

## Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio: A Revolution in Print<sup>1</sup>?

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The book we call the "First Folio" is not by Shakespeare. Published in 1623 by Isaac Jaggard and Edward Blount seven years after Shakespeare's death, *Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* is, according to John Heminge and Henrie Condell, Shakespeare's "owne writings... collected and published" by "his Friends"<sup>2</sup>. In their preface to the First Folio, "To the great Variety of Readers", Heminge and Condell assert that: "the Author's...diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies, maimed, and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters" are now, in the 1623 folio, "offered to...view...cur'd, and perfect of their limbes"<sup>3</sup>. The defaced copies of the author's works, with which the public had been "abus'd" have now been "cur'd"; in the folio volume they are presented as *whole* and "perfect". Those writings which had *not* been pirated or circulated in various unauthorized versions ("all the rest") are included exactly as Shakespeare had written them: "absolute in their numbers, as he conceived them"<sup>4</sup>.

The language used in the preface is strong. It conjures up an image of justice rendered to an innocent victim of imposters and thieves. It conjures up as well images of disease, deformity and handicap in relation to textual problems and the power of an editor to cure these maladies. Heminge and Condell tell their "great Variety of Readers":

It had bene a thing, we confesse, worthie to have bene wished, that the Author himselfe had liv'd to have set forth, and overseen his owne writings; But since it hath bin ordain'd otherwise, and he by death departed from that right, we pray you do not envie his Friends, the office of their care, and paine, to have collected & publish'd them.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is based on a talk given at the seminar *Renaissance*, Paris III - Sorbonne Nouvelle on December 3, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> John Heminge and Henrie Condell, "To the great Variety of Readers" in *Mr. William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies. Published according to the True Originall Copies*, London, 1623, sig. A3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, sig. A3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, sig. A3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, sig. A3.

The author's "right" to set forth and oversee his own writings is here assumed to be *natural* and "worthie to have bene wished". The editors imply that only "death" prevented the author from doing so himself. They also imply, obliquely, that the author has thus legally given up this natural right ("by death departed from that right"). The author's death leaves a space for others, "his Friends", rather than legal inheritors, to engage themselves on his behalf, but also, conversely, to anoint themselves *ad hoc* executors of his literary estate. The question as to whether Shakespeare had indeed considered collecting and publishing his own works in folio is an open one. Lukas Erne has argued that Shakespeare wrote for readers as well as for spectators, but whether Shakespeare was planning to publish his works in folio is unknowable<sup>6</sup>. It was Ben Jonson who first published his dramatic works together with his poetry in a folio volume. Furthermore, he did so within his own lifetime, conscientiously overseeing its production at the Stansby press with an astonishing meticulousness. Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio is *the* precedent for Shakespeare's 1623 Folio and the ancestor of Beaumont and Fletcher's magisterial 1647 Folio. Heminge and Condell implicitly refer to Jonson's 1616 Folio in imagining that, had *their* "Author" lived, he would have "set forth and overseen his owne writings", like a second Jonson. It seems that, as the First Folio was modeled on his 1616 Folio, it was Jonson who was asked to lend his book-making hand by writing two poems for the volume. In "To the Reader", printed opposite the portrait of Shakespeare in *William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, and signed "B.I.", Jonson urges the "Reader" to "looke / Not on his Picture, but his Booke". In his dedicatory poem, "To the memory of my beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare: