

## Representing Shakespeare the Dramatist

### A Study of the Early Title-Pages

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The following is a study of the Shakespeare publications up to the First Folio of 1623, and special attention is paid to the ways the publishers represented Shakespeare the dramatist on the title-pages. It will survey issues of dramatic authorship and publication, and the basis of the exploration will be the playbooks, the main source of information to any students of plays. The emphasis will be not on the aesthetic evaluation of the plays discussed but rather on their existence in printed form: the ways they were represented to readers will suggest not only the quality of playbooks themselves, but the attitudes of playwrights, stationers, and readers to the publication of plays.

In addition, as dramatic writing is intended primarily, if not exclusively, for theatrical realization, the study will include considerations not only of print culture but of the theatre culture of the day: in other words, I am going to deal with both the theatricality and the literariness of the Shakespeare publications at once.

Here 'literariness' must be defined: my concern is not with the quality of Shakespeare's plays as verbal art, but more specifically with the ways they were represented as reading matter. To illustrate the point: plays written by Shakespeare were performed by the best company of the day (the Chamberlain's/King's Men) at the two leading playhouses (the Globe and the Blackfriars), and their excellence could be confirmed by theatregoers. But Shakespeare's plays were not treated as 'literary' works at the beginning of his career. Early plays were published as six-penny chapbooks, almost identical with throw-away books of ballads and almanacs. Many of them were published anonymously, and in some cases in mutilated texts. In

spite of their intrinsic merit as verbal art, Shakespeare's plays were not given due 'literary', or 'bookish', provision: attention was not paid to preliminary statements, correct text, neat layout, handsome appearance as a book etc. Because of their theatrical, 'unbookish' origin, the status of plays and playwrights is always unstable in the world of books and readers. This study of Shakespeare's plays as they were presented to readers aims to explore part of the complicated process by which plays and playwrights acquired recognition as books and authors.

#### (1) Title-Pages of the Shakespeare Quartos

As is well known, Shakespeare presented himself in the world of books and readers only as a narrative poet. He supervised the publication of *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and provided each of them with a dedicatory letter to the Earl of Southampton. The first letter refers to the Ovidian poem as 'the first heir of my invention', and, anticipatively, to the second poem as 'some graver labour': these two poems are the legitimate sons of William Shakespeare.<sup>(1)</sup> Shakespeare the playwright did not, however, make appearance in the 'bookish' world: there is no sign that he committed himself to the publication of his plays. As a playwright closely attached to the Chamberlain's and King's Men, he might have had psychological and institutional barriers to publication: the legal status of plays as property was different in those days and when a playwright sold his writing to a dramatic company or its agent, the play, it is believed, became the property of the company, not of the author. Probably it goes too far to argue that Shakespeare was totally uninterested in publishing his

plays. The 1604 *Hamlet*, for example, contains about 3800 lines, and is considerably longer than is required for stage realization. Shakespeare might have had publication in mind as a way to present his work in full. But we have no evidence that he actually concerned himself with publication, and in the 'literary' world, the plays were, as Heminge and Condell rightly said, Shakespeare's 'Orphanes'.

In spite of his apparent indifference, his plays remained neither unpublished nor anonymous, and Shakespeare the playwright, together with his writings, has inevitably been re-presented by others for these four hundred years. I wish to investigate the early stages of representation revealed symptomatically on the title-pages, but, before going into bibliographical details, I should like briefly to review the general function of title-pages of the time.

Title-pages developed with the growth of printed books, and gradually superseded the colophon. McKerrow traces three steps in the process: first, '[the title page] gives merely the name or contents of the book, with or without the name of the author'; second, 'It begins to take over the function of the colophon, adding first the date of printing, then the name or sign of the printer or bookseller'; third, 'It becomes more definitely an advertisement of the book designed to attract purchasers'.<sup>29</sup> In addition, at the last stage, title-pages not only advertised the book on the bookshelves of stationers, but, as contemporary allusions tell us, were posted up in town and gave publicity to the newest copies.<sup>30</sup> Shakespeare quartos belong to the third period of development. On the title-pages of the Shakespeare publications, therefore, we see what the stationers (or more widely publishers) expected to encourage the sales of the book. On the next page is a list of the kinds of information included on the title-pages of the quartos up to 1623.<sup>31</sup> (I exclude the problematic *Taming of A Shrew* and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* from this list of Shakespeare quartos.)

Though the table is mostly self-explanatory, I should like to add some minor explanations. Titles and editions are listed in modern abbreviated form, and the asterisk attached to some of them shows that, according to the title-page, it was a revised edition.

The year of the first column indicates the actual year of publication, while that of the last column reproduces the year printed on the title-page. (However we often conjecture the 'real' year of publication from the title-page statement, so in many cases, the year of the first column does not differ from that of the last.) The third column shows whether the title-page records Shakespeare's authorship or not. Some of the title-pages represent Shakespeare ostensibly as a reviser (e.g. 'Newly corrected and augmented by W. Shakespere', *L.L.L.*, Q1), but this does not contradict the possibility of Shakespeare's initial authorship. The fourth column indicates the appearance of the dramatic companies, and an asterisk is attached when the name of a playhouse appears as well. Also I should like to mention here that there are cases when the title-page advertises that the play has been acted, without specifying the names of the company.

Concerning the 'stationer' column: no effort is made to distinguish between printer, financier, and bookseller. Description found on title-pages ranges from the very detailed ('Printed by Iohn Danter, and are to be sold by Edward White & Thomas Millington', *Titus*, Q1), to mere initials, but I have indicated only apparently fraudulent cases by double asterisks (\*\*). The sixth 'place' column shows the appearance of the address of the shop where copies were to be sold. The simple indication of the place of publication, which was invariably 'London', is not counted here. Issues and variants are listed only when they differ from the original regarding the headings of this table.

This rough chart reveals certain tendencies in the Shakespeare quartos. As for the first seven playbooks, publishers did not bother to print the name of the playwright: probably they did not expect that the name of an obscure beginner would encourage sales. In contrast, five of the seven title-pages triumphantly declare the names of the players (or, more accurately, the names/titles of their aristocratic patrons used as *their* title). The situation, however, changed gradually: *Henry V* of 1600 was the last 'first edition' to be published anonymously, and all other editions first published during the period 1600-1622 invariably

year	plays	author	company	stationer	place	year
1594	<i>Titus</i> , Q1	none	yes	yes	yes	1594
	<i>2H.VI</i> , Q1	none	none	yes	yes	1594
1595	<i>3H.VI</i> , Q1	none	yes	yes	yes	1595
1597	<i>R.II</i> , Q1	none	yes	yes	yes	1597
	<i>R.III</i> , Q1	none	yes	yes	yes	1597
	<i>Romeo</i> , Q1	none	yes	yes	none	1597
1598	<i>1H.IV</i> , Q1	none	none	yes	yes	1598
	<i>L.L.L.</i> , Q1*	yes	none	yes	none	1598
	<i>R.II</i> , Q2	yes	yes	yes	yes	1598
	<i>R.II</i> , Q3	yes	yes	yes	yes	1598
	<i>R.III</i> , Q2	yes	yes	yes	yes	1598
1599	<i>Romeo</i> , Q2*	none	yes	yes	yes	1599
	<i>1H.IV</i> , Q2*	yes	none	yes	yes	1599
1600	<i>H.V</i> , Q1	none	yes	yes	yes	1600
	<i>2H.IV</i> , Q1	yes	yes	yes	none	1600
	<i>Much Ado</i> , Q1	yes	yes	yes	none	1600
	<i>M.N.D.</i> , Q1	yes	yes	yes	yes	1600
	<i>Merchant</i> , Q1	yes	yes	yes	yes	1600
	<i>2H.VI</i> , Q2	none	none	yes	yes	1600
	<i>3H.VI</i> , Q2	none	yes	yes	yes	1600
	<i>Titus</i> , Q2	none	yes	yes	yes	1600
1602	<i>Merry Wives</i> , Q1	yes	yes	yes	yes	1602
	<i>R.III</i> , Q3*	yes	yes	yes	yes	1602
	<i>H.V</i> , Q2	none	yes	yes	yes	1602
1603	<i>Hamlet</i> , Q1	yes	yes	yes	none	1603
1604	<i>Hamlet</i> , Q2*	yes	none	yes	yes	1604
	<i>1H.IV</i> , Q3*	yes	none	yes	yes	1604
1605	<i>R.III</i> , Q4*	yes	yes	yes	yes	1605
	<i>Hamlet</i> , (reissue of Q2*)	yes	none	yes	yes	1605

