1   A Guide for the Perplexed

THIS is a book about how to look at written and printed words, not as texts, but as processes of communication in which meaning is made through the relationship between signs, structures, and materials. It has been written to complement the use of Gaskell, and to expand on those areas that were not covered in his book.[1] In the following pages, the intention is both to explain the methods and processes that are used to describe and study early printed books and manuscripts, and to situate that understanding in a scholarly context in order that the insights so derived might be fruitfully employed. The focus will shift from broader narratives about the methods and ideas employed in bibliographical study to specific details and examples that serve to make a more general point. The illustrations have been chosen, where possible, with an eye to freshness. The hope is that those who wish to read this will be able to look at a book or manuscript and study the way in which it was made, the processes through which it may have evolved, and its history as reflected through the archival records as well as the evidence of its use.

I

When we look at the handwriting of someone that we do not know, we form an impression of their personality from their 'character'. We may not do so consciously, but we sense handwriting to be unique and revealing. We perceive whether the script is open or tight; whether the forms are regular and disciplined, or whether majuscules and miniscules are mixed together. We notice whether the hand slopes in one direction, or whether there is a lack of consistency. The size of the letters may be large, small, or so cramped as to require magnification (and perhaps psychoanalysis) to be read. There is an immediate sense of whether a hand looks 'normal', even highly educated; or whether it shows the tremor and difficulty of age. Sometimes a script will reveal illiteracy (that the person has difficulty co-ordinating the letter forms), or it may convey a visceral sense of some deeper kind of personal disturbance. At a glance, we make all these assessments, and usually know whether it was written by a man or a woman, and perhaps the approximate age of the person concerned (owing to a period style, or immaturity), without reading a word.

   Except amongst forensic specialists and palaeographers, no-one trains a person to read handwriting: rather, it is a judgment that is made from

[1] P. Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford, 1972; rev. edn. 1974).

experience: difference alerts us either to patterns that have been seen before, or to strangeness. Looking at early printed books and manuscripts requires the same kind of visual, tactile, and historical discrimination: memory, comparative analysis, and sensory perception are fundamental skills that are as much applied as they are theoretical. If the thoughts 'I have seen that elsewhere' or 'that looks odd' occur when handling a document, then the instinct should not be ignored. All early modern documents were subject to variation from one copy to another: there is, even for the same printed edition, no such thing as a duplicate copy in *all* its physical and textual details. As McKitterick remarks, books 'ostensibly offering shared knowledge on the basis of standardised text and image, in fact provided only partial standardisation'.[2]

To understand why some things may be unusual, it is necessary to have a feeling for what is conventional, and the only way to do this is to handle the original items, and a lot of them: microfilm or digital images may provide easy access and magnification, but they obscure information about the internal structure of a document; they impede descriptive methods, and they do not (beyond the image supplied) afford details about provenance or use, or give any indication about paper or bindings. To the scholar who has not seen a physical copy, they may be misleading about dimensions as well as type, and they cannot be structurally examined to determine what changes, if any, have been made. Textually, digital and print facsimile resources facilitate rapid access to an image of the original, but the limitations of simulacra need to be understood.

It is always helpful to look at multiple copies (if possible), to take detailed notes (including physical dimensions and shelfmarks—or call numbers as they are sometimes known), and to be aware not only of the history of the document, but of the libraries in which copies are found. It is not unusual to find that one copy of a printed book may have details about its earliest price or date of publication; another, a gift binding; a third may have marginalia, or an interesting provenance: cumulatively, copy-specific details build up a more complex picture than that which any one volume might present. Further, all copies (whether manuscript or printed) will differ from one another owing to either the practices of a particular intermediary, or as a result of proof correction.

Very deliberately, the emphasis in this *Guide* is on both manuscript and print, which are viewed as parts of a larger whole rather than as being separate fields of study. There are certain technical terms, methods of description, and conventions that are used. Thus a *printer* was fallible

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[2] D. J. McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge, 2003), 80.

flesh and blood, not a machine linked to a computer, whilst a book that is *slightly foxed* is not in a state of (inanimate) confusion but has paper that is discoloured owing to the conditions in which it has been kept. Other words, such as *felt* and *revise* have a specific technical meaning.[3]

When we look at books as books, we are conscious of more than simply shape, colour, and weight. Imagine, for instance, that on the table is a copy of an early eighteenth-century poem, printed in folio and set in large type with obvious spaces between the lines. If a literary person was asked 'What is the most obvious thing about what you are looking at?', their first reply might be something like 'It is a poem.' To the extent that a poem involves the layout of type on a page in a way that distinguishes it from prose, the answer would have some cunning, but to distinguish the text as 'a poem' is to invite a literary reading of the words as *words*. The most obvious thing about the page (before anything had been 'read') is, in fact, the size of the type and the space between the lines, and that is the step that is often overlooked: large type and extra space meant more paper was used, more paper meant more expense, and someone had to pay the bill—quite possibly not the printer, or publisher. The difference between looking at a page and seeing 'a poem', or seeing a relationship between type, paper, and space is the difference between 'being literary', and thinking like a bibliographer. The physical aspects of a text are always determined by the economics of book production ('Who paid for this?' is a useful question, if one not always possible to answer), as well as the materials and methods combined to create the document.

There is a second point to the example as well, and it has to do with the relationship between form and meaning. To recognize that the text is 'a poem' is to recognize something about its form, its conventions, and its readership.[4] In the first instance, the text does not matter. If, to make the point clear, we were to discover that the text was, in act, a prayer, we would want to know why the conventions of one textual form had been applied to another; and we would want to know who made that decision, why, and whether the text was, in some way, verse. What the text actually said would still be of secondary importance, and would only come into play once we had understood the way in which the formal criteria had been reapplied. Over time, this is how the conventions of textual design evolve: slight adjustments are made to the formal aspects of presentation

[3] An important general reference work for such terms is J. Carter, *ABC for Book Collectors* (London, 1952; last revised, 1973; many subsequent editions); see also, P. Beal, *A Dictionary of English Manuscript Terminology 1450–2000* (Oxford, 2008).
[4] See, N. Barker, *Things Not Revealed* (London, 2001, in offprint): these Panizzi Lectures were given out at the end of the final lecture but have yet to be finally published.

