

Jonson First Folio copies in the Meisei Shakespeare Library

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Article

JONSON FIRST FOLIO COPIES IN THE MEISEI SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

Especially by virtue of its holdings of Ben Jonson folios, the Meisei Shakespeare Library in Tokyo is also a Jonson library. Its value as such is barely recognized.¹ The main aim of the present note is to open a window onto the Meisei's Jonson folio collection by presenting a preliminary description of its fourteen copies of the 1616 edition, and thereby to complement the existing accounts of this landmark edition.

The collection was built mainly in the period 1975–93, during the high final years of the Japanese economic miracle. The driving force behind it was Mitsuo Kodama, president of Meisei University from 1978 to 1995. The print holdings are recorded in a three-volume catalogue, *Shakespeare and Shakespeariana*.² This lists and briefly describes all copies of the Jonson 1616 Folio. It uses a shelfmark referencing system that has now been replaced. In the catalogue, the edition as a whole has the shelfmark 932 J72 1616, which is supplemented with a suffix letter identifying the individual copy. The present account correlates the two references, giving priority to the new MR number. Though it does not attempt a full description of copies, it adds to the catalogue's information, and occasionally corrects it. It also identifies for the first time the states in each copy of the variant title pages. Further notes describe the condition of the copy and identify owners.

Variant Title Pages: The edition was printed and published by William Stansby, but the interests of other stationers are reflected in variant title pages. Though individual plays are not printed on separate quires, in addition to the general title page for the book as a whole play each has its own title page with imprint. The title pages of the first three plays to be set in print, *Every Man Out of His*

Humour, *Cynthia's Revels*, and *Poetaster*, were printed with variants of two kinds: (a) plain text, or with title and imprint set in type 'in-compartment' within an engraved border; (b) imprint identifying Stansby only, or Stansby as printed 'for' John Smethwick or Matthew Lownes.³ As will be seen, when sheets were gathered to make up copies, no obvious attempt was made to coordinate the imprint details. David Lee Gants' dissertation supplies reproductions of most of the states, and so is referenced below.⁴ The entries in the present account record the states with reference to details as follows:

General Title Page (sig. ¶2r): Engraving. The engraved imprint is found in three different states:

- a: *Imprinted at | London by | Will Stansby || An^o D. 1616.* (Gants p. 366)
- b: *LONDON | printed by W: | Stansby. and are | to be sould by | Rich: Meighen. || An^o D. 1616.* (Gants p. 367)
- c: *LONDON | Printed by | William | Stansby. || An^o D. 1616.* (Gants p. 368)

The title leaf is missing from most Meisei copies.

Every Man Out of His Humour (sig. G1r): The title of this, the first play in the volume to be printed, presents a complex mix of in-compartment and plain forms.⁵ The engraving for the in-compartment version (McKerrow and Ferguson title-page border 224) is re-used for the in-compartment titles of *Cynthia's Revels* and *Poetaster*.⁶ In the following notes, only the stationers' names are quoted from the imprints.

³ See James A. Riddell, 'The Printing of the Plays in the Jonson Folio of 1616', *Studies in Bibliography* xlix (1996), 149–68; Riddell, 'Addendum: The Printing of the Plays in the Jonson Folio of 1616', *Studies in Bibliography* l (1997), 408–9. See also W. W. Greg, *A Bibliography of English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 vols. (London, 1959), 3.1070–73; Mark Bland, 'William Stansby and the Production of *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*, 1615–16', *The Library*, VI.20 (1998), 1–33.

⁴ David Lee Gants, 'A Bibliographical Description of *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* London: William Stansby 1616' (Dissertation, University of Virginia, 1997).

⁵ The states and their sequence were most fully identified by Riddle.

⁶ R.B. McKerrow and F.S. Ferguson, *Title-page Borders Used in England and Scotland 1485-1640* (London, 1932 (for 1931), #224. McKerrow and Ferguson list various books printed by

¹ My thanks to Mariko Nagase for facilitating my visit to the Meisei Shakespeare Library, to Kyushu Institute of Technology as host institution during my research visit, and to Meisei former librarian Sumimoto Noriko and current librarians Ota Jun and Ishii Miki for their generous assistance.