year	plays	author	company	stationer	place	year
1608	<i>Lear</i> , Q1	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1608
	<i>R.II</i> , Q4	yes	yes	yes	yes	1608
	(variant t.p.)	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1608)
	<i>1H.IV</i> , Q4*	yes	none	yes	yes	1608
1609	<i>Troilus</i> , Q1	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1609
	(two issues)	yes	none	yes	yes	1609
	<i>Pericles</i> , Q1	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1609
	Q2	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1609
	<i>Romeo</i> , Q3*	none	yes*	yes	yes	1609
1611	<i>Titus</i> , Q3	none	yes	yes	yes	1611
	<i>Hamlet</i> , Q3*	yes	none	yes	yes	1611
	<i>Pericles</i> , Q3	yes	yes*	yes	none	1611
1612	<i>R.III</i> , Q5*	yes	yes	yes	yes	1612
1613	<i>1H.IV</i> , Q5*	yes	none	yes	yes	1613
1615	<i>R.II</i> , Q5*	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1615
1619	<i>Contentions</i> (2,3H.VI,Q3)	yes	none	yes	none	none
	<i>Pericles</i> , Q4	yes	none	yes	none	1619
	<i>Merry Wives</i> , Q2	yes	none	yes**	none	1619
	<i>Merchant</i> , Q2	yes	none	yes**	none	1600
	<i>Lear</i> , Q2	yes	yes*	yes**	none	1608
	<i>H.V</i> , Q3	none	yes	yes	none	1608
	<i>M.N.D.</i> , Q2	yes	yes	yes**	none	1600
1622	<i>Othello</i> , Q1	yes	yes*	yes	yes	1622
	<i>R.III</i> , Q6*	yes	yes	yes	yes	1622
	<i>1H.IV</i> , Q6*	yes	none	yes	yes	1622
1611	<i>Romeo</i> , Q4*	none	yes*	yes	yes	none
<<37	(variant t.p.)	yes	yes*	yes	yes	none)
	<i>Hamlet</i> , Q4*	yes	none	yes	yes	none

Table Title-pages of the Shakespeare Quartos

mention the name of the playwright. (Reprints often transmit the anonymity of the preceding editions until later.) This testifies to the growing fame of Shakespeare the playwright, as well as to the general tendency towards the acknowledgement of dramatic authorship.

Concerning Shakespeare's authorship, I should like briefly to refer here to a further group of publications which also evidences the popularity of the playwright in the world of book trade. They are: *The London Prodigal* (1605), *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (1608, 1619), and *I Sir John Oldcastle* ('1600' = 1619). These are part of the so called Shakespeare apocrypha, plays ascribed on their title-pages to the playwright without authority. We may include in this

category *Lochrine* (1595), *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (1602), and *The Puritan* (1607), written, as the title-pages allege, 'by W. S.'; *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (1611), 'by W. Sh.'. The wrong attributions might well have been result of innocent mistakes or careless conjectures. In the cases of *Lochrine* and *Thomas Lord Cromwell*, there might have been another playwright with initials 'W. S.' (though on the other hand *The Puritan* is probably by Thomas Middleton, not by 'W. S.'). But if the publishers deliberately ascribed them to Shakespeare, knowing that they were *not his*, it strongly (and in a perverse way) attests the reputation the playwright enjoyed.

From around 1608, title-pages began to declare the names of playhouses along with those of theatrical

companies, which probably suggests that not only the royal/aristocratic names of the companies but the theatrical activities themselves had become of significant interest. With the exception of the problematic 1619 quartos, they printed the address of the bookseller fairly rigidly: as the copies of title-pages were posted as advertisements in town, it was an essential provision for guiding potential purchasers to the bookshop.

For the sake of economy of space, this table fails to incorporate many interesting details of the title-page description, variants, etc. (the fragmentary edition of *I Henry IV*, which probably preceded the 'first' quarto is among the most curious). It also does not show the subtle difference in nuance of publishers' legitimate or illegitimate claims to the authenticity and up-to-dateness of their wares: the wording is too variable and subtle in implication to tabulate in a limited space.