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that cumulatively affect the appearance of the page in quite radical ways. Furthermore, texts get presented in new ways to reflect the changing history of their use: an early edition of Shakespeare was printed according to the conventions of seventeenth-century casual reading; a modern edition is usually designed for the classroom with its accompanying introduction, illustrations, notes, and list of textual variants.

An awareness of how the formal aspects of books affect their transmission, and of how the material evidence speaks not of the text but of its own history, lies behind the assertion by Greg that 'with these signs [the bibliographer] is concerned merely as arbitrary marks; their meaning is no business of his', although he allowed that 'we all involuntarily pay attention to the sense of the texts we are studying'.[5] In more recent times, Greg's comment has been ridiculed, and his obvious literary interests pointed up, but that criticism is mistaken in its understanding of the distinction that he was trying to make. Greg believed 'that bibliography necessarily includes, as its most distinctive branch, the study of textual transmission',[6] and he argued for the need to take account of physical processes when establishing the history of a text.

One of the most obvious ways to trace the evolution of a text is to study its typography, or its manuscript equivalent, script. The history of letterforms, and the way in which they are laid out on a page reflect social conventions as well as individual choice. This is why it is possible, simply by looking at a document, to estimate when it was made to within a period of five or ten years. Bindings similarly reveal periods and tastes, as do the apparently incidental features of format, ornament stocks, and the use of ruled borders. Each of these elements has required a conscious decision by someone at some time, and for this reason it is as necessary to see the text as to read it. Indeed, sometimes it helps not to read the text at all—certainly it helps to read the text only after these other aspects of the book have been taken into consideration.

Bibliography is a historical and analytical discipline concerned with literature in the broadest meaning of that word. Hence, it is an appreciation of literary texts and historical facts that usually shapes a desire to recover more accurately the history of a text through the processes of its making and the ways in which it was read.[7] The point,

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[5] W. W. Greg, 'Bibliography—An Apologia', (Oxford, 1966), 247, 248.
[6] Greg, 'Bibliography—An Apologia' 259.
[7] Greg was unashamedly frank about this connection, to his later detriment at the hands of scholars who ought to have admitted as much: 'At any rate I freely confess that my own interest in bibliography is by no means purely bibliographical. It is literary. . . . It was the results of bibliography that I wanted but my search led me to the far greater discovery of the importance of the subject itself': 'What Is Bibliography?', *Collected Papers*, 82.

however, is that in order to understand printed books and manuscripts, the approach to literary documents cannot be limited to 'high' literature. A printing-house produced more than play quartos or sermons, a scrivener copied more than verse (in fact, more often a scrivener copied political and financial documents), whilst those private individuals who copied poems also wrote letters and wrote or copied other documents. Unless the full range of evidence is taken into account, crucial details will be overlooked that may affect our understanding of such basic matters as attribution, date, or the identity of the person responsible for copying or producing a document. Almost certainly, a limited perspective will deny to any text its proper *context*, and thus obscure the purpose that it first served. There is nothing difficult about being thorough; the problem with thoroughness is that that not all the evidence will survive, and that it is time-consuming and, sometimes, wearying.

Perhaps the most basic concept that needs to be borne in mind when studying early books and manuscripts is that repetition reveals process, identity, and expectation; difference describes history. The information so derived may be of two kinds: physical or cultural. For instance, the shift from black-letter to roman, the setting of text within rules and the subsequent disappearance of such rules, the shift from sidenotes to footnotes,[8] and from single-volume folio collections to multi-volume octavo sets, are all defining moments in the evolution of the early printed book, but they can only be perceived to be so because of their difference from past practices. Individual traits may equally be recognized: both Bacon and Jonson preferred (and had access to) fine Italian and Spanish papers rather than the coarser but more commonly available imports from northern France. Whilst the vanity of Margaret Cavendish is revealed in her choice of double pica type for the printing her books—a size larger than even the *Works* of King James, and matched as a text font in the period only by royal proclamations and other broadsides of that ilk. Some authors paid to have their books printed, or paid for special work to be done, but Cavendish is the first clear example among English authors of someone who simply had her work printed in a type of a very large size.

II

As a discipline, bibliography has always allowed itself a very broad scope, even if at times the practice has been rather narrower. All bibliographers, or historians of the book, are interested in the methods

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[8] See, A. T. Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Princeton NJ, 1997).

and mechanisms of human communication and record. Yet defining what this involves succinctly, and how it differs from other disciplines that are broadly interested in the same texts and materials, has provoked considerable debate. In their respective ways, such issues as the role of memory in the transmission of the past, and the instabilities of the digital archive, extend the discipline beyond what is written, printed, or inscribed on a durable surface.[9] With some prescience, almost a century ago, Sir Walter Greg defined the subject as the study of 'the transmission of all symbolic representation of speech or other ordered sound or even of logical thought', and he described what he called 'critical bibliography' as 'the science of the material transmission of literary texts'—the word 'literary' having the meaning 'written' rather than narrowly 'of aesthetic interest' although, even by Greg, this is how it came to be applied.[10]

In some ways, Greg was his own worst enemy. When he first set out his ideas, he was careful not to limit the scope of the subject to printed books (a restriction that he termed 'a very foolish one'); but, in practice, the study of manuscripts, and of memorial, and inscribed texts remained limited to those scholars who had to establish a relationship between non-printed texts in order to study a particular author (Donne is the obvious early modern example). The study of English printed books and early printing-houses, on the other hand, was largely driven by the editing of Shakespeare and the Renaissance drama. Continental book production, and the editing of humanist authors became a separate area of interest, as did the novels and verse of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. Gaskell sought to find some common ground between these various fields of research; but, as a consequence, the focus of his account is deliberately on the production and description of printed books.[11] By the 1970s, medieval and early modern manuscript studies had become, almost, separate disciplines unto themselves.

The important moment of change in bibliographical studies, though delayed in its reception, was laid out in the 1957 Lyell Lectures of the great typographer Stanley Morison (best known for the design of Times Roman). These lectures, which are magnificent for their sheer generosity of scope and richness of detail, went largely unnoticed through the 1960s,

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[9] See, in particular, D. F. McKenzie, 'What's Past Is Prologue: The Bibliographical Society and the History of the Book', *Making Meaning: 'Printers of the Mind' and Other Essays* (Amherst MA, 2002), 259–75; also, P. L. Shillingsburg, *From Gutenberg to Google: Electronic Representations of Literary Texts* (Cambridge, 2006).

[10] Greg, 'What Is Bibliography?', 75–88 esp. 78 and 83; Greg's paper was first published in *The Library* in 1914.

[11] Gaskell, *New Introduction*, 1.

as they were not published until 1972.[12] Whilst some have criticized aspects of Morison's argument,[13] the lectures exemplify in their scale of vision the principle that was established on the first page of the introduction: it is not only, he observed, that without bibliography 'the accurate description of anything written, engraved, or printed for the purpose of being read cannot be complete' (something that is necessary for the comparison and analysis of artefacts as witnesses to the texts they record), and thus 'It is the task . . . of the bibliographer to control documentation'; he claimed that the 'grammatically or philologically accurate transcription of a set of alphabetical signs may not always exhaust the suggestions of the text'. What then followed was a statement that Morison modestly suggested was 'for the future':

> The bibliographer may be able, by his study of the physical form of an inscription, manuscript, book, newspaper, or other medium of record, to reveal considerations that appertain to the history of something distinct from religion, politics, and literature, namely: the history of the use of the intellect. So far, that is, as intellect has made its record in script, inscription, or type.[14]

In New Zealand, the first person to borrow Morison's *Politics and Script*, on its arrival at Victoria University of Wellington Library, was D. F. McKenzie.[15] During the 1960s, McKenzie used his detailed knowledge of the Cambridge University Press at the end of the seventeenth-century to overturn prevailing assumptions about early modern printing-houses, most notably in the landmark article 'Printers of the Mind'.[16] Morison offered McKenzie the next step in his argument, one that shifted the study of printing-houses in a positive direction towards an engagement with all the methods of textual transmission in their full complexity.

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[12] S. A. Morison, *Politics and Script: Aspects of Authority and Freedom in the Development of Græco-Latin Script from the Sixth Century B.C. to the Twentieth Century A.D.*, ed. N. J. Barker (Oxford, 1972). An important related study is M. B. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Aldershot, 1993).

[13] For instance, A. Petrucci, 'Symbolic Aspects of Written Evidence', *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, ed. and trans. C. M. Radding (New Haven CT, 1995), 103–31.

[14] Morison, *Politics and Script*, 1. The comment is also a critique of Greg's claim that the 'real aim and value' of type is that 'it enables us to assign an undated and unlocated book to a particular place and date' (Greg, 'Bibliography—An Apologia', 242).

[15] Shelfmark Z40 M861 P: The issue card has been removed, but the date stamp remains.

[16] First published, D. F. McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices', *Studies in Bibliography*, 22 (1969), 1–76; reprinted: *Making Meaning*, 13–85.

Starting from his Sandars Lectures in 1976, then at Wolfenbüttel the following year, again in his presidential address to the Bibliographical Society in 1982, and finally in the inaugural Panizzi Lectures at the British Library in 1985, McKenzie outlined an agenda that moved bibliography away from Greg's positivism towards 'a sociology of texts'.[17] In doing so, he sought to reassert the view of Greg and Morison that the discipline involved more than the study of printed books, and that a text was more than words. He was less concerned to critique Greg's intention, than to address the ways in which Greg had emphasized text over artefact.

McKenzie's career demonstrates that he understood the sociology of texts to be a product of the archaeology of texts as documents. He had perceived both that the material forms of documents might reveal (in Morison's phrase) 'the history of the use of the human intellect', and that they revealed, as French scholarship described, the history of a society as manifest in its uses of texts as a means of record. It is this dual insight that can serve to show that printed books and manuscripts are always witnesses to a history that is separate from the texts that they preserve. As he put it in the Panizzi Lectures: 'In its ubiquity and variety of evidence, bibliography as a sociology of texts has an unrivalled power to resurrect authors in their own time, and their readers at any time.'[18] That view has subsequently been developed in various ways, most notably for early modern studies by such scholars as Roger Chartier, Mirjam Foot, Harold Love, David McKitterick, Randall McLeod, and Henry Woudhuysen.[19]

The most potent aspect of McKenzie's reformulation of the discipline (and this is something that has not always been properly understood) was that he reunited the study of books and manuscripts as artefacts with a broader awareness of the history of books and texts in their malleable and unstable forms. Further, he suggested that bibliography would have to deal with the role of memory in the transmission of texts, especially in non-literate societies, as well as more recent technologies such as film, music, and digital encryption. Language, he remarked, 'knows no social

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[17] D. F. McKenzie, *The London Book-Trade in the Later Seventeenth Century* (typescript 1976, on deposit at selected libraries); 'Typography and Meaning: The Case of William Congreve', *Making Meaning*, 198–236.

[18] D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (London, 1986), 19. See note 4 regarding Panizzi Lectures.

[19] For instance, R. Chartier, *The Order of Books* (Oxford, 1994); —, *Publishing Drama in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1998); M. M. Foot, *The History of Bookbinding as a Mirror of Society* (London, 1998); H. Love, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1993); —, *Attributing Authorship: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2002); —, *English Clandestine Satire 1660–1702* (Oxford, 2004); McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*; for McLeod see footnote 46; H. R. Woudhuysen, *Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1580–1640* (Oxford, 1996).

or educational boundaries, but saturates society in all its complexity, it serves indifferently the canonical and the marginal, the classical and the vulgar, the serious and the trivial'.[20] It is the fusion of the social and the material that can be used to show that printed books and manuscripts are always witnesses to something other than the texts that they preserve.