² Meisei University, *Shakespeare and Shakespeariana*, 3 vols. (Tokyo, 1980–86).

1: in-compartment; ‘*William | Stansby.*’ §
(Gants 370)

2: plain; ‘WILLIAM STANSBY.’

3: plain; ‘WILLIAM STANSBY | for *Iohn Smithwicke.*’ (Gants 373)

4. plain; ‘WILLIAM STANSBY | for *Iohn Smithwicke.*’; ‘Hor.’ added to right of quotation above imprint (Gants 372); conjugate page G6v corrected

4.5: As above, but ‘HOR.’ now with capital ‘OR’, and set centred

5: in-compartment reinstated: the same setting with variant imprint, ‘*W. Stansby | for I: Smithwicke.*’ (Gants 371); conjugate page G6v as in 4

6: plain; ‘WILLIAM STANSBY.’ (Gants 374); lower imprint and G6v reset. Textual variants on G6v confirm the resetting of the forme. Riddell demonstrates that the forme was reset after the printing of P3 (‘Printing’, 155).⁷

Cynthia’s Revels (sig. P5r)

In-compartment, ‘*W. Stansby.*’ (Gants 375)

Plain, ‘WILLIAM STANSBY.’ (Gants 376; imprint retained from *Every Man Out* State 6)

Poetaster (sig. Z4r):

In-compartment, ‘*W. Stansby, | for M. Lownes.*’ (Gants 377)

Plain (imprint retained from *Cynthia’s Revels*), with imprint variants:

‘WILLIAM STANSBY.’ (Gants 378)

‘WILLIAM STANSBY, | for *Matthew Lownes.*’ (Gants 379)

The Lownes state of the plain title, with the Lownes line removed but the comma after ‘STANSBY’ retained, is found in the *Sejanus* title page (Bland 157).

Stansby containing the border, of which the earliest, Richard Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Politie*, has subtitles dated 1616–18.

⁷ However, the upper lines of the title page are printed from standing type from State 4b, preserved in expectation that the border and imprint would be reused for other play titles, as they were from State 6 to *Poetaster*.

MR number **MR 1091a**
Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616a
General title: State c (Stansby)
Variant Title *Every Man Out: State 5*
Pages (in-compartment, Smethwick)
Cynthia’s Revels: in-compartment Poetaster: plain, Lownes
Condition Riviere binding. Gilt edged. Bindings repaired, Quaritch, 1981. Clean and complete copy.
Ownership Hannah D. Rabinowitz bookplate
Other notes Previously Pforzheimer 559. MR 1091a is the first volume of a rebound set. The second volume, MR 1091b, is a copy of the 1640 Jonson Folio.

§

MR number **MR 1092a**
Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616 b
Variant Title *Every Man Out: Two separate loose copies of State 5 (in-compartment, Smethwick), the second torn.*
Pages The water-stain mark found in earlier leaves is evident in the undamaged copy, which is trimmed to the same outer edge as surrounding leaves.
Cynthia’s Revels: missing Poetaster: plain, Lownes. The leaf is detached, is narrower, and has a straighter outer edge. It may have been inserted from another copy.
Condition Binding: early, sheep. Lacks quire ¶ and fols. F6, H4, P5 (*Cynthia’s Revels* title page), 4D3 (not 4D2 as noted in library slip) and 4P3–4Q4. Detached: A1–C1 and H3. Quires A–E ‘damaged by damp at upper inner corner with loss of text’ (library slip). Damage on A2r–D2v and 2S5 patched with paste-in slips. Missing text, and text obscured by paste-ins, handwritten onto paste-ins. Subsequent worm-holes. Final leaf 4P2.
Ownership Anthony Lumpkin, 1726. ‘WMilward’ inscribed in the second copy of the *Every Man Out* title page.
Other notes Handwritten list of contents on verso of A1 (*Every Man In* title page; first extant leaf).
Handwritten copy of Thomas Lisle’s lyric ‘When Orpheus went down’ pasted onto inside back cover (author unidentified).