Most of all, the table distorts the general impressions given by the quarto title-pages by referring to the plays with such modern abbreviations of Folio titles as *2H.VI*, and *M.N.D.* In many cases, the titles of the Shakespeare quartos are distinct from the Folio titles, and very descriptive. To cite for example the title-page of the *Merry Wives* (1602) in full:

A Most pleasaunt and excellent conceited Comedie, of Syr Iohn Falstaffe, and the merrie Wiues of Windsor. Entermixed with sundrie variable and pleasing humors, of Syr Hugh the Welch Knight, Iustice Shallow, and his wife Cousin M. Slender. With the swaggering vaine of Auncient Pistoll, and Corporall Nym. By William Shakespeare. As it hath bene diuers times Acted by the right Honorable my Lord Chamberlaines seruants. Both before her Maiestie, and else-where. [lace ornament] London Printed by T. C. for Arthur Iohnson, and are to be sold at his shop in Powles Church-yard, at the signe of the Flower de Leuse and the Crowne. 1602.

This title-page is the fuller in information and satisfies most of the headings of the table above. In addition, what we call the 'title' is inseparably connected with the description of the play, embellished with such

laudatory phrases as 'Most pleasaunt', 'excellent conceited', 'sundrie variable and pleasing humors', and so on. The name of the playwright occupies a conspicuous position in the middle of the page, but the types used for his name are far smaller than those used to print the names of 'Pistoll' and 'Nym'.

Concerning the wording of the title-pages of the time, McKerrow notes as follows:

We must ... regard the title-page not as part of the work to which it is prefixed, or as the production of its author, but rather as an explanatory label affixed to the book by the printer or publisher. Not only are some of the descriptions added to titles of plays so inappropriate that it seems impossible that they can have been supplied by the author, but we have the definite statement of Wither in *The Scholar's Purgatory*, c. 1625, that some stationers having obtained a written copy likely to be vendible, 'contrive' and name it according to their own pleasure, 'which is the reason so many good books come forth imperfect and with foolish titles.

(*Introduction*, p.91)

From circa 1600, the name Shakespeare came to be acknowledged fairly constantly on the title-pages of his playbooks, and even those which were *not his* also began to claim his authorship. But his name is only one of many laudatory devices publishers prepared to promote sales, and, according to their business judgement, it was still obviously not as famous as the names of the *dramatis personae* of his plays: the change in attitude to Shakespeare's authorship came more gradually than the simple yes/no chart can convey.

After his death, Shakespeare's dramatic authorship, it seems, came to be emphasized more strongly. It was in 1619 that the first attempt was made to publish a collected edition of his plays. This abortive project ended up by handing down to us nine separate playbooks. To list their titles and imprints:

*The Whole Contention* ... 'Printed at London, for T. P.'

*Pericles* ... 'Printed for T. P. 1619'.

- A Yorkshire Tragedy* ...'Printed for T. P. 1619'.  
*The Merchant of Venice* ...'Printed by I. Roberts, 1600'.  
*The Merry Wives of Windsor* ...'Printed for Arthur Johnson, 1619'.  
*King Lear* ...'Printed for Nathaniel Butter. 1608'.  
*Henry the Fifth* ...'Printed for T. P. 1608'.  
*Sir John Oldcastle* ...'London printed for T. P. 1600'.  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream* ...'Printed by James Roberts, 1600'.

The imprints are misleading, if not deliberately fraudulent. Bibliographical investigations initiated by Pollard at the beginning of this century have revealed that all these plays were printed at the charge of Jaggard by the commission of Thomas Pavier (the 'T. P.' of the imprint).<sup>69</sup> The continuous signatures running through the *Contention* and *Pericles* strongly suggest an attempt at a single volume collection of plays 'by Shakespeare', including the problematic *Contention*, the apocryphal *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, and the non-Shakespearean *Sir John Oldcastle*. It was rather a shabby selection of plays, all of which were reprinted from earlier editions.

The name Jaggard has been associated with another Shakespeare collection which anticipated the 1623 First Folio. It was a small pamphlet of twenty non-dramatic poems, entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim* first published in 1599. This was the first collection published under the name of Shakespeare. Both this collection and the 1619 quartos were characterized by a fraudulent and even piratical nature, the earlier one, according to Thomas Heywood, offending the playwright himself, and the latter the King's Men. The Jaggards, on the other hand, were among the earliest to value the name Shakespeare as saleable merchandise. Strictly speaking, they had not necessarily been keen on representing the writings of Shakespeare themselves so far (their 'Shakespeare' publication includes many non-Shakespearean works): rather, they were interested in Shakespeare's 'authorship'. The dramatic collection of 1619, which both relates to, and contrasts with the publication of the Folio, shows a growing interest in the playwright Shakespeare.

