

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

### No.7 An Eighteenmo Signed in Sixes, Bound in Eighteens

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In his recent note in this series on multiplying signatures in collected editions of Mark Twain, B.J. McMullin observed in passing that 'before the exploitation of the stereotyping process in the early nineteenth century volumes with two complete series of signatures are unlikely to be found, since in reimposing type pages (as opposed to plates) it is a simple matter to remove one set of signatures and replace them by a new set'.<sup>1</sup> While the observation – supported by evidence from the output of the Foulis Press – does not bear directly on the Twain volumes, it may be worth reporting that at least one instance of such signing *does* exist from the eighteenth century.

The publication in question is an edition of Swift's *The Travels of Lemuel Gulliver* in two volumes,<sup>2</sup> with the imprint 'EDINBURGH: | PRINTED FOR AND SOLD BY THE BOOKSELLERS. | [short rule] | M DCC XCIII.' It is an eighteenmo on unwatermarked laid paper gathered in eighteens, but signed (\$1-3) for gathering in sixes, so that a typical gathering runs:

A1 A2 A3 [A4] [A5] [A6] B1 B2 B3 [B4] [B5] [B6] C1 C2 C3 [C4] [C5] [C6] with the sewing coming between B3 and [B4]. Unlike the 8°/12° Foulis Press variation, therefore, here the actual gathering is a multiple of the ostensible. Thus the two volumes collate:<sup>3</sup>

I: a<sup>6</sup> b<sup>6</sup> (ABC)-(NOP)<sup>18</sup> (QR)<sup>12</sup>; II: (ABC)-(QRS)<sup>18</sup> T<sup>6</sup>

That this is an instance of variation in imposition rather than in folding is shown by the conjugacy in the typical gathering (i.e. it would not be possible to fold, or cut and fold, the sheets to produce two sets of gatherings, either one gathering to the sheet or three):

A1.C6  
A2.C5  
A3.C4  
A4.C3  
A5.C2

- 1 'Mark Twain's "Author's National Edition" and Multiple Signatures', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 21 (1997), 116-124 (p.121).
- 2 In the copy examined (Monash University, \*SW820.5 S977 A6/G.bo), bound in one.
- 3 For suggestions for representing such volumes formulaically see the section 'Missings and Misprints' in Fredson Bowers, *Principles of Bibliographical Description* (Princeton University Press, 1949), pp.222-225.

A6.C1  
 B1.B6  
 B2.B5  
 B3.B4

The signatures imply that there were two issues of the 1793 Edinburgh *Gulliver*: the one described here, the other collating:

I: a<sup>6</sup> b<sup>6</sup> A-R<sup>6</sup>; II: π<sup>6</sup> A-T<sup>6</sup>

But I have not been able to see a second copy of this edition to be able to verify this assumption.<sup>4</sup>

It might be noted that the volume designator, 'Vol.I.[II.]' appears in the direction line of only \$ADGKNQ1<sup>r</sup>; given the presence of 'additional' signatures, one might have expected it to appear on \$A-R1<sup>r</sup> in vol.I and \$A-T1<sup>r</sup> in vol.II.<sup>5</sup>

I have not been able to eliminate the possibility that this edition was indeed stereotyped (such demonstrations are notoriously difficult), though by 1793 the process was theoretically available, having been 're-invented' by Alexander Tilloch and Andrew Foulis and patented in 1784.<sup>6</sup>

Press figures occur in Vol.I only:

|   |                 |                 |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 |                 | G6 <sup>r</sup> | L6 <sup>v</sup> |
| 2 | A5 <sup>r</sup> | G6 <sup>v</sup> |                 |
| 3 | B6 <sup>r</sup> | D6 <sup>r</sup> | P1 <sup>r</sup> |

Since press figures are peculiar to the forme (the unit of printing) they are of no evidential value in the present instance, though their incidence in a putative issue in sixes would have gone some way to showing that such an issue was probably an eighteenmo (as presumed in setting out the figures above) rather than a twelvemo or a twentyfourmo.<sup>7</sup> Why one volume is figured and not the other when the two are so obviously related is presumably to be accounted for by shared printing.

There are several peculiarities in this publication. What their import is to the question of imposition I cannot say, but I list them here for the evidential value that others may find in them:

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- 4 There is no copy listed in *NUC*; ESTC records a copy in the National Library of Scotland (NLS); and Teerink's bibliography of Swift (both editions) records a copy in the University of Leipzig. Richard Ovenden of the NLS reports that that library's copy is gathered in eighteens (personal correspondence). Since the Leipzig copy is reported as an eighteenmo one might guess that it is also gathered in eighteens.
- 5 Strictly speaking, of course, the references should be \$1<sup>r</sup>, 4<sup>r</sup>, 7<sup>r</sup> for the issue in eighteens and \$1<sup>r</sup> for the inferred issue in sixes, but for clarity I have used – both here and subsequently – the signatures of the latter.
- 6 See, for example, Colin Clair, *A Chronology of Printing* (London: Cassell, 1969), s.v. 1781.
- 7 See B.J. McMullin, 'Press Figures and Format', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand* 7 (1983), 109-119.

- Vol.I, gathering (GHI) is bound G1-6 I1,2 H1-6 I3-6; the two pairs, G5.I2 and G6.I1, are glued in – perhaps this is merely an error in binding.
- Vol.II, I3 O4,5 have been cut out with scissors – for no obvious reason.
- Vol.II, M2,3 are signed I2,3 – they occupy the same position in successive sheets.
- Vol.II, I2 is signed on recto *and* verso.
- Vol.II, S2,3 are not signed and S1 has had the lower margin cut off, removing any signature that may have been present.

The 1793 Edinburgh *Gulliver* may be no more than an oddity, but 'retaining' a 'redundant' signature sequence, when – unless plated – it would have been a simple task to remove it, may also provide an unwitting clue to a certain complexity in book production in the late eighteenth century.

Nor is the 1793 Edinburgh *Gulliver* alone in the hand-press era in being gathered in multiples of the number of leaves called for by the signing. Dr McMullin will, I hope, forgive me for reminding him that he has already identified one such publication: the 1643 Cambridge *Minucius Felix*,<sup>8</sup> a sixteenmo signed as if to be gathered in eights (A-F<sup>8</sup> G<sup>4</sup>) but in all copies seen collating (AB)-(EF)<sup>16</sup> G<sup>4</sup>(-G<sup>4</sup>). In addition he has already identified an instance of re-imposition with unchanged signatures, where one copy (out of 20 seen) of the 1748 Oxford *Bion and Moschus* retains the original signatures though having been reimposed so that Greek precedes Latin rather than Greek and Latin being on facing pages.<sup>9</sup>

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8 'Gatherings Signed with Two Letters', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 8 (1984), 208-213.

9 'Re-imposition with Unchanged Signatures: the Oxford *Bion and Moschus*, 1748', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 12 (May 1978), 115-117, and 'Postscript', 5 (1981), 16.