

Paul Werstine – English 9002A – November 4, 2013
Analytical Bibliography and Printing Books in Shakespeare’s Time (late 1500s-early 1600s)

reading: Peter W.M. Blayney, *The First Folio of Shakespeare* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1991), pp. 1-16 only + illustration on p. 17

ANALYTICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY: effort to discover how a book was manufactured using what is available in the book itself (and in other relevant books from the period)
important for authenticating the objects you are looking at or studying
details below primarily from 1594 (first year a Shakespeare play was published) to 1623 (year the Shakespeare First Folio was published), but generally relevant from 1460s (beginnings of print) to around 1800 (when machine-press printing replaced hand-press printing)

when manuscripts survive, whether written by the author or copied by a scribe, they were once considered too messy to have been used in theater – W.W. Greg called them “foul papers” and argued that the actors needed to work from promptbooks – we know now that the distinction between manuscripts and promptbooks often won’t hold up – both authorial and scribal MSS can be clean or messy – plays that got into print came from acting companies to advertise or promote their works

1) papermaking

paper was hand-made in the period – expensive because imported (English not good at it, imported from France and Belgium) – material: rags soaked until they fall apart into constituent fibers

2) Book format

- a) folio: paper folded once – used for important books: heraldry, scholarly and theological works, sometimes for plays (for example, Ben Jonson in 1616), then Shakespeare First Folio in 1623
—groups of sheets = signature or gathering or quire – each leaf has front side (recto or r) and back (verso or v) – pages numbered as 1 (or 1r), 1v, 2 (or 2r), 2v, etc.
—one full side of a sheet = forme
outer forme of a folio (sheet folded once, into 2s) = pages 1, 2v; inner forme = 1v, 2
- b) quarto: sheet folded twice, into 4s – outer forme = 1r, 2v, 3r, 4v (pages 1, 4, 5, 8); inner forme = 1v, 2r, 3v, 4r (pages 2, 3, 6, 7)
- c) octavo = folded three times into 8s; duodecimo = 12s, etc.

deckle: frame around the wire mesh onto which the pulp that would become the paper was lifted from the vat, defines the edge of the paper

wire lines: pulp rested on mesh of thin, close wires which produced “wire lines” in the paper

chain lines: lines in paper perpendicular to wire lines produced by thicker, wider-spaced wires

watermark (decoration): papermaker’s design, device, trademark, or identification woven into wires and into paper (at beginning of 20th century, French monk C.M. Briquet published four volumes of reproduced images of watermarks from paper mills in northern Europe)

gutter: blank space between printing on facing pages of a book; in a quarto, the paper folds over the watermark and so the watermark crosses the gutter

3) typesetting (composition) (composition = process of typesetting; compositor = typesetter)

Shakespeare First Folio (1623) was printed “in sixes”: groups of three folded sheets of paper = 6 leaves or 12 pages (printing in 6s gave more stability when the book was bound)

composition: typesetter takes individual pieces of type (metal letters) from boxes in cases of type and inserts the letters into a compositor’s stick (upside-down and in reverse order) to place in lines in imposing stone and then in chase (frame) for printing

upper-case and lower-case letters: “capital” and “small” letters are named this way because of the placement of the two cases of type one above the other
distribution: opposite of composition, process of putting individual type-letters back into the appropriate compartments in the cases after printing – best cleaner for type was urine

Isaac Jaggard, the Folio’s printer, didn’t have enough type to print 12 pages at once
Charlton Hinman studied the surviving copies of the First Folio in detail – using a machine he invented (the “Hinman Collator”), he compared minute differences between copies

setting type seriatim = setting type in order in which it will be read (page 1, 2, 3, 4, etc.)
setting by formes (as in the Shakespeare First Folio, which was a “folio in 6s”) = setting middle double-page in signature first, then next double-page, then next: 6-7, 5-8, 4-9, 3-10, 2-11, 1-12
casting off copy = in general, estimating how many pages the full book will occupy
or, specifically, exactly which lines of type will go on, for example when printing “in sixes,” pp. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 before starting to print pp. 6 and 7

compositors can be identified according to their spelling habits

4) **presswork**: taking the type to the press, putting it on the press, printing the book
the worker who lifted the type onto the printing press was called the “printer’s devil”
the worker who pulled the “tympan” (the frame containing the paper) over the type was called the “pressman”
pie the type: let pieces of type fall out of the tympan onto the floor
in Italy, the printing happened with a “kiss impression” (light touching paper to type); England and Spain produced the worst printing in Europe, “crash impression”

5) proofreading

foul proof: one copy of a page that is pulled to check for errors
stop-press correction: process of reading a printed sheet as copies are being printed and stopping the press to correct the type

reason for doing analytical-bibliographical work: importance of knowing about a book’s manufacture in order to understand the quality of the text in it (examples from Peter Blayney’s pamphlet on the Shakespeare First Folio) – in several places in the First Folio, printers set the text in a particular way because they had too little type or because they misjudged the space they needed when they cast-off the copy – Shakespeare didn’t write it in the way it was printed