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THE TAXONOMY OF PRINTERS' ORNAMENTS¹

THE TIME HAS COME for a catalogue of printers' ornaments: a catalogue of all ornaments of all printers.² That sounds rather sweeping, and this paper is restricted to talking of a catalogue of the ornaments of eighteenth-century British printers. The major obstacles to such an undertaking are technical and procedural.

The technical problem has been the sheer difficulty of copying and reproducing ornaments. The advent of the modern photocopier now gives most researchers a means of obtaining fine copies of ornaments from their own books. Nevertheless, if many pages are to be copied it is still generally preferable that a book be photographed, during which it need not be bent open so wide or subjected to such a bright light as in photocopying. Photographing also has the presumed advantage of occurring at the hands of professional staff working in controlled conditions. Clearly this is the preferred method for institutions when they themselves reproduce ornaments, and at present it is being applied to nothing less than the planned and supervised reproduction on microfilm of the major part of the printed output of the eighteenth century. This is being done in conjunction with the Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), each entry in which will contain a reference to the relevant microfilm. It is estimated that microfilming will take fifteen years, and the first reels have already been published. By the end, every printers' ornament will be available on microfilm and could be printed from microfilm to paper by any of the now common microfilm projectors with printing capacities. The problem of copying and reproducing printers' ornaments has thus been solved technically, and in the case of British printing of the eighteenth century it is being solved in practice.

How many ornaments might there be? It is impossible to say. Certainly thousands; probably tens of thousands. It is in handling such a vast array of data that the procedural problems arise. To guide us over these difficulties we can turn to catalogues of ornaments from earlier centuries, when printers and their ornaments were fewer, and, for the eighteenth century, to a few small studies of the

ornaments of individual printers or engravers. Maslen's booklet on *The Bowyer ornament stock* identified 319 ornaments used by the Bowyers virtually exclusively over the eighty years 1699 to 1777.³ The few other studies, of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century printers or printing houses, dealt with only a few dozen ornaments at most.⁴ The only engravers whose work has (to my knowledge) been studied are Francis Hoffman⁵ and Thomas Bewick.⁶ Because of their limited scope these works provide little guidance on how to master the problems of cataloguing larger numbers of ornaments.⁷ In particular, the cataloguing usually relied on the fact that all the ornaments were used only by one printer or chain of printers. McKerrow's arrangement of Alde's ornaments, for instance, separates his 'regular stock' from other ornaments; this is a useful means of sub-dividing ornaments into manageable groups but it would not be meaningful in a general catalogue.

This paper arises out of a concrete situation, when 969 ornaments had to be filed in a coherent way. That was as part of a study of French printing in London during the eighteenth century.⁸ The printers who undertook this work ranged from the most eminent to the quite obscure. Unfortunately not all the printers could be identified, for although the study embraced some thousand items, only a third of these items had the printer's name on them. To remedy this, recourse was had to the ornaments, 969 in all, in these items. The aim of the filing process was to construct a catalogue of these ornaments and to list under each ornament all the items in which it appeared, with a note of the printer when known. It was then argued that if the same ornament appeared in several items, they would all have been printed by the same printer. Or if an ornament passed from one printer to another it was arguable that there was a link between them, or even that the second printer was successor to the first.⁹ The construction of a file of ornaments went through several stages. At first when an ornament looked like one already seen, an attempt was made to match it by leafing through the collection of ornaments, which were arranged chronologically. This was time consuming and the result was often frustratingly unproductive as many ornaments were similar but not the same (see Fig. 1). As Plomer warned, it is difficult to 'carry in one's head

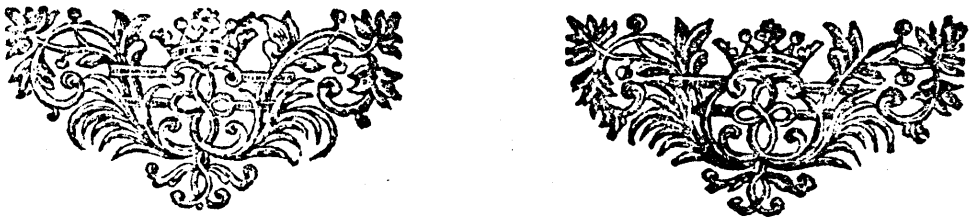


Fig. 1

Tail-pieces from the title pages of Frederick II, King of Prussia, *Exposition of the motives* (London: printed for J. Raymond. [1752]) and F.-M.-A. Voltaire, *L'Orphelin de la Chine* (Londres: chez Jean Nourse, 1756).