The letter written by the publisher of *Othello* (1622) is also interesting in this context: 'To commend it[i.e. *Othello*], I will not, for that which is good, I hope every man will commend, without intreaty: and', he continues, 'I am the bolder, because the Authors name is sufficient to vent his worke'(cited in *Bibliography*, III, 1218). Certainly this statement is highly rhetorical (the publisher praises the play indeed by presupposing, rightly or wrongly, the good reputation of the playwright among readers), but the purport of this letter agrees with the general situation that prepared the commemorative publication of 1623.

## (2) 'Mr. William Shakespeare' of the First Folio

Seven years after his death, Shakespeare's plays were collected in a handsome folio volume entitled: 'Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies according to the True Originall Copies'. This collection was published by several stationers (including Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard), in co-operation with the King's Men. It represents first and most importantly 36 plays written by the playwright, of which probably 18 had not been put in print before. But it is not only the text that the book presented: it also represents in its preliminary leaves different activities and persons concerned in the book: stationers, players, men of letters, patrons, and most of all the author Shakespeare. In the following section, I should like first of all to concentrate on the way Shakespeare is represented on the title-page, and then appraise its significance in a wider context.

Preceding the publication of the First Folio, on November 8, 1623, the Stationers' Register recorded the following entry:

*Ent. (E.) Blounte and Isaak Iaggard: lic. Worrall: Mr. William Shakspeers Comedyes, Histories, and Tragedyes, soe manie of the said copies as are not formerly entred to other men, vizt.*

*Comedyes.*

*The Tempest. The Two Gentlemen of Verona. Measure for Measure. The Comedy of Errors. As You Like it. All's Well that Ends Well. Twelfth Night. The Winters Tale.*

*Histories*

*The thirde parte of Henry the Sixt. Henry the Eight. Tragedies.*

*Coriolanus. Timon of Athens. Iulius Coesar. Mackbeth. Anthonie and Cleopatra. Cymbeline.*

This entry, which allegedly covers all the Folio plays not already 'entred', in fact excludes those which had been printed without being entered: probably the Stationers' Company regarded the act of publication as effectively equivalent to the formal entry in terms of the establishment of rights in a copy. Moreover, this entry curiously excludes two plays which had been neither published nor entered. They are *The Taming of the Shrew* and *King John*. Critics agree that these plays were regarded from the Company's point of view as identical with *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), and *The Troublesome Reign of King John* (1591), on which they were probably based. Putting aside the possibility that they were in fact 'identical', these slips in registration testify to the general neglect — or at least lack of sense — of dramatic authorship: *King John* was *King John*, whoever the author was. It is difficult to say whether the Company identified the plays with similar titles deliberately or by mistake, but almost certainly they did not think it particularly worthwhile to distinguish them with respect to the name of the author.

It is against this general disregard of authorship that we must appraise the First Folio's emphasis on the figure of Shakespeare. The editorial principle here was, as in the preceding play collections, that of authorship. And, according to Heminge and Condell, the purpose of the publication itself was 'onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, & Fellow alieue, as was our Shakespeare' (πA2).<sup>60</sup> All the commendatory poems (including Jonson's shorter verse on Shakespeare's portrait) praise the genius of the playwright himself, while the titles of individual plays are not emphasized.

This strong sense of authorship is symptomatically expressed on the title-page, the most conspicuous part of which is occupied by the name 'Mr. William Shakespeare' and his engraved portrait.

Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies. [engraved portrait] London Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

Of all the Shakespeare publications, it was only the second time that his name occupied the top of a title-page. In the case of the only precedent, the 1608 *King Lear*, the prominence given to the name Shakespeare 'may reflect the bookseller's desire to distinguish this play from the anonymous *Chronicle History of King Leir* (1605)'.<sup>61</sup> The Folio, on the other hand, emphasizes Shakespeare's authorship, since it is the editorial principle of the book as a whole: the plays were collected primarily because they were written by Shakespeare (though we must add some qualification to this thesis later).