In effect, McKenzie reminded bibliographers and editors that books are complex textual and social documents. Greg, and many others before him, had emphasized that authors revise, and compositors and scribes alter what is before them; in the theatre, actors transform texts through performance; and readers assume meanings that are pertinent to their understanding. None of this was new; what was different was McKenzie's preference for pragmatism, and his engagement with rich detail of textual and physical evidence as a guiding principle, as well as his emphasis on embracing the complexity of forms and meanings over the desire for simplification. Unravelling what a text might be, and how it has changed in time, requires an engagement with all the facets of its representation.

The expansive view of bibliography put forward by McKenzie insisted that the analytical methods account for the complexity of the historical evidence. At the same time, he recognized that analytical methods could be employed in new ways to answer different questions in order that the discipline embrace all aspects of how a text communicates its history, aesthetics, context, and meaning. The result, as he perceived it, was a renewed sensitivity to 'the book as an expressive form'.[21] It is an approach that recognizes the ways in which books and manuscripts are not only textually meaningful, but have involved human agency (and therefore decisions) at every point of their creation and use.

Literary criticism reads the otherness of a document: the words that represent an author or editor. Few read the page for what it is: a physical composition of paper, illustration, and script or type. The art of bibliography is to let the page speak, not of its otherness, but of itself: so that it may account for all the variety of influences that gave it form. It requires that we be able to look at and describe a manuscript or printed text and read the signs of its making and, then, to explain how that information can be usefully employed in order to study the transmission and history of literary documents.

If we were to reformulate the idea of what bibliography is, not as we would now describe it, but as someone from the sixteenth or seventeenth-

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[20] D. F. McKenzie, 'Our Textual Definition of the Future: A New English Imperialism?', *Making Meaning*, 276–81 (277).
[21] D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*: 'The Book as an Expressive Form' is the title of the first lecture, and the phrase appears again in p. 24.

century might have approached it, then we might get closer to what Greg, Morison, and McKenzie meant by suggesting that it is *the art of reading well*: by which is meant *the art of reading all the circumstances of a text and its history, including all the ways in which it has been designed, documented, preserved, and used*. Gaskell explained how a book was put together; the emphasis here is with how to look at, and into, the object in hand and read it well: that is how to look into a book or manuscript and see not only an association of words, but what the various signs tell us of its history and existence. In this chapter, the emphasis is on how to approach the subject; later chapters will proceed step by step through the various kinds of evidence and what they represent.

<div align="center">III</div>

This book has been written with reference to late sixteenth- and early–mid-seventeenth-century documents because they most precisely illustrate the ideas and concepts under discussion. With care, most of what follows can be applied a little more expansively, but the further one strays from the central period, the more likely it will be that other factors (mechanical, commercial, social, and material) need to be taken into account. Broadly speaking, the early modern period might be held to cover the history of Europe from the Black Death to the French Revolution.[22] This book, however, would lose focus and utility if it were to address every nuance of so wide a spectrum of evidence. Rather, the period covered is one in which the printed book-trade had accepted a broad range of conventions (such as the title-page),[23] and in which the production of manuscripts was still a vibrant aspect of private, political, and commercial life. The two forms of textual production were mutually influential and much is to be gained by treating them in conjunction with one another.

   For students of the fifteenth or eighteenth centuries, this book will provide an introduction to most of the important concepts, but it needs to be stressed that there are real differences in the methods of production and the contexts of use during these periods that give shape to the evolution of the book in the two centuries between. Even during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the book was not a stable concept—textually, physically, or socially. What is apparent is that certain technical

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[22] The earliest use of 'early modern' in a book title would appear to be: W. Wulf (ed.), *Rosa Anglica, seu Rosa Medicinæ, Johannis Anglici. An Early Modern Irish Translation of a Section of the Mediæval Medical Text-book of John of Gaddesden* (London, 1929).

[23] For the origins of the title-page: M. M. Smith, *The Title-Page: Its Early Development 1460–1510* (London, 2000).

and historical developments gave shape and impetus to that process. For a few paragraphs, therefore, something needs to be said about the nature of the book during these outlying periods in order to contextualize the discussion that follows and supply guidance to those readers whose interests lie at the margins of its principal concern.

With the end of the Roman empire, commercial book production, as it had been known in the ancient world, came to an end. This was not the result of a single catastrophic event, although the Fall of Rome hastened the decline, but one that had been anticipated in the changing uses of texts during late antiquity.[24] There is much debate amongst scholars as to how literacy and book production evolved, as the decline in literacy amongst the secular elite was by no means universal or consistent.[25] For the next 700 years, however, most book production happened within religious communities. Outside of that environment, literacy was most necessary for political administration.[26]

During the medieval period, six developments that were necessary preconditions for the emergence of the early modern book and book-trade took place. First, and early on, the appearance of the page was modified by the introduction of space within the text; a practice that led to the gradual development of word separation (ancient texts were written in continuous script).[27] Second, at much the same time, scribes began to develop a variety of marks for punctuation and a system for their use. These two developments were concerned with legibility and the clarification of meaning, but they also represent a shift in perception from the texts being primarily oral performances to being written documents. The importance of punctuation is that it facilitates silent reading, suggesting not only logical structure but the inflection of speech: it thus enables a reader to understand the text without having to recite the text

[24] W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge MA, 1989), 285–322; G. Cavallo, 'Between *Volumen* and Codex: Reading in the Roman World', *A History of Reading in the West*, ed. G. Cavallo and R. Chartier (Cambridge, 1999), 64–89.

[25] N. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c.568–774* (Cambridge, 2003); A. Petrucci, 'The Lombard Problem', *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, 43–58; M. B. Parkes, 'Reading, Copying and Interpreting a Text in the Early Middle Ages', *A History of Reading in the West*, 90–102.

