

PART V

PRINTING, PUBLISHING, TEXTUALITY

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Compared with other dramatists, Shakespeare was successful as a published writer. Even during his lifetime, about two-thirds of Shakespeare's known plays appeared in single-title editions. In 1598, Shakespeare's plays became best-sellers. In that year, four of Shakespeare's plays were published in quarto: *1 Henry IV*, the second editions of *Richard II* and *Richard III*, and the first surviving edition of *Love's Labour's Lost*. All but *1H4* identify Shakespeare as author on the title page. His name could sell books. By 1600, Shakespeare had become London's most regularly published dramatist.

The sudden growth in Shakespeare publications in 1597–1600 was short lived, however. Of the five remaining plays first issued before Shakespeare's death in 1616, only *Hamlet*, in a more reliable text, seems to have been published with his company's assent. The company seems to have reconsidered its relation to the print industry, and decided to keep its distance. Or Shakespeare himself may have restrained publication with a view to the later collection of his works. That collection – the First Folio – did not appear until 1623, seven years after his death. From 1623 onward, Shakespeare was established as a major figure in print culture and literary culture.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The role of publisher
- *Venus and Adonis*: format and title page
- The author in the print marketplace
- Plays in print
- Shakespeare and Jonson
- "Enlarged to almost as much againe as it was"
- "Wrytten by m^r Shakespere"
- Conflicting paratexts: *Troilus and Cressida*
- Print lineages: Aspley and Smethwick
- The Pavier collection
- The First Folio
- Folio paratext
- After 1623

45. THE LONDON BOOK TRADE

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The rise of the professional theater, and the career of Shakespeare, coincided with a transformative moment in the history of the printed book trade. In the first decade of the sixteenth century, there had been three London printers; by 1586, there were twenty-five printers and fifty-four allowed presses. Literary property in and of itself was not intrinsically valuable. We do not have print runs for most books, but it is unlikely that any play or volume of poems was printed for the first time in much more than 500 copies. Only rarely were plays reprinted. A copy of a printed play would serve much the same function as a modern program or item of memorabilia. The printing and publication of the First Folio of Shakespeare in 1623 was predicated on the financial success of such volumes as came before it (Ben Jonson's *Works* of 1616, for example) and their newfound place in the libraries of the gentry.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Family businesses
- Changes to the trade
- Publishing plays

- Organization and economics
- Authors

46. PRINTING PRESS TECHNOLOGY

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Early printed books were similar in appearance to the manuscript books that preceded, and for a long time persisted beside, them. Gradually, however, certain features came to characterize the majority of printed books. These included a title page, giving details of the work inside, such as the author(s), the printer and/or publisher, and other relevant details; dedications and addresses to the reader; commendatory verses; a table of contents and/or an index; errata lists; running heads on each page; and printed marginal notes to elaborate meaning or draw attention to key moments in the text. If rather than *reading* the printed page we pause and *look* at it, it can begin to tell us another story: the rich detail of its material history and the network of agents and technologies that came together to give it shape.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The printing house and materials
- Movable type
- Ink and paper
- Making the page
- The printing press
- Making the book

47. PAPER

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As an enterprise that at every phase from conception to production required substantial stocks of paper, the early modern professional theater was itself a metaphorical paper stage. Preperformance, paper was required for creating an array of documents, including plot scenarios and actors' individual parts. During production, most plays required one or more paper properties or "scrolls" to be delivered onstage. Virtually everything we know about that theater is due to the survival of paper in the form of books and manuscripts. Laid paper produced on hand paper molds from macerated linen rags is the most abundant physical survivor of early modern manufacture, with millions of extant examples. Attention to the physicality of early modern paper stocks can provide evidence crucial to the reconstruction of the complex interactive processes of producing and reproducing the early modern drama.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Papermaking
- Watermarks
- Shakespeare and the bibliographical uses of paper

48. READING PRACTICES

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Shakespeare's early modern readers – those who not only bought, borrowed, and circulated but also marked and appropriated the text of his first editions – were arguably as essential to the growing status of Shakespeare's works as those who acted, directed, or went to see his plays (and indeed sometimes they were the same people). Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there came to be more readers of Shakespeare's plays than spectators. Although the stage and the publishing world continued to influence each other, the "order of books" – that is, the writing strategies of authors combined with the configuring of the text by publishers and editors – began to shape an increasingly large number of people's perceptions of Shakespeare's works.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The early modern book market
- Reading practices
- Shakespeare's early modern readers at work
- Valuable traces of reading

49. MANUSCRIPT CULTURE

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The emergence of the printed book should not be taken as a sign that manuscript culture suddenly died off. Recent scholarship is demonstrating that early modern England saw, if anything, a flourishing of manuscript culture that rendered it decidedly more than the outmoded predecessor of the flashy new printed book. More than the relatively paltry archival record, however, it is Shakespeare's works that insistently register the importance of manuscript culture. Shakespeare's plays and poems are riddled with examples and images drawn from manuscript paper culture. The products of professional manuscript culture are to be found throughout the plays – in the form of orders, proclamations, warrants, treaties, and official letters. More than any other product of manuscript culture, it is letters that dominate Shakespeare's plays.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- The scene of writing
- Professional manuscript culture
- Staging manuscript culture
- Unofficial documents
- The late plays

50. THE FIRST FOLIO

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"The First Folio" is "first" in the sense that it was the earliest of four successive folio collections of Shakespeare's plays in the seventeenth century, and as such it has been prized by editors and collectors alike. Of greater significance is its position as the first book to consist entirely of the collected plays of an English writer for the professional stage. During the preceding twenty-five years, collected works of various authors had been printed – but they were not limited to plays. The word "folio" is of equal importance. Books in folio format were usually, although not always, serious, high minded, and influential. Hence, the format itself seems to be making a claim for Shakespeare's importance. The monetary value of the First Folio has both paralleled and produced Shakespeare's cultural value.

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS CHAPTER INCLUDE

- Publishing the First Folio
- The Jaggards
- The syndicate: money matters
- Printing the First Folio
- The text: manuscripts and morality
- Composing, correcting, and collating
- Dedicating Shakespeare
- "To the great Variety of Readers"
- Remembering Shakespeare
- The catalogue
- Canonizing Shakespeare