Adding to the statement of the first line, the engraved portrait confirms the authorship. It is very rare to find an authorial portrait in a playbook. Preceding Shakespeare, only three playwrights had enjoyed the honour: John Bale in *The Three Laws* (1547–48?); Robert Armin on the title-page of *The Two Maids of Moreclacke* (1609); William Alexander on the title-page of the 1616 edition of *The Monarchicke Tragedy*.<sup>62</sup> In none of them were the playwrights represented as 'playwright'. John Bale wrote many tracts for the cause of the Reformation, and his religious plays were part of that activity. Accordingly, his austere expression in the woodcut represents him as a polemicist, not a provider of entertainment: he is portrayed with (apparently) a small book in his hand, but the book is too thick to be a playbook. The title-page of *The Two Maids of Moreclacke* represents Armin in the person of 'John of the Hospital': Armin played the role in the play and the portrait represents Armin the player, not the playwright. Sir William Alexander was knighted in 1609 and appointed a Master of Requests in 1614, and his portrait of 1616 presents him accordingly in the smart garments of a courtier.

Unlike the Stratford monument, which figures the playwright with a quill pen in his hand, we find no attribute in the Folio portrait to signify the identity of Shakespeare specifically as a writer of plays: it is

simply an image of a man of honourable standing of the day.<sup>69</sup> This is partly due to the fact that the convention of portraying playwrights with laurels and a pen was yet to be established. At the same time, it is indicative of the fact that the Folio was a memorial not only to Shakespeare the prominent playwright, but to Shakespeare the gentleman. The volume commemorates, as the preliminary letters and poems emphasize, the gentleness and personal integrity of the late 'friend' of players and men of letters.

The title-page does not refer to the names of individual plays, and only the three genres of 'Comedies. Histories and Tragedies' are mentioned. The only adjective is found in the phrase 'the True Originall Copies', which also emphasizes the fact that it was a volume consecrated to, as well as by, the author Shakespeare.

The posthumous First Folio was the ultimate representation of 'Shakespeare, the playwright': the large types used to print 'Mr. William Shakespeare', the portrait, and the claim for the 'True Originall' authorial copies co-operate to represent the figure of the great author in its handsome volume. Other preliminary leaves with commemorative allusions to the playwright, also help the representation.

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Concluding this essay, I should like to review the problems of playbook publication and dramatic authorship in a broader context. From the 1550s onwards, with the rise of the London companies, plays came to be printed and reprinted by London stationers, but they were presented to readers as cheap books of an ephemeral nature, and most of them were not provided with any preliminary statements, such as dedications to patrons, or letters to the readers: this is indicative of the fact that the playbooks were little more than by-products of theatrical activities. In spite of the popularity they enjoyed, social esteem for the players was not very high, so it is hardly surprising that most of the playbooks of the time, which were printed as accompaniments to performance, were nothing but a kind of job printing.

And this theatricality of playbooks probably

explains why the sense of authorship was so weak in most of them. In the playhouse, script is transformed into words spoken by players, and what the audience sees on the stage are players or the *dramatis personae* they represent, not the playwright: the figure of the playwright together with the words he actually put on paper necessarily becomes obscure and invisible in the playhouse. Moreover, as theatrical performance is collaborative by nature, it is impossible for any one person to dominate the stage as the only moving spirit.

At the time of Shakespeare, plays in a playhouse were collaborative not only in that close co-operation of playwrights, players, directors, musicians etc. was presupposed in performing them: collaboration began at the stage of the script. As Henslowe's *Diary* shows, playwrights of the time had to accept collaboration with, and revisions of their plays by, other playwrights: a playwright was not always sure which play was *his*.<sup>69</sup> A letter written in as late as 1698/99 by John Dryden also testifies to the anonymity of playwright in a theatre.

This day was played a revised comedy of Mr. Congreve's called *The Double Dealer*, which was never very taking. In the playbill was printed, — 'Written by Mr. Congreve; with several expressions omitted.' ... the printing an author's name in a play-bill is a new matter of proceeding, at least in England.<sup>69</sup>

Surely we must be very cautious in applying the reference to the period of our concern, but the theatre is 'always highly conservative', and if the laureate's name was not printed on the bills for the performance of his plays during the Restoration period, 'it is unlikely that the names of the playwrights had been so dignified in a theatrical advertising of the reigns of the first James and Charles'.

It is this anonymity of playwrights that is reflected in the title-pages of six-penny playbooks. Apart from two play collections, 67 plays were first published in the 1590s, of which only 19 title-pages notify the names of playwrights in full. Seven give the name in initials, and two more names are noted in colophon and *explicit* respectively. In total, more than

half the playbooks were published without any explicit notification of their authors. In contrast, 36 Title-pages state the names of the company that put the play on stage, and 13 more indicate the fact that the play was acted: altogether about three-quarters of the playbooks announce their theatrical background. We can probably say that in the 1590s a playbook was identified firstly by the title of the play (with a brief description of the content), and secondly by the name of the company that performed it in a playhouse. Only after those two came the playwright. It is to this tradition that most of the title-pages of the Shakespeare quartos belong.