[more than] the general character of any block'.¹⁰ What was needed was a system that avoided the need constantly to look through the entire collection of ornaments. Only then could one be sure that each time an ornament was filed it would be put in the same place. This had to be done consistently over many months. Each time an ornament was filed it would either be new or would be matched against an ornament already filed. When filing, the need was to find the right place for each ornament with the minimum waste of time. This led to the development of as many classifications as were necessary to keep each classification down to a few dozen ornaments in size.

How to do this? McKerrow in compiling a catalogue of ornaments from the early centuries of printing felt that 'for the purpose of ready reference the best arrangement would undoubtedly be according to size'.¹¹ The chief difficulty he saw in this was that 'considerable variation in size is to be met with in different prints from the same block. This is of course due to the fact that paper was generally (? always) printed damp, and that the damping caused it to expand. Hence a print when dry is always smaller than the original block.'¹² Unfortunately, this is not a uniform process. 'The size of the print varies somewhat according to the dampness of the paper at the time of printing',¹³ and according to whether the ornament was heavily or lightly inked.¹⁴ These factors could vary even between the start and finish of a press run. Furthermore, 'paper expands unequally with and across the grain'¹⁵ and thus 'expands more in one direction than in another [so] that prints in a folio or in an octavo book will tend to vary in their *proportions* from prints from the same block in a quarto book.'¹⁶ The blocks themselves could also change shape, most commonly 'in the case of *cracked* blocks, in which the cracks would open or close according to the conditions of the weather and the tightness with which they were locked in the chase.'¹⁷ McKerrow did not consider the variations in size an insuperable difficulty; they simply obliged the researcher to search the ornaments on either side of the estimated size of any particular ornament. He reckoned that 'the difference in size between the smallest and largest print from a block may amount to five or six per cent., [although] some cases, especially when the block is cracked, may be considerably more.'¹⁸ Since McKer-

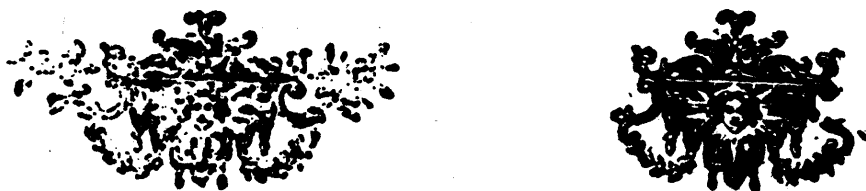


Fig.2

Tail-pieces from J.-B. Rousseau, *Supplement aux OEuvres* (Londres: de l'imprimerie de Jacob Tonson & Jean Watts, 1723), p.117 and J.-B. de Moliere, *L'Avare* (London: printed for John Watts at the Printing Office, 1732), [final page of French text].

row's catalogue of printers' devices contained only 428 ornaments, a search ranging over a five or six per cent variation in size was acceptable.¹⁹ It is not acceptable when we have to deal with thousands of ornaments. With numbers of that magnitude a system of browsing in hope will not do.

Another difficulty of classifying by size is that badly damaged blocks might be recut or might be cut down to the extent that they should be described as another state. Fig. 2 illustrates the two different ornaments that can emerge from that process. Maslen noted a Bowyer ornament that, after appearing cracked, finally split into two halves that were then used separately.²⁰ One of the challenges facing a cataloguer of ornaments is constructing rules that will bring such states together, or at least reasonably together, so as to spark the idea that they are related. In a catalogue arranged according to size they would be far away from each other and would never be detected.

