. "He descends through the vault" in William Kemp, *John Marston's The Wonder of Women or The Tragedy of Sophonisba*, p. 99.

Zanthia and Syphax descend and seemingly they go down some unseen steps. Unlike all the other witches studied in this thesis, the stage direction reads 'Infernal Music' during Erictho's entrance rather than *Thunder and Lightning* to signify supernatural activity.

Mehl observes, in *Sophonisba*, that 'stage directions are used much more frequently and consciously than in the work of many other dramatists to make the spoken word more effective and expressive'.[87] The stage directions in the rest of the acts, Act IV and V, of the play read 'enter' and 'depart' when the characters enter and exit during the playing of the music. Thus, there is no evidence to show that the characters flew, but simply 'entered'. Therefore, it seems that the trapdoor was used for the entrances and exits of the characters especially Erictho. The witch Erictho does not 'fly' throughout the play either in the old or the modern editions. However, Marston made sure to explain, in a note appended to the Epilogues, the condition of the Blackfriars playhouse, since the musical interludes between the acts were well-established, being a tradition at the Blackfriars. *Sophonisba* was performed in 1604-1606 which was before the King's Men leased the Blackfriars in 1609. It may be that Blackfriars did not have the flying machinery to descend and ascend the supernatural characters for miraculous effects at the time the play was performed there. Or equally, Marston may not have been interested in making his supernatural characters fly. He may have only needed a curtain and a trapdoor to stage the supernatural scenes, and concentrated more on music to get the attention of the Blackfriars audience. Corbin and Sedge argue that 'Marston's boldness in the use of stage spectacle goes well beyond the creation of striking local effects, making full use of, and sometimes straining to the utmost, the resources of the Blackfriars'.[88] Trapdoors act as both sudden exits and entrances. For instance, trapdoors were used when Erictho '*slips into the ground*' and Asdrubal's ghost rises out of the altar.

In conclusion then, Ben Jonson's hags did not fly in the original performances, but simply appeared from the 'hell' and exited back there. Although, this paper has found that Jonson used some technical terms in stage directions suggestive of flight, such as 'throne' and 'fly', his Queens still were not made to 'fly' and were instead only suspended above the stage. Likewise, Marston's Erictho simply 'enters' and does not 'fly', and although there are stage directions call for her descent, she descends from the 'vault' and not the 'heaven'. Both dramatists represented their witches as grotesque, with more music and dances being used to accompany their entries and exits rather than flying effects. On the whole then, these plays were more interested in witches' festivities, such as music, dancing and costume rather than in the Continental idea of flying witches such as in *The Witch*.

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[87] Dieter Mehl, *The Elizabethan Dumb Show: the History of a Dramatic Convention* (London: Methuen, 1965), p.123.
[88] Corbin and Sedge, *Three Jacobean Witchcraft Plays*, p. 9.

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