On the other hand, there were several attempts, among both playwrights and publishers, to present playbooks not simply as a secondary representation of the stage but as something forming part of a literary tradition. The *Workes* of Ben Jonson published in folio in 1616 certainly was a landmark: with its strong emphasis on authorship, and inclusion of commercial plays, this collection anticipated the publication of the Shakespeare Folio in many ways.

In the First Folio, the plays were tied together first of all by authorship, which is emphatically represented on the title-page: "Shakespeare" was the name that guaranteed the consanguinity and therefore the coherence of what might otherwise have been no more than a miscellany'.<sup>(2)</sup> And let us also note here that apart from the layout of the title-page, the folio publishers used many other strategies in presenting the volume to the world of books and readers. First of all they collected Shakespeare's plays that had hitherto been scattered around in the history of performance and of separate publication: they chose good copies as the basis of the Folio text, replaced the corrupt texts of the bad quartos with superior ones (this is the role played allegedly by Heminge and Condell), and, more essentially, rejected several plays which had been attributed to Shakespeare. It is generally accepted that basically the First Folio collected only the 'canonical' plays of the great playwright (though this does not refute the possibility of occasional collaboration in some of them). We are not sure, on the other hand, if the editors collected all of his canon (the exclusion of *Pericles* offers the most curious case). However, we

can probably say that the Folio transplanted the 36 plays from a theatrical context to a 'bookish' one under the name of the playwright. Then the publishers accumulated letters to patrons and to readers, and appended a table of contents, etc. according to the bibliographical conventions of the time. They also divided up the plays neatly (though rather arbitrarily) into the three categories of 'Comedies, Histories & Tragedies', and renamed the plays in accordance with the categories they were assigned to.

It is probably misleading to argue that the Folio thoroughly detached Shakespeare and his plays from their theatrical background. As we have noted, it was not only the London stationers but the King's Men who prepared the publication, and, moreover, Shakespeare was represented not only as a great writer but as one of the theatre people of his time: his name is listed as one of the Chamberlain's/King's Men in the catalogue of 'The Names of the Principall Actors in all these Playes' (πB2), and in the two letters to patrons and to readers, Heminge and Condell claim affective ties to the playwright. Nevertheless, the posthumous Folio was certainly the first formal introduction of Shakespeare the dramatist and his plays to the world of English letters.

#### NOTES

- (1) William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (London: Oxford U. P., 1986), p.224.
- (2) Ronald B. McKerrow, *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1927), p.22.
- (3) Contemporary allusions are cited by McKerrow, *An Introduction*, p.90, note.
- (4) Title-pages and entries in the Stationers' Register are reproduced according to W. W. Greg's *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 vols (London: Bibliographical Society, 1939 - 1959), unless specified otherwise. This bibliography will be referred to as *Bibliography* hereafter.
- (5) The process of the investigation is summed up



by Pollard, *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos: A Study in the Bibliography of Shakespeare's Plays 1594 – 1685* (London: Methuen, 1909), pp.81 – 106.

- (6) Reference to the First Folio is given in parentheses by signature, according to *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. by Charlton Hinman (New York: Norton, 1968). I also consulted the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust copy (Lee, XII), and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre copy (Lee, CVII) of the First Folio.
- (7) Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1987), p.35.
- (8) Portraits of concern are reproduced in *Bibliography*. See Plates XVI, LVI (in Vol. I), and CXIV (Vol. III).
- (9) The Droeshout portrait is studied by J. L. Nevinson, 'Shakespeare's Dress in His Portrait', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 18(1967), 101 – 106; and David Piper, *The Image of the Poet: British Poets and their Portraits* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1982), pp. 1 – 42.
- (10) I use R. A. Foakes and R. T. Rickert's edition of the *Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1961), with Neil Carson's *A Companion to Henslowe's Diary* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1988). I also consulted Greg's *Henslowe's Diary*, 2 vols (London: Bullen. 1908).
- (11) This letter, with the two following quotations, is quoted from G. E. Bentley's *The Profession of Dramatist in Shakespeare's Time 1590–1642* (New Jersey: Princeton U. P., 1971), pp. 60 – 61.
- (12) Margareta De Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authority and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1991), p.39.