§

MR number **MR 1092 b**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616c
 Variant Title General title: missing
 Pages *Every Man Out*: State 3 (plain, setting A, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: plain
Poetaster: plain, Lownes

Condition Binding: early, poor condition; no front cover. Lacks ¶1-2. Bottom outer corner of 2F1 cut out. Minor tears.

Ownership *Alchemist* title page: owner's signature 'Th[...]as F[...]y' dated 2 June 1644, with name deleted and replaced above with 'John Wignur [...]'. 4Q4v: heavily inscribed with practice writing and signatures, including 'Tho: Tomkins', 'John Wigner' and 'Elizabeth'.

Other notes ¶3r heavily annotated with marginalia. Some plays marked with vertical pencil lines, as for abridgement. Annotated 'Beniamen Jonson' on 4L6r is not autograph.

§

MR number **MR 1092c**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616d
 Variant Title General title: missing (see below)
 Pages *Every Man Out*: State 5 (in-compartment, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: in-compartment
Poetaster: plain, Lownes

Condition Early binding, worn, spine defective. Lacks ¶1-2. *Every Man In* title page has been 'moved to the front to serve as a title' (library slip). Leaf ¶3 pasted onto front cover, verso uppermost. Final leaf loose.

Ownership Verso of final leaf signed 'Anne Bulkely Lienere 1631'.

Other notes *Sejanus* title page inscribed with quotation from 'Juvenall of Seianus.'

§

MR number **MR 1092d**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616e
 Variant Title General title: missing
 Pages *Every Man Out*: State 4 (plain, setting A, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: plain
Poetaster: in-compartment

Condition Binding: early, worn. Lacks quire ¶ in position, quires I-P, 2F2-5, 2Q1, 2Q6. Missing leaves substituted with blank leaves. Smaller leaves of ¶3-6

(Catalogue and commendatory verses) follow 2X6. 4Q4 trimmed and mounted on separate leaf. Damage on 2Y1 repaired with patch over recto, obscuring the text. *Every Man In* title page and A2 damaged and stained. On 2Y1r, part of the page below the 'T' ornament is covered with a paste-in slip. Otherwise mostly clean. Front endpaper records sale for £2 by 'Sidley Tayler next door to the fresh Butter Warehouse'.

Other notes 'Cam' in gothic script with flourishes in middle of page below the Tayler note. 4Q4r has show-through annotation on pasted 4Q4v.

§

MR number **MR 1092e**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616f
 Variant Title General title: State a (Stansby)
 Pages Other variant titles: missing
 Condition Binding early, heavily worn and loosed. General title: a fragment mounted on fly-leaf. The fragment has torn top and outer edges, but the full imprint remains. This copy lacks title page leaves of *Every Man Out* (G1), *Cynthia's Revels* (P5), *Poetaster* (Z4), *Epicene* (2X5), *Catiline* (3K4). It also lacks ¶1, A2, 2B3-4, 2K5, 2X6 (library slip identifies this as 2X4), 3E6, 3I5, 3T4, 4A2, 4H6, 4K4, 4P3-4, 4Q4. Damage: 2E5, bottom corners torn off and repaired with patch; 2S3, bottom right corner cut off.

§

MR number **MR 1092f**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616g
 Variant Title General title: Handwritten title on slip pasted into a window cut in a copy of *Every Man Out* title State 5 (in-compartment, Smethwick).⁸
 Pages *Every Man Out* (in correct position): State 5 (in-compartment, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: plain
Poetaster: plain, Lownes

⁸ Discussed in Mariko Nagase and John Jowett 'The Brightest Star: The Meisei Shakespeare Collection', *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 111 (2023), 85–104.