Another possibility considered by McKerrow is arrangement by owner. He dismissed this on the grounds that from around 1550 onwards 'the majority of printers [was] using old blocks which had belonged to others — sometimes to several others — before them'.²¹ Also, there was a 'large number of devices the ownership of which is either uncertain or unknown'.²² The same difficulty applies to arrangement by maker. Only a small minority of ornaments is signed or appears in catalogues. Caslon or Baskerville specimen sheets, for example, show only small ornaments such as fleurons and stars.²³

Arrangement in chronological order of first appearance is another possibility. Unfortunately the long lifetime of many ornaments would make a catalogue arranged by this method difficult to use. Many ornaments were used over periods of thirty or forty years. Maslen found eight Bowyer ornaments in use for over 50 years and one for over 60 years (1715 to 1776).²⁴ In this last instance, in a catalogue arranged chronologically one would have to read backwards from 1776 looking at every ornament across the greater part of the century.

To avoid this difficulty, and yet to retain the benefits of a chronological approach, McKerrow decided to arrange his illustrated catalogue of ornaments 'in chronological order according to the first appearance of their designs'.²⁵ The main disadvantage of this arrangement is that ornaments that are similar will not necessarily appear together. Common ornaments, like the fleur-de-lys for example, are scattered over the centuries. McKerrow later admitted this difficulty and in a subsequent work, although he still adopted a basic arrangement of chronological order of first appearance, he often breached that rule. '[F]or convenience in use,' he explained, 'we have frequently brought together [ornaments] which, though of different dates, are similar in design and may thus easily be confused. While, therefore, the arrangement is in general chronological, it is by no means strictly so.'²⁶ The result is neither fish nor fowl.

The same judgement must be made of Maslen's organisation of the Bowyers' ornaments. They are 'arranged by classes in chronological order'.²⁷ This means that within each class the order is chronological. Class is a conveniently ambiguous word. In the case of head-pieces it proves to mean their size, larger head-pieces preceding smaller ones. Among the tail-pieces the arrangement is much more by theme: nos. 114–120, for example, all have a bird as a major feature. So, however, do other ornaments placed elsewhere (e.g., nos. 133 or 180). All but one of the group of ornaments with birds, moreover, also have large sunbursts; but so do ornaments placed elsewhere. Thus even when ornaments are arranged by theme there is no clear rule as to how to handle ornaments with several prominent themes. Of course, in the case of this Bowyer catalogue these criticisms are churlish, as the general arrangement does help one quickly to locate the right pages and thereafter soon to find the exact ornament for which one is looking. In a catalogue of only 319 ornaments, of which a quarter are letters of the alphabet, Maslen's arrangement is more than sufficient. It does not, however, provide us with the strict rules needed to handle ornaments by the thousand.

The procedure eventually adopted was to jettison chronology altogether and to retain arrangement by size, from large to small, only as a final sorting process. Instead, the focus was the contents of the ornaments themselves.

What follows does not touch upon fleurons. This is primarily because they



Fig.3

Head-pieces, Louis de La Prade, *Sermon prononce dans la chapelle francoise de Wapping, le jeudy 27 Juin 1706* (A Londres: par J. Delage, 1706), pp.3 and 5.

were so common that several different printers were likely to have had the same ornaments, and their use would not have met the primary aim here of allotting printers to works without imprints.²⁸ In retrospect, one might judge that fleurons used in combinations to 'build up larger ornamental blocks should have been noted as 'composite ornaments', because some printers seem to have tied (or glued²⁹) such collections of fleurons into place and to have inserted them into different measures of type. Fig. 3 shows identical head-pieces made up of fleurons from two different pages in the same work. (It is possible that the type was reset with the head-piece left untouched.) Similar composite ornaments were made from pieces of type (Momoro called them 'vignettes de fonte'³⁰), which were also used to lengthen ornaments where necessary, especially head-pieces.³¹ Otherwise the word ornament is hereafter taken to include almost everything that is not letter press, whether wood or metal, relief cut or copper plate engraving.

What follows are the general rules developed for cataloguing ornaments, together with observations on their application in filing the 969 ornaments under study. Let us begin with general rules. Each ornament was classified as follows:

- i) a letter (145 of the 969 ornaments)
- ii) an ornament containing letters or words (circa 20)
- iii) a head-piece (276)
- iv) a tail-piece (392) or
- v) a factotum (156).

The distinctive hole in the middle of factota made them easily identifiable. The difference between head-pieces and tail-pieces was not always clear, in that some ornaments could be used in either position. Here, however, the difference was held to be one of shape. A head-piece was defined as having corners, and thus as square or rectangular. All others were deemed to be tail-pieces.

The most easy ornaments to file were capital letters. These were arranged in alphabetical order. This neatly distributed the 145 ornaments into 23 distinct categories. Within each letter the ornaments were arranged by size. In a larger catalogue too many ornaments would be of the same size and further classification would be necessary.³²

Some other ornaments also contained letters or words. These ornaments were catalogued twice, once alphabetically and once according to the rules applying to all other ornaments, with cross references. This was necessary because writing in ornaments was not always clear and sometimes may not be noticed at all. Maslen pointed out some previously unnoticed initials, H D , in a Bowyer ornament, they had formerly been unknown to bibliographers because they were reversed and because they were best seen 'with the aid of a glass'.³³ Where letters were noticed and were legible the order of filing was strictly alphabetical, whether initials or words, so that FH (the initials of Francis Hoffman) preceded FINIS. Some ornaments contained surnames, and were filed a third time in alphabetical order of surname. This may seem a duplication of the main alphabetical filing,

but surnames were often so small and faint as to be virtually illegible; in those cases the initials and the letter at the start of the surname were most likely to be legible so the ornament could be filed with some accuracy in the main alphabetical file.

Head-pieces, tail-pieces and factota were all classified by the same general rules. At first different rules were developed for different kinds of ornaments, but in the interests of simplicity it was better to have a single set of rules applying to all ornaments. Some kinds of ornaments also needed additional rules particular to them, but only when the general rules could not apply.

The essence of the classification of these ornaments was their visual elements, their pictures or designs. A number of models presented themselves here. Heraldry, for example, is a system of describing a wide assortment of shapes. Two of its main practices, however, are inapplicable: its descriptions rely on colour and they begin with the background (the field) which in printers' ornaments is always much the same. The simplest system is, as with the radical in Chinese characters, that one part of the ornament should be the starting point, the key to its place in a catalogue. This was what appeared at the top in the centre: the upper central element. That is, the very top part of the ornament. By this key the ornaments were broken down into a good range of divisions, which were arranged in alphabetical order as follows: Angel (which included any humanoid face or figure with wings — even Father Time), Animal, Bird, Book, Canopy, Column, Container (which included cornucopiae, and all overflowing containers — baskets, urns, etc. — of flowers), Cross, Crown, Face (which included skull and parts of the face), Figure (including a representation of a figure such as a suit of armour), Flame, Fleur-de-lys, Flower (i.e. an individual flower; baskets or urns of flowers go under 'Container'), Fruit, Geometric, Insect, Lyre, Scallop, Scroll, Sun (which included anything within a sun burst), Tree, and Urn. It is a major handicap that this basic classification must depend so heavily on a string of English words, some of which are not common and may, at first sight at least, be strange to non-English speakers. Nevertheless, the visual elements are the most distinctive aspects of ornaments and if we were to keep like with like then we must name names. (Briquet's catalogue of watermarks is usable by non-French speakers even though it is classified in French, from *aigle* to *trident*.³⁴) In applying this system to a much larger number of ornaments further divisions will be inevitable. The insects or fruit could be split up into their species. The number of divisions is as unlimited as the imagination of the makers of ornaments. The divisions as given above reflect the decorative tastes of the eighteenth century: birds, cherubs and baskets of flowers and fruit.³⁵ The size of the divisions varied wildly. There were 131 ornaments classified as Tail-piece, container, and only one as Tail-piece, tree.

Each of these classifications was sub-divided according to other elements in the ornament. The more elements the more sub-divisions. At each stage the simple ornament preceded the more complicated.

First, ornaments were sub-divided vertically, i.e., by what was below the upper central element:

- i) ornaments with nothing beneath the upper central element (most ornaments fell into this first group, because ornaments tend to spread horizontally rather than vertically);
- ii) ornaments with an element beneath the upper central element;
- iii) ornaments with an element beneath the element beneath the upper central element.

And so on. In each case ornaments were classified by the element immediately beneath the upper central element and then further classified as necessary by the elements further away.

Next, each of these categories was sub-divided horizontally, i.e., by what was beside the upper central element:

- i) ornaments with nothing to the left of the upper central element;
- ii) ornaments with an element to the left of the upper central element;
- iii) ornaments with an element to the left of the element to the left of the upper central element.