[26] R. McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), 211–70; S. Kelly, 'Anglo-Saxon Lay Society and The Written Word', *The Uses of Literacy in Early Mediæval Europe*, ed. R. McKitterick (Cambridge, 1990), 36–62; R. Collins, 'Literacy and the Laity in Early Mediaeval Spain', 109–33 in the same volume; M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy and the Laity', *Scribes, Scripts and Readers: Studies in the Communication, Presentation and Dissemination of Medieval Texts* (London, 1991), 275–97.

[27] P. Saenger, *Space between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford CA, 1997); Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, 20–9.

from memory. Word separation has a further function in relation to the advent of print, for the manipulation of space is necessary in order that each line be the same length as all the others: without it, the text could not be set as an exact rectangle (this is also true for verse and the ends of paragraphs where the apparent irregularity disguises the use of quads and other forms of spacing that justify the text to the right margin).

Third, from the Carolingian period on, there was an attempt to copy some of the classical texts from antiquity. This not only preserved a works that might otherwise have been lost (and which served as copy for the early printed editions of these authors); it meant that Carolingian miniscule served as the model for humanistic script, and thus 'roman' type.[28] Fourth, the rise of the universities in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, together with the formation of stable legal and political institutions, created a demand for scribal services and thus a commercial book-trade that was independent of the practices of the Church.[29]

Fifth and sixth, the universities' interest in Aristotle, and the Arabic versions of his works, led to developments in optics and the introduction of paper to the West. Optics was important because it led to the introduction of spectacles, and because magnification ultimately enabled the kind of detailed work required for the cutting of type punches;[30] whilst, the shift to paper provided a resource that freed book production from its dependency on treated animal skins as a writing surface.[31]

The reappearance of commercial manuscript production was an important moment in the development of the book-trade, but other forces were also shaping a new kind of document. The links that were established between the universities, the bureaucracies, and the trade encouraged the production of multiple copies and thus the specialization of tasks and the organization of work on a booklet system within the scriptoria. Illustration was a separate skill in its own right, as was binding. The books produced in this way were essentially specialized products that were intended for the political and administrative elite.[32] Inevitably, methods of commercial manuscript production in the fourteenth and the

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[28] Morison, *Politics and Script*, 265–93.

[29] The history of these developments in Paris is discussed in detail by M. A. Rouse and R. H. Rouse, *Illiterati et uxorati, Manuscripts and Their Makers: Commercial Book Producers in Medieval Paris 1200–1500*, 2 vols. (London, 2000).

[30] J. Dreyfus, 'The Invention of Spectacles and the Advent of Printing', *The Library*, VI: 10 (1988), 93–106; reprinted, *Into Print: Selected Essays on Printing History, Typography and Book Production* (London, 1994), 298–310.

[31] G. Pollard, 'Notes on the Size of the Sheet', *The Library*, IV: 22 (1941), 122–34; J. M. Bloom, *Paper before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World* (New Haven CT, 2001).

[32] Rouse and Rouse, *Manuscripts and Their Makers*, 235–60.

first half of the fifteenth-century influenced practices in the book-trade after the arrival of the printing-press.[33]

The earliest printed books were, in their manufacture, distribution, and use, conceived of as being similar to manuscripts except that they were produced in multiple copies that were to be hand-finished according to the requirements of individual clients. They were not thought of as texts produced by a different technology. Not surprisingly, the supply of books was far greater than the auxiliary trades could cope with,[34] and many purchasers spared themselves the cost of initials and borders, leaving their copies unadorned; or, conspicuously, they spent their money on the binding rather than extra internal illustration. Fifteenth-century printed books remained artisan products. If this is true for the history of book production, it is true as well for how books were used: most readers did not distinguish between manuscript and print as inherently different sources for a text: both are to be found bound together, and many sammelbände (single volumes that bound together multiple items) were only separated after the seventeenth-century.[35]

Further, manuscript production remained a viable alternative to print: not all texts were required in several hundred copies, and those that were commercially produced in manuscript were often intended for a select audience, to meet a private need, or for a specific patron: these items suited scribal work, and perhaps could be given the extra touches that purchasers of printed copies increasingly spared themselves. Equally, the practice of copying texts, even from printed sources, was deeply engrained. Manuscripts depend on replication for survival; the printed book-trade depends on old books being worn out, on new fashions, and on older texts being packaged in new ways.[36] Those two views of book production remained in tension throughout the early modern period.

We perhaps can understand more about fifteenth-century attitudes towards manuscript and print by looking at a book called *Lumen Anime*. This is a preacher's manual, or commonplace book, of natural and moral philosophy, that gathers together quotations on relevant themes from authors as diverse as Aristotle, Theophrastus, the elder Pliny, Ptolemy, Solinus, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Isidore, Hugh of St Victor, and Avicenna. It is broadly organized in three parts beginning with the birth

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[33] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 30–48.

[34] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 34–41. For the crisis in publishing during 1472–3, see: M. J. C. Lowry, *Power, Print, and Profit: Nicholas Jenson and the Rise of Venetian Publishing in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford, 1991), 107–11.

[35] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 48–52.

[36] McKenzie, 'Speech—Manuscript—Print', *Making Meaning*, 250.

of Christ, and other theological material, before going on to such worldly matters as abstinence, abjection, adulation, wealth, guilt, love, humility, health, silence, and pride. It then proceeds to the two longer parts: the first, concerned with the natural world of plants, animals, and trees; and the second, in more depth, with moral and philosophical problems. It was composed by Berenger of Landorra, Archbishop of Compostella, between 1317 and his death in 1330. By 1332, a copy of the manuscript had reached Austria, where it was revised, modified, and expanded by an otherwise unknown monk, Gregory of Vorau.[37]

Gregory's version of *Lumen Anime* was immensely popular in the fifteenth-century as a reference work and, despite its Dominican origins, found its natural home and use in the Benedictine orders of Central Europe. There are some 195 surviving manuscripts and fragments, as well as four fifteenth- and one sixteenth-century printed editions. Of the 195 manuscripts, 35 date from the fourteenth-century and the remainder from the fifteenth-century, most from the period of 'print'. Yet only two of these manuscripts derive from the printed editions, and only two of the manuscripts are to be found outside of Central Europe. The printed editions, on the other hand, despite being produced in thousands of copies, are extremely rare (they were read and used until they fell apart). As a form for preserving the text, manuscript was still preferred to print.

It is important to realize, as the *Lumen Anime* demonstrates, that print did not eradicate the making of manuscript books, or the skills of the trade; nor, for all its prolific ability, was the radical part of Gutenburg's invention the *printing-press*, rather it was the creation of *movable type*. The ability to produce identical copies of each letter that could be combined with other letters, as well as punctuation and space, in a rigid structure was the breakthrough that drove the rapid expansion in printed book production, but it did not, at first, replace the skills of scribes. The press was merely the most efficient mechanism that could be adapted (from viticulture) for the purpose of making an impression on a sheet of paper.

Gradually, the economics of the printed trade began to impose its own logic upon the appearance of the page. The problems posed by extra illustration were resolved through initial letters, ornament stocks, and woodcut (later copperplate) images. By the end of the fifteenth-century, many other aspects that came to shape the early modern printed book were in place as well: title-pages, imprints, prefatory material, indices, and errata lists being the most obvious. From the 1490s on, the technical

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[37] M. A. and R. H. Rouse, 'The Texts Called *Lumen Anime*', *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, 41 (Rome, 1971), 5–113; N. R. Ker, *Records of All Souls College Library, 1437–1600* (Oxford, 1971), 27.

aspects of the printed book changed little during the hand-press period. What does change is the appearance of the text, the contexts in which books were produced and used, and the material that was printed. To these evolving circumstances, the manuscript trade adapted itself and continued, for the next two centuries, as a vibrant commercial activity.[38]

The rapid expansion of the book-trade; the humanist emphasis on education, combined with population growth and increased paper production across Europe to meet rising demand; the need to control the flow of information and the expansion of the government bureaucracy; the changing structure of literacy that by the end of the sixteenth-century included women on a scale not seen before; and the ideological and spiritual impact of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation; all these factors coalesced to drive a demand for printed books and manuscripts on a scale that transformed access to, and the use of, the written word. Yet the trade was beset by overcapacity which the rapid rise in the supply of second-hand books only compounded. One consequence was trade protection and self-regulation, another was the subversion of authority.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were more literate, and semi-literate groups and communities enjoyed greater access to texts, than is sometimes assumed.[39] The pulpit, the theatre, and the ballad are three obvious ways in which the spoken (or sung) and the written (or printed) coalesced. The ways in which early modern society engaged with texts are equally significant. Manuscript and print are found side by side in the marginalia of many books, whilst the practice of copying texts in manu-script certainly enabled the circulation of information in ways that the press was unable to match owing to its regulation and control. Poetry, in particular, flourished through manuscript circulation and both Donne's and Jonson's poems continued to be mediated in this way even after the publication of their printed texts; that activity, however, represents but a small part of the commercial trade, much of which was related to politics.

By the end of the seventeenth-century, the arrangements that had sustained the book-trade during the previous two centuries were under pressure. In England, the end of licensing in 1695 and the lifting of re-strictions on the number of printers and presses affected not only the economics of printed books, but the commercial manuscript trade. Over the next 40 years, as the trade spread from London and the universities,

[38] P. Beal, *In Praise of Scribes: Manuscripts and Their Makers in Seventeenth Century England* (Oxford, 1998), 1–30.
[39] See, A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000); K. Thomas, 'The Meaning of Literacy in Early Modern England', *The Written Word: Literacy in Transition*, ed. G. Baumann (Oxford, 1986), 97–131.

the number of printers multiplied and the unit cost of book production fell, whilst the manuscript trade concentrated on legal and financial services. As producers of books, scriveners ceased to be able to compete because they could not match the economies of an unprotected trade. By 1740, the printed trade had reached critical mass. Over the next 60 years, the difference between the costs of production (which fell) and retail price (which rose) widened substantially.[40] These increased profit margins, reinforced by the spread of substantial private libraries as forms of conspicuous consumption, enabled the trade to accumulate significant capital resources from their profits. At the same time, private manuscript activity found new impetus in letters as a social art, in diaries and journals—the public and private spheres of the book separated.

This disjunction of the private and the public had several important corollaries for the eighteenth-century book. First, the end of licensing occurred at the same time as new presses increased the size of the platen and thus the area of a sheet of paper that a printer could impress. Very rapidly, the formats of books changed with royal octavo (c.29 × 20 cm) becoming the new standard for the trade. Indicatively, Jonson's 1692 *Workes* was printed as a single volume in double columns on crown folio; the 1716 bookseller's edition of his *Works* was six volumes of royal octavo, and much more amenable to the hand.[41] Second, copperplate engraving was more often a grace-note to a well-designed text. Third, people started collecting manuscripts, not as a research and reference collection (as Cotton had), but as objects of antiquarian interest (as did Harley and Rawlinson). Fourth, the book-trade became more discreet about its mistakes, no longer inviting readers to 'emend with their pen'. Fifth, interest increased in the early history of printing and trade practice: Moxon was the first English manual in 1683, but from the mid-eighteenth-century there were several more.[42] Sixth, as the price of new books increased, the antiquarian trade flourished with the formation of private libraries like those of Malone and Heber. Books were still personalized by their individual owners, but the trade was more effacing in its direct engagement with the text. Books were less often personalized *for* readers, and instead were personalized *by* them to reflect not only knowledge, but taste. The social dynamics of the book had fundamentally changed.

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[40] These comments are indebted to James Raven: of course, the price multiple for every book varies and it is very difficult to make broad generalizations; what is apparent is the trend of expanding margins and hence capital formation.

[41] McKenzie, 'Typography and Meaning', 228.

