

GATHERINGS SIGNED 'W': A FURTHER NOTE

MAY I RESPOND to the previous Editor's call for more observations on the use of W as a signature by reporting two such occurrences in related octavos from the early eighteenth century. In 1701 appeared *A collection of poems: viz. The temple of death: by the Marquis of Normanby*, followed by a second edition in 1702. The 1701 edition ('London: printed for Daniel Brown . . . and Benjamin Tooke') collates: A⁴ B-U⁸ W⁸X-2E⁸ 2F⁴.¹ There seems to be nothing unusual about the make-up of the book; ESTC describes it as a revised and enlarged reprint of *A collection of poems by several hands*, 1693,² and it was presumably from a copy of this 1693 work (or perhaps its 1695 reissue) that the 1702 edition was set. In either case the compositor encountered a sequence of gatherings made irregular by cancellation but this was no reason for his resorting to W when signing his own sheets.

The second edition ('London: printed for Ralph Smith') collates exactly as the first,³ gathering W taking its place in an otherwise perfectly normal sequence of pagination and text. If we assume that the 1701 edition served as copy for 1702 then what we here have is a slavish following of copy by the 1702 compositor, even to the point of his departing from the enshrined 23-letter alphabet. A later gathering suggests such blind adherence to copy: the 1701 compositor mis-signed the third leaf of gathering Bb as B3, which error is repeated by the 1702 compositor, who then proceeds to mis-sign the next leaf as B4.

John Harris,
College of Librarianship Wales,
Aberystwyth.

NOTES

¹ Arthur E. Case, *A bibliography of English poetical miscellanies 1521-1750* (Oxford, 1935) no.151 (e).

² Case 151 (c) and (d).

³ Case 151 (f): 'this is a different edition from that of 1701' (ESTC confirms this). Copy at College of Librarianship Wales as Case, except that p.296 is misnumbered '259'.

Copyright of Full Text rests with the original copyright owner and, except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, copying this copyright material is prohibited without the permission of the owner or its exclusive licensee or agent or by way of a license from Copyright Agency Limited. For information about such licences contact Copyright Agency Limited on (02) 93947600 (ph) or (02) 93947601 (fax)