And so on. In each case ornaments were classified by the element immediately to the left of the upper central element and then further classified as necessary by the elements further away.

Many ornaments had no upper central element but still had a central element, and exactly the same classifications applied. They applied, too, when instead of there being a central element there was a pair of central elements.

The effect of these rules was to generate a succession of sequences, in each of which the smaller and simpler ornament came before the larger and more complicated. In many ornaments the upper central element was the only element or was accompanied only by foliage or other indeterminate swirls. These simple ornaments came first. Second came ornaments with two elements, where the upper central element still had nothing beneath it but had one other element to its left. Then came ornaments with yet other elements to the left. Then came ornaments with something beneath the upper central element, in the same order.

The rules can be illustrated by applying them to the classification of *Head-piece*, *Container*. Within each of the following classifications other ornaments were further arranged in descending order of size.

- I. Upper central element
(in alphabetical order, in this case 'container')
 - A. Nothing below or beside upper central element
e.g., a container



Fig. 4

Head-piece, J.-B. de Molière, *Les Fâcheux* (London: printed for John Watts at the Printing Office, 1732), p.89.

- B. Elements to left of upper central element
- 1. Element to left of upper central element
(in alphabetical order by element)
e.g., a container with a bird to the left



Fig.5

Head-piece, Abel Boyer, *Le Compagnon*, 5th ed. (A Londres: imprimé pour D. Midwinter; T. Woodward; & Aaron Ward, 1741), p.113.

- 2. Element to left of the element to left of upper central element
(in alphabetical order by element)
e.g., a container with a bird to the left, with a container further left

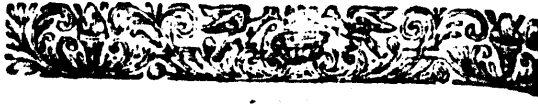


Fig.6

Head-piece, Peter Hudson, *The French scholar's guide*, 2nd ed. (London: printed for George Keith, 1756), p.32.

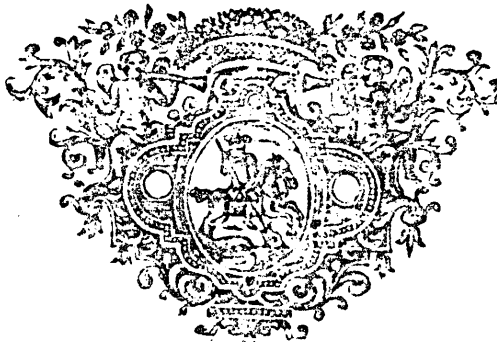
- 3. Element still further to left
(in alphabetical order by element)
e.g., a container with a bird to the left, a container further left and a bird further left
(see similarly below, II.B.3)

- C. Element beneath upper central element
(by alphabetical order of lower element)
e.g., a container with an angel beneath

**Fig.7**

Head-piece, *Two memorials of the Abbé de la Ville, together with the French King's declarations* (London: printed by E. Owen, 1747), p.2.

1. Element to left of upper central element
(in alphabetical order by element)
e.g., a container with a figure beneath and an angel to the left

**Fig.8.**

Head-piece, Michael Malard, *The French and Protestant companion* (London, printed for the author, and Mr. Marshall; and sold by G. Mortlock, [et. al.], 1719), p.15.

- D. Two elements beneath upper central element
(by alphabetical order of left hand lower element)
(see similarly II.D below)

- II. No upper central element, but still a central element
 - A. Nothing below or beside central element
e.g., a container



Fig.9

Head-piece, *Lettre du duc de Newcastle* (A Londres, chez Edouard Owen), 1753, p.3.

- B. Elements beside central element
 - 1. Element to left of central element
(in alphabetical order by element)
e.g., a container with an angel to the left



Fig.10

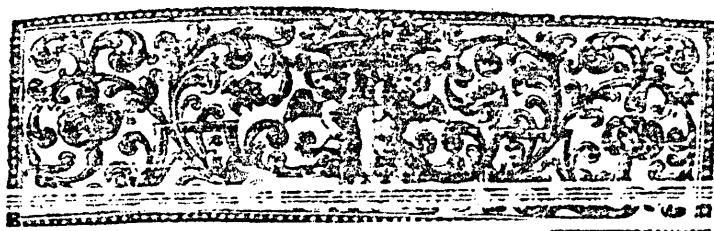
Head-piece, Isaac Martin, *Le Procez et les souffrances* (Londres pour le compte de l'auteur, 1723), [page headed: AU LECTEUR].