- Condition Binding perished and lacks back cover. Leaves loose. Lacks ¶1-2, A1, G3-4, and 4Q3-4. §
- Ownership Owners' signatures: G. Fletcher, 1775; Brinsley Nicholson M.D. 31 May 1885. MR number **MR 1433**
Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616j
- Other notes Note by Nicholson: 'formerly in the possession of P.A. Daniel, who wrote the above', this referring to the note 'Wants the engraved title by Hole. Some "ingenious" gentleman has manufactured a general title to the volume out of the woodcut title of Every Man out of his Humour.' *Alchemist* 'has been marked up by an editor c.1874' (library slip). Variant Title General title: missing
Pages *Every Man Out*: State 6 (plain, setting B, Stansby)
Cynthia's Revels: in-compartment
Poetaster: in-compartment
- Ownership Catalogue: Signatures of 'Mary' (trimmed), 'mary Barker', 'Edward Burnet', 'mary Barker', 'mary Ba', 'your sarva[n]t Mary Burnet'. Inverted signatures of 'Guil<>mus Wa<.', '...tantus amor florum' (from Virgil, *Georgics*). 4Q4r includes signature 'John Knight' and two lines of verse signed 'J: K:'. 4Q4v contains two inverted signatures 'Gulielmus Waring'.
- §
- MR number **MR 1092 g**
- Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616 h
- Variant Title General title: missing
- Pages *Every Man Out*: State 3 (plain, setting A, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: plain
Poetaster: plain, Lownes
- Condition Binding perished. Lacks ¶1-2, Z4, Z6, 2K5, 2B3-4, 2X4-5, and leaves after 4Q3. General title leaf is a torn and trimmed fragment mounted onto a separate leaf; title and imprint remain.
- Other notes Sold by John Lever of Little Moorgate (printed bookseller's slip pasted into A2v); Plomer dates 1765-70.
- §
- MR number **MR 1092 h**
- Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616i
- Bibliographical details Variant title pages missing.
- Condition Disbound fragment. Consists of 4C6-4Q3v (Entertainments and Masques), followed by ¶3 (top trimmed off), 3K4 (*Catiline* title page), 3T4, and back cover.
- §
- MR number **MR 1434**
- Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616k
- Variant Title General title: missing
- Pages *Every Man Out*: State 3 (plain, setting A, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: in-compartment
Poetaster: in-compartment
- Condition Binding cracked and worn. Bottom outer of title leaf torn off; the remnant lacks the imprint and part of the title. Lacks 4Q4.
- Ownership Bookplate: James Anderson Rose. Catalogue: headed with 'ex lib: Gw: Meredith C.S.S. Trin: Cant.'
- Other notes ¶1v contains handwritten copy of couplet criticizing Jonson for calling a play a 'work', and a couplet in response. Title leaf verso contains a handwritten list of plays in the Folio and in Gifford; and note.

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MR number **MR 1435**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616 m
 Variant Title General title: missing
 Pages *Every Man Out*: State 3 (plain, setting A, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: Plain
Poetaster: in-compartment
 Condition Front cover and flyleaf broken off from spine. Lacks quires ¶ and leaves A1-3, T5-6, 3G1, and 4Q3. Replaced with transcript are: T5-6, 3G1. Detached from binding: 3X1-3Z5. Torn off outer and lower leaf: 4Q4.

§

MR number **MR 1436**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616n
 Variant Title General title: missing
 Pages *Every Man Out*: State 5 (in-compartment, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: plain
Poetaster: plain, Lownes
 Condition Lacks front and back covers, but held together at spine. Lacks quire ¶, A1-3, 4Q3. Though 4Q4 survives, right and bottom edges are torn off.

§

MR number **MR 1437**
 Old shelfmark 932 J72 1616p
 Variant Title General title: missing
 Pages *Every Man Out*: State 5 (in-compartment, Smethwick)
Cynthia's Revels: in-compartment
Poetaster: Plain, Lownes
 Condition Binding broken. Front cover detached. Back cover almost detached. Flyleaf and ¶3-5 detached, pasted together. Lacks ¶1-2, ¶6, A1-2, 2D3. Other detached leaves: A3-6, 2D4, 4Q4.
 Ownership 4Q4v: signature 'Edward Stafford | 1633'.

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