[42] J. Moxon, *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing (1683–4)*, ed. H. Davis and H. Carter, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 1962); McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 166–86.

By the early nineteenth-century, the results of mechanization made further change inevitable. Paper, presswork, and finally typesetting and binding were all subject to new methods of production that increased the uniformity of appearance, despite the greater diversity of material in print. These developments, of course, belong to the machine-press period, but the results of that modernization have shaped understandings of the book as textually and physically consistent, at least until recently. In dealing with the early modern book, one needs to recognize its composite and partial forms as a witness to the past: not only is uniformity not the norm, it is nonexistent. Print did not replace manuscript: the two existed in conjunction with each other as complementary forms of mediation.[43]

<center>IV</center>

In 'The Trout and the Milk', the late Hugh Amory explored the history of a strange object found at a Connecticut burial site: it was a leaf from a duo-decimo seventeenth-century Bible that had fused with the paw of a bear, to which it had been tied and then wrapped in cloth.[44] In an exemplary manner, Amory identified the edition of the Bible from which the leaf was taken, and established the date as being c.1680; and he compared the date to the history of the local Pequot communities and the European colonists. The text had been included in a talismanic medicinal bundle for a young girl, as part of a ritual to preserve the memory of the dead, to present the soul to the world to come, and to protect it from further harm.[45] Amory demonstrated that the item had been made some 20 years before literacy spread through the Pequot community. He also pointed out that such Bibles were not really read by the Europeans either: the type was too small, and their use was much more symbolic than textual (an object carried as a mark of piety). The Pequots had recognized the regard in which the early Puritans held scripture, and they understood its symbolic associations. Adding a leaf from a Bible was like adding an extra charm or incantation; it was a gesture that expressed an accommodation with, and recognition of, the alien culture that had arrived in their midst.

What is significant about 'The Trout and the Milk' is the way in which Amory deftly links bibliographical evidence with ethnography and social

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[43] Cf. E. L. Eisenstein, *The Printing-Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1979).

[44] H. Amory, 'The Trout and the Milk: An Ethnobibliographical Talk', *Harvard Library Bulletin*, NS 7 (1996), 50–65.

[45] See, in particular, A. Petrucci, *Writing the Dead: Death and Writing Strategies in the Western Tradition* (Stanford CA, 1998).

history, and demonstrates the connection between material evidence and broader social narratives. Bibliography and book history involve more than abstract narratives about books in society, and the history of reading: these are but aspects of the discipline that take their life from the artefacts and documents that bear witness to how they have been made and used.

Randall McLeod, in particular, has been interested in the ways in which books and manuscripts contain signs that are other than the text, or that are not immediately visible to the eye.[46] One article, 'Obliterature' recovers a text of Donne's 'To His Mistress Going to Bed' that has been painted over with an ink wash to suppress it. Another article, 'Where Angels Fear to Read', investigates the use of load-bearing type in the first edition of Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (Venice, 1528). McLeod is able to map patterns within the production process from the blind impressions left by type that had been used to stabilize the forme during the impression of the sheet. The reason for the use of load-bearing type might be technical, but what the article demonstrates, in a rather charming way, is that there is more than one possible 'reading' of the physical book as he explores that other narrative about its production processes.

When a book or manuscript, as sometimes happens, is only regarded as a 'text', it can sometimes be forgotten, or at least overlooked that, as objects, books exist in time, in relation to one another, and that their parts exist in relation to their whole. Thus, the bibliographical study of printed and manuscript materials cannot be separated from the history of their creation and use. Any narrative that fails to recognize this complexity, the variety of such relationships, the instabilities of texts, and the differences between artefacts as witnesses to the history of a work or text, will fail to recognize the communicative power of books and manuscripts (rather than words) as witnesses to the past.

The failure to appreciate the significance of books as artefacts is not only an intellectual problem. The fact that they have a history that is separate to their texts has been ignored and this has led to the destruction of material evidence as bindings have been replaced, sammelbände broken up, and manuscript annotations washed away. Further, modern library management (looking for economies where they do not exist) has misunderstood the nature and limitations of new digital resources, often

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[46] For instance, some recent articles include: R. McLeod, 'Altvm Sapere: Parole d'homme et verbe divin: Les chronologies de la Bible hébraïque in-quarto de Robert Estienne', in B. E. Schwarzbach (ed.), *La Bible imprimée dans l'Europe moderne* (Paris, 1999), 83–141; 'Where Angels Fear to Read', in J. Bray, M. Handley, and A. C. Henry (eds.), *Ma'king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page* (Aldershot, 2000), 144–92; 'Obliterature', *English Manuscript Studies*, 12 (2005), 83–138.

to the detriment of the collections in their care. At the heart of this mis-management is the idea that a book is but a text; which is, as if to say, that a Greek vase is the decoration and not the pot, or that a painting is but the image. No art gallery would destroy a Titian because they could preserve a digital image of it on the wall, but that is precisely what librarians have done with some of the materials in their care, especially newspapers.[47]

If librarians and scholars have employed a simplified notion of 'text' that separates words from their material record, and manuscript from print, then it is not surprising that the definition of the text has continued to be closely aligned with concepts of authorship rather than with the history of the documents that preserve them. It is, for instance, comparatively rare for library catalogues to identify printed books with significant manuscript marginalia, and thus identify texts with visible traces of having been read.[48] Books of this kind are not only authorial texts, but complex records of how these texts have been used in society; cumulatively, that information can be highly revealing—a study of multiple copies of the Estienne Aeschylus (Paris, 1557), for instance, would demonstrate an extensive history of annotation, and scholarship.[49]

If marginalia represent one aspect of bibliographical information that extends the potential complexity of documents, then the work of such scholars as Mirjam Foot reveals that bindings are not absolutely dead things either. They serve not only as indices of taste, but had commercial imperatives, and in their differences they serve as social and personal witnesses to the history and uses of a text.[50] Gift bindings, in particular, are an expression of patronage relationships and friendships that are signified through their choice of material and decorative embellishment: they range from simple gilt vellum to elaborately worked finishes.

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[47] In particular, see N. Baker, *Double Fold: Libraries and the Assault on Paper* (New York, 2001); also, M. B. Bland, 'Memory—Witness—Use: Books and the Circulation of Learning', *Turnbull Library Record*, 33 (2000), 11–34; McKenzie, 'Our Textual Definition of the Future', 276–81; McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 17–21. It may be objected that Greek vases are works of art, and newspapers are not; however, most vases and cups were not conceived as works of art but to serve specific social purposes, whilst often newspapers were published with more literary care than many other ephemeral texts.

[48] The Adv. shelfmark at Cambridge identifies books with marginalia, but is not inclusive; at Oxford, the Auct. shelfmark (opened in 1789 and closed in 1940) includes incunabula, *editio princeps*, and other volumes with significant scholarly marginalia. More recently, Bernard Rosenthal gave the Beinecke Library at Yale a collection of early printed books with extensive marginalia: see B. M. Rosenthal, *The Rosenthal Collection of Printed Books with Manuscript Annotations* (New Haven CT, 1997).

[49] Such observations are not exclusive to the Aeschylus, although the Estienne edition is a useful example of a history of annotation that is largely overlooked by both classicists and early modern scholars.

[50] For instance, M. M. Foot, *Bookbinders at Work: Their Roles and Methods* (London, 2006).

Binding, like engraved illustration, and the typographic layout of the page, involves aesthetic and practical decisions that made Greg distinctly uncomfortable: hence his impulse to separate the language and grammar of a text from its formal structures. What Greg got right was his insistence that the processes of transmission and production could be interrogated for what they revealed about the history of a document; what he failed to recognize was that the criteria that shaped these narratives were always as much aesthetic as textual. Writers, editors, printers, and scribes balance considerations of materials, appearance, price, and use, to appeal to their customers, employers, or readers. The problem was that Greg overstated his case because the implicit target of his criticism was the literary scholar and aesthete George Saintsbury, who selected his 'copy-texts' according to what pleased him without regard to the history of the documents.[51] Greg, on the other hand, wanted some logical rigour brought to the methodology of bibliography and textual criticism. Thus, viewing aesthetics as subjective, rather than as an integral aspect of composition and production, he rejected Housman's view of aesthetic discrimination in the resolution of textual cruces as 'meta-critical' and so exposed himself to later criticisms that he did not anticipate.[52] As McKitterick comments:

> Greg's own primary interests, and his failure to recognise the potential interpretative energy inherent in a more generous view of bibliography, have proved to be more influential than his almost incidental ignorance of later manuscripts or engraved illustration.[53]

Greg's interests inevitably drove later discussions of the discipline, so it is worth recalling that he 'would have our studies be catholic', just as McKenzie would have them be 'secular'.[54] This book starts from the point of view that all aspects of a text and its material forms are germane to understanding its history, and that an understanding of aesthetics, and its relationship with the technical limitations of textual production as well as commercial imperatives, is inseparable from that historical process of analysis. Aesthetics exists in the design of books, just as taste does in the consumption of them: the making of meaning is never static.

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[51] 'Bibliography—An Apologia' was delivered in March 1932, and published in *The Library* that September. Saintsbury died in January 1933: *Oxford D. N. B.*, 48, 669–71. In targeting Housman, a much greater scholar, Greg could avoid criticizing a revered and elderly man. See also, Saintsbury's *Minor Caroline Poets*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1925).
[52] Greg, 'Bibliography—An Apologia', 253.
[53] McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*, 78.
[54] Greg, 'Bibliography—An Apologia', 244; McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 28.

Aesthetics tells us that not all editions of printed texts are 'ideal' and that the idea that any are is deeply suspect. Aesthetics instructs editors that they have a duty of care in establishing the relationships between different kinds of evidence and how they seek to reconcile the issues that documents and their contexts create: every decision is a kind of epitaph. Aesthetics alerts us to the significance of meta-textual detail, including paper, script or type, and bindings, and its relationship to the meaning of a document, as well as its history and use. Aesthetics exposes the tension between the limitations of technology and commerce, both then and now, and the complexity of the evidence that survives. What is so dangerous about Greg's denial of the role of aesthetics in the historical analysis of these objects and their texts is the dissociation of sensibility it involves. Those who came after Greg, charged with a new discourse and sometimes a lack of intellectual rigour, made that denial a commonplace of literary scholarship; yet without an understanding of the role of aesthetics in the making of these materials, we know not what we do.

When we take a book in hand, we feel its weight, look at the binding and the type, note the texture of the paper, smell its age, perhaps hunger to read it, all before we hear or read the text on the page. 'Some *Bookes*', wrote Bacon, 'are to be Tasted, Others to be Swallowed, and Some Few to be Chewed and Digested.'[55] What was read was also written, and not always set in type. Savile, in print, called it 'this scribbling age'; Daniel remarked on 'the presse of writings'; Selden wrote of what 'speaks in Print'; and Florio 'could not chuse but apply my self in some sort to the season'.[56] All experienced a world of books, tracts, and documents, manuscript and printed, not as an abstract *culture*, but as a physical and historical fact that impelled them to engage with its almost oppressive diversity and indiscriminate prolixity. Milton, privileging the author, remarked that 'books are not absolutely dead things'; yet imagine a library where every book is not 'a dead thing', but rather its own true witness, archivist, and reporter of its history: the rest is silence.

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[55] F. Bacon, 'Of Studies', *The Essayes or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, ed. M. Kiernan (Oxford, 1985), 153.
[56] H. Savile, *The ende of Nero and beginning of Galba* (STC 23642, 1591), ¶2ʳ; M. de Montaigne, *Essayes*, trans. J. Florio (STC 18041, 1603), ¶1ʳ; J Selden, *Titles of honor*, STC 22177, 1614, a2ᵛ–a3ʳ; J. Florio, *Florios second frvtes* (STC 11097, 1591), A2ʳ⁻ᵛ.