2. Element to left of the element to left of central element
(in alphabetical order by element)
3. Element still further to left
(in alphabetical order by element)
e.g., a container with a bird to the left, a container further left and a bird further left

**Fig. 11**

Head-piece, Martin, *Procez*, [on page headed: LE PROCEZ ET LES SOUFFRANCES DU SR ISAC MARTIN]

- C. Element beneath central element
(by alphabetical order of lower element)
- D. Two elements beneath central element
(by alphabetical order of left hand lower element)
e.g., a container with two angels beneath

**Fig. 12**

Head-piece, François Villette, *A Description of the great burning-glass* (London: printed for W. Lewis. 1718), [sig. A2]

- III. No central element, but a pair of central elements
e.g., two containers



Fig.13

Head-piece, Louis Villette, *Traité des sociétés civiles* (A Londres: imprimé pour T. Read, 1727), [sig. a1]

File in same order as I and II above
e.g., two containers with a bird to the left



Fig.14

Head-piece, Abel Boyer, *Le Compagnon*, 4th ed. (Londres: chez Tho. Woodward; & Aaron Ward. 1723), p.1.

These same rules applied to tail-pieces and to factota. If necessary they could also apply to capital letters (many of which had other elements with them in the ornament) if the number of ornaments under any one letter grew too great. These rules covered the majority of ornaments that had to be classified.

There were, however, problems. Some ornaments did not have a central element or pair of elements at all. This was especially common when the ornament comprised a scene. Such ornaments were few in number among the 969 and for that reason did not require the development of the comprehensive rules that they may well need. They were classified according to the element on the left of the upper central point, i.e., as though there was an upper central item already dealt with, and thereafter they were classified according to the rules already enumerated.

In other cases it was not always clear which was the upper central element because it was not obvious which way was up. This can be true of capital letters H, I, N, O, S and X. Also, Fig.15 shows an ornament that seemed acceptable

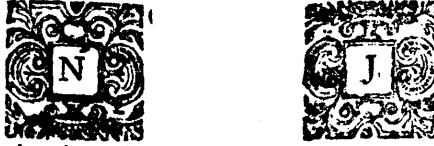


Fig.15

Factota, J.-B. de Molière, *Le médecin malgré lui* (London: printed for John Watts at the Printing Office, 1732), p.12 and Molière, *L'Avare* (London: printed for John Watts at the Printing Office, 1732), [at start of 'The life of Molière']

until it was encountered right way up; what had seemed to be an ornamental foot was in fact a container. In many other cases the design was entirely abstract and there was simply no way up that was more correct than any other. For these ornaments the system of upper central or central elements could not apply. Such cases were uncommon among tail-pieces, more common among head-pieces, and very common among factota.

For factota therefore a second set of rules had to be developed for ornaments of which the vertical alignment was unclear. These rules were focused on the feature common to all factota, the central aperture. Its shape was the first criterion for classification: round, square and various other shapes each formed a separate classification. This did not, however, lead very far as most factota had square holes. Of the 156 factota dealt with here, all but eight had square holes.

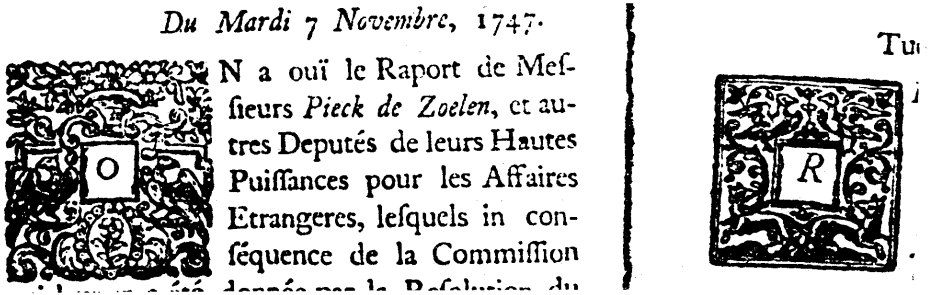


Fig.16

Factota, *Two memorials of the Abbé de la Ville, together with the French King's declarations* (London: printed by E. Owen, 1747), pp.24-5.

