

Anonymity and the Erasure of Shakespeare's First Eighteenth-Century Editor

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THERE has always been a certain elegant simplicity to the history of Shakespearean editing. The seventeenth century was clearly "the pre-Editorial era,"¹ an age of monolithic folios and unnamed compositors. The eighteenth century, by contrast, witnessed "the birth of editing"² with multiple volume octavos produced by editors with names. But now the boundaries have been crossed, the distinctions have been blurred, the teleologies have been challenged, and the elegant simplicity has been shattered by the discovery of an early eighteenth-century folio, an edition without an editor, a text literally without rules.

Some copies of the Shakespeare Fourth Folio (1685) contain seventy scattered pages that were printed without side rules and foot rules. In most copies of the Fourth Folio these same pages are boxed with rules on the sides, head, and foot. The strikingly different appearance of the partially unruled pages was noticed over a century ago,³ but it was not until 1951 that Giles Dawson discovered that the unruled pages had actually been reset and reprinted.⁴ The reprinted pages correct dozens of errors in F4, modernize hundreds of spellings and punctuations, and systematically introduce the use of apostrophes in possessives. The fact that the compositor responsible for the reprinting was apparently unaware of the practice of boxing folio pages, combined with the fact that the reprinted sheets bear a different watermark than all of the normal sheets in the volume, suggested to Dawson that the reprinting occurred at a date substantially later than the original printing in 1685, and he proposed circa 1700. Since the reprinted pages would therefore constitute a fifth folio printing, Dawson termed them F5.

The Fourth Folio was printed in three sections by three different printers. Henry Herriman was the principal if not the sole capitalist in the publication. Dawson conjectured that following the initial sales of F4, Herriman had warehoused the stacks of ungathered sheets, from which

copies could then be made up and bound as the need arose. At some point it was noticed that seventeen of the stacks were nearly exhausted while the vast majority of stacks had more than two hundred sheets remaining. Dawson speculated that a calculation of costs and of the probability of future sales indicated that it would be profitable to go to the expense of reprinting the seventeen sheets required to make the remaining stock good. All of the seventeen sheets in question appear in the second section of the folio; apparently, the printer of the second section had short-sheeted Herriman. If Herriman had noticed the discrepancy when the sheets were first delivered to him, he no doubt would have insisted that the original printer reprint the sheets, in which case the reprinted pages would be technically cancels rather than later reprints.⁵

But it is difficult to imagine that the original printer in 1685 would have produced cancels so remarkably different in appearance from the original sheets. Although the evidence for later reprinting is largely inferential, the thoroughgoing modernization of punctuation and spelling in the reprinted pages does indeed suggest a date in the early eighteenth century. If Dawson's interpretation of the evidence is correct, then the F5 pages represent the first eighteenth-century edition of *King John*, *2 Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *1 Henry VI*, *2 Henry VI*, *Henry VIII*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Coriolanus*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Curiously though, Dawson's discovery has been universally ignored. Although the standard reference works alert editors to the existence of F5,⁶ not one F5 reading has been cited in the textual notes to any edition of Shakespeare that has appeared in the last four decades. Admittedly, the F5 pages are not easily accessible. They do not appear in either the Methuen facsimile or the Pollard STC microfilm of F4, but can only be found in four of the Folger's thirty-seven copies and in two copies in the New York Public Library.⁷ And yet, one suspects that if Dawson could have attached a name to the F5 text, it would almost certainly not languish in obscurity. The fundamental prejudice against anonymous editors in favor of those with names is so deeply ingrained that we tend to accept without question McKerrow's assertion that "what we understand by the 'editing' of Shakespeare" began with Rowe in 1709.⁸ But when a prominent scholar observes that "Rowe, as the first to scrutinize the text, had more occasions than his successors to make worthwhile alterations,"⁹ he effectively erases the thousands of alterations made in the seventeenth century by the succession of editors and compositors who, of course, scrutinized the text long before Rowe did.¹⁰

It is generally assumed that the intentional textual changes made by the editors of the eighteenth century were different in kind from the types of alterations made by the anonymous folio compositors, but this is not necessarily the case. Renewed attention to the reprinted Fifth Folio pages

reveals that the person responsible for the text of F5 behaved very much like an eighteenth-century editor.¹¹

In fact, a significant number of emendations previously attributed to Rowe, Pope, and Theobald turn out to have been anticipated by F5. Of the substantive emendations adopted by the *Riverside Shakespeare*, for instance, Rowe's emendations of *2 Henry VI* (4.2.90), *Henry VIII* (1.2.179 and 1.3.59), *Troilus and Cressida* (1.2.85 and 1.2.210), *Titus Andronicus* (1.1.144), and *Romeo and Juliet* (3.2.28), Pope's emendations of *2 Henry VI* (4.2.172) and *Troilus and Cressida* (4.5.78), and Theobald's emendation of *Titus Andronicus* (2.3.291) were all anticipated in F5. Another characteristic feature of eighteenth-century editions—the restoration of readings from earlier quarto texts—is present in the Fifth Folio as well. F5 restores two Q1 readings in *Henry V* (2.1.85 and 2.2.5), a Q1 reading in *Troilus and Cressida* (1.3.168), an F1 reading in *Coriolanus* (1.2.21), a Q1 reading of *Titus Andronicus* (3.1.115) as well as a Q2 reading (2.3.140), and a Q2 reading in *Romeo and Juliet* (3.2.106).¹²

The discovery of what may be the first eighteenth-century edition of Shakespeare challenges some of our fundamental ideas about editors and editing, and leaves us with some haunting questions as well. Were folio editions of Shakespeare in such demand at the turn of the century that Herriman (or his successors) could justify the time and considerable expense of resetting and reprinting seventy folio pages? Was the reprinting undertaken *after* the copyright was sold to Jacob Tonson? Might the reprinting have been occasioned by the renewed interest in Shakespeare generated by Rowe's edition for Tonson in 1709? Was the folio intended to compete with Rowe? This Shakespeare Fifth Folio text of manifestly uncertain date, of uncertain authority, of uncertain agency, unknown to the editors of the eighteenth century and ignored by those in the twentieth clearly deserves more careful attention.

OVERVIEW OF THE REPRINTED FOURTH FOLIO PAGES

Sig.	Page number	TLN	Text affected
2B3r	5	534–677	<i>King John</i> , 2.1.228–3.1.184
2B3v	6	678–825	"
2B4r	7	826–971	"
2B4v	8	972–1112	"
2I2r	87	3324–50	Epilogue of <i>2 Henry IV</i> and Dramatis Personae for <i>Henry V</i>
I2v	88	1–85	<i>Henry V</i> , Prologue-2.4.75

2I3r	89	86–231	"
2I3v	90	232–379	"
2I4r	91	380–523	"
2I4v	92	524–671	"
2I5r	93	672–819	"
2I5v	94	820–967	"
2M1r	121	1257–404	<i>1 Henry VI</i> , 3.1.51–3.2.103
2M1v	122	1405–542	"
2M6r	131	2683–826	<i>1 Henry VI</i> , 5.4.43–5.5.108
2M6v	132	2827–931	"
2N1r	133	1–101	<i>2 Henry VI</i> , 1.1.1–1.3.147
2N1v	134	102–249	"
2N2r	135	250–393	"
2N2v	136	394–540	"
2N5r	141	1115–262	<i>2 Henry VI</i> , 2.3.59–3.1.110
2N5v	142	1263–410	"
2O3r	149	2297–439	<i>2 Henry VI</i> , 4.1.129–4.9.10
2O3v	150	2440–581	"
2O4r	151	2582–721	"
2O4v	152	2722–862	"
2T3r	209	77–223	<i>Henry VIII</i> , 1.1.33–1.3.66
2T3v	210	224–366	"
2T4r	211	367–514	"
2T4v	212	515–657	"
2X2r	231	3236–376	<i>Henry VIII</i> , 5.2.199–Epilogue
2X2r	232	3377–460	"
2X3r	233	1–76	<i>Troilus</i> , Prologue-1.3.351
2X3v	234	77–224	"
2X4r	235	225–373	"
2X4v	236	374–523	"
2X5r	237	524–671	"
2X5v	238	672–818	"
2Y1r	241	1113–260	<i>Troilus</i> , 2.2.124–2.3.199
2Y1v	242	1261–406	"
2Y6r	251	2578–723	<i>Troilus</i> , 4.5.26–5.1.1
2Y6v	252	2724–871	"
2Z2r	255	3166–309	<i>Troilus</i> , 5.2.169–5.5.57
2Z2v	256	3310–459	"
2Z3r	257	3460–592	"
2Z3v	258	1–94	<i>Coriolanus</i> , 1.1.1–1.6.46
2Z4r	259	95–242	"
2Z4v	260	243–382	"
2Z5r	261	383–520	"
2Z5v	262	521–659	"
*3B2r	279	2975–3120	<i>Coriolanus</i> , 4.6.66–5.2.23
*3B2v	280	3121–261	"

*3B5r	285	1-90	<i>Titus</i> , 1.1.1-205
*3B5v	286	91-235	"
*3C2r	291	812-957	<i>Titus</i> , 2.3.73-4.3.90
*3C2v	292	958-1098	"
*3C3r	293	1099-239	"
*3C3v	294	1240-383	"
*3C4r	295	1384-529	"
*3C4v	296	1530-669	"
*3C5r	297	1670-813	"
*3C5v	298	1814-957	"
*3E3r	317	1638-1781	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 3.1.93- 3.3.107
*3E3v	318	1782-923	"
*3E6r	323	2486-616	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> , 4.3.7-5.1.29
*3E6v	324	2617-754	"

NOTES

1. Random Cloud, "The very name of the Persons': Editing and the Invention of Dramatick Character," in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, eds. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), 88-98, esp.94.

2. *Ibid.*, 94.

3. *Contributions to a Catalogue of the Lenox Library, No. V. Works of Shakespeare, Etc.* (New York, 1880), 41.

4. Giles Dawson, "Some Bibliographical Irregularities in the Shakespeare Fourth Folio," *Studies in Bibliography* 4 (1951): 93-103.

5. On cancels, see Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 134-35.

6. See Richard Hosley, Richard Knowles, and Ruth McGugan, *Shakespeare Variorum Handbook: A Manual of Editorial Practice* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1971), 57; see also T. H. Howard-Hill, *Shakespearean Bibliography and Textual Criticism, a Bibliography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 71.

7. Folger copies 7, 13, 28, and 33; New York Public Library copies Astor and Lenox.

8. Ronald McKerrow, "The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text by His Earlier Editors, 1709-1768," *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London, 1933), 4.

9. Peter Seary, *Lewis Theobald and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 60n. Elsewhere, however, Seary acknowledges that the Second Folio "was subjected to a great deal of attention by an 'editor' who, without reference to any manuscript authority, made a large number of alterations in the texts of the plays" (136).

10. The Second Folio made more than 1600 deliberate changes in the text of the First; the Third Folio made over 900 changes; the Fourth Folio made over 700. See M. W. Black and M. A. Shaaber, *Shakespeare's Seventeenth-Century Editors, 1632-1685* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1937).

11. My analysis of possible compositorial discriminants in the reprinted F5 pages suggests that they were all set into type by the same workperson.

12. I would like to thank Jennifer Hoyer for her assistance in preparing these collations.