The other question that was asked of the central aperture of a factotum was whether it was surrounded by lines or not, and if so, by how many. No lines, one line, or two or even three lines each constituted a separate classification. Each

group was further subdivided by applying the same test to the outer edge of the factotum, where again there might be no line or several. This system generated a large number of clearly distinguishable classifications, since any of the patterns around the inner aperture could occur with any of the patterns at the outer edge. For example, a factotum might have no lines outside and one inside or it might have two lines outside and two inside (see Fig.16, and also Fig.15). Within each classification the ornaments were ordered by size.

This system was also applied to the factota that could be classified in the ordinary way by their upper central elements. The range in the size of factota was not very great, and this additional way of classifying them was used at the end of the application of the general rules apart from classification by size.

No such solution was possible for the head- and tail-pieces with no apparent right way up. Indeed, the reason why one cannot say which way was up for these ornaments was because they have no pictorial elements and tend to consist of foliage. They were thus particularly difficult to classify. Other than filing them by size no way of dealing with them was developed.

This paper is based on British ornaments of the eighteenth century and to that extent constitutes only an initial step in the development of a taxonomy of printers' ornaments. Nevertheless, the problems outlined above are common in the work of bibliographers and historians of the book, many of whom have private files of ornaments selected for varying reasons and arranged according to a wide variety of rules. Most such files are still of relatively recent origin following the introduction of the photocopier. What is needed now, before different researchers in different parts of the globe establish different and incompatible rules for cataloguing ornaments, is for a discussion to occur in the bibliographical world, with its vast collective memory of every possible shape of ornament. We may then be able to agree on some generally acceptable rules.

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NOTES

¹ This article is based on a paper delivered to the 1984 Conference of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand and draws gratefully on the comments made then.

² See Henri-Jean Martin, 'Comment mesurer un succès littéraire. Le problème des tirages', in Roger Laufer (ed.), *La bibliographie matérielle* (Paris, 1983), p.31-2.

³ K.I.D. Maslen, *The Bowyer ornament stock* (Oxford, 1973) (Oxford Bibliographical Society Occasional Publication no.8).

⁴ E.R.McC. Dix, 'The ornaments used by John Franckton, printer at Dublin', *Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, 8(1907), 221-7; E.R.McC. Dix, 'The initial letters and factota used by John Franckton, printer in Dublin', *Library*, 4th ser., 2(1922), 43-8; H.R. Plomer, 'The Eliot's Court printing house, 1584-1674', *Library*, 4th ser., 2(1922), 175-84; H.R. Plomer, 'Eliot's Court press: decorative blocks and initials', *Library*, 4th ser., 3(1923), 194-209; R.B. McKerrow, 'Edward Allde as a typical trade printer', *Library*, 4th ser., 10(1930), 121-62; H.R. Hoppe, 'John Wolfe, printer and publisher', *Library*, 4th ser., 14(1934), 241-88; C. William Miller, 'Thomas Newcomb: a Restoration printer's ornament stock', *SB* 3(1950), 154-70; C. William Miller, 'A London ornament stock:

1598-1693', *SB* 7(1955), 125-51; J.A. Lavin, 'John Danter's ornament stock [1591-97]', *SB* 23(1970), 21-44, where the small number of the above studies is described as astonishing and their individual incompleteness as regrettable, p.21-2.

⁵ Stanley Morison, *The English newspaper* (Cambridge, 1932), p.321-4.

⁶ See Iain Bain (ed.), *Thomas Bewick, vignettes* (London, 1978) and Frances Hicklin, *Bewick wood engravings* (London, 1978).

⁷ Carol Belanger Grafton, *Pictorial archive of printer's ornaments from the Renaissance to the 20th century 1489 designs* (New York, 1980), though it contains over a thousand ornaments, has no stated system of organisation at all and uses a mixture of period, subject and shape.

⁸ Jim Mitchell, 'French printing in eighteenth-century London', paper presented at the Fourth George Rudé Seminar, 1984, and soon to appear in the *Australian Journal of French Studies*.

⁹ R.J. Goulden, 'Auction catalogue printing, 1715-1730', *Factotum* 10(1980), 23-7, uses ornaments to identify the printers in this specialist area, although without illustrating the ornaments.

¹⁰ 'Eliots Court press', p.195.

¹¹ Ronald B. McKerrow, *Printers' & publishers' devices in England & Scotland 1485-1640* (London, 1949 [first printed in 1913]), p.xlix, n.3.

¹² McKerrow, *Devices*, p.li.

¹³ McKerrow, *Devices*, p.195.

¹⁴ Miller, 'Newcomb', p.161.

¹⁵ Ronald B. McKerrow and F.S. Ferguson, *Title-page borders used in England & Scotland 1485-1640* (London, 1932), p.xlvi.

¹⁶ McKerrow, *Devices*, p.li.

¹⁷ *Devices*, p.li.

¹⁸ *Devices*, p.195, n.1. Thus catalogues ordered by size, and even indexes by size of catalogues ordered otherwise, face a choice between giving average measurements (Miller, 'Newcomb', p.161), or giving the measurements of the particular ornament used for illustration (Maslen, *Bowyer ornament stock*, p.45).

¹⁹ And remained acceptable to his successor, J.A. Lavin, 'Additions to McKerrow's *Devices*', *Library*, 5th ser., 23(1968), 191-205.

²⁰ Maslen, *Bowyer ornament stock*, p.8.

²¹ *Devices*, p.xlix, n.3. Thus each ornament would have to be repeated for each owner, or would appear and be indexed under its first owner and then be cross referenced under subsequent owners. I know of only one owner obliging enough to publish the ornaments he owned: 'Specimen of types in the printing-house of James Watson', in [James Watson], *The History of the art of printing* (Edinburgh: printed by James Watson. Sold at his shop. M. DCC. XIII [reprinted in *English Bibliographical Sources*, Series 3: Printers' Manuals, no.1, London: Gregg, 1965]), p.i-xxvi.

²² *Devices*, p.1.

²³ H.R. Plomer, *English printers' ornaments* (London, 1924), p.61.

²⁴ Of the Bowyers' 200 ornaments, 37 were used for 30 years or more and 37 for 40 years or more (Maslen, *Bowyer ornament stock*, p.57-9). McKerrow, *Devices*, p.xxxiii, noted a woodcut that lasted for 125 years. See also Lavin, 'John Danter's ornament stock', p.35, for blocks lasting 40, 60 and 80 years.

²⁵ *Devices*, p.xlix.

²⁶ McKerrow and Ferguson, *Borders*, p.xlv.

²⁷ Maslen, *Bowyer ornament stock*, p.8, and see p.45.

²⁸ But see Lavin, 'John Danter's ornament stock', p.22, n.4. Dix provided an illustration of a head-piece made up of fleurons, but added that when made up into head-pieces in other works, 'the separate parts of the ornament, though identical, are placed or arranged differently' ('The ornaments used by John Franckton', p.225-6). For a small catalogue of fleurons see John Ryder, *A suite of fleurons or a preliminary enquiry into the history & combinable natures of certain printers' flowers* (London, 1956).

²⁹ John Smith, *The printer's grammar* (London, 1755), p.137, recommends printers to pay a compositor for creating such an ornament and 'to preserve the substance of his invention intire, for occasional use; being first well secured and conglutinated [by wetting it with Gum water], to keep it from breaking'; the square brackets are Smith's.

³⁰ A.F. Momoro, *Traité élémentaire de l'imprimerie* (Paris, 1793), p.329.

³¹ Smith, *Printer's grammar*, pp.139 and 203, illustrates such ornaments.

³² One could attempt to arrange them in sets, but this was easily done only in small collections. Miller, 'London ornament stock', p.140, divided them 'into three alphabets according to relative size'.

³³ Maslen, *Bowyer ornament stock*, p.8.

³⁴ C.M. Briquet, *Les filigranes: Dictionnaire historique des marques du papier dès leur apparition vers 1282 jusqu'en 1600* (4 v., Leipzig, 1923). In this way it deals with 16,112 watermarks.

³⁵ Plomer, *English printers' ornaments*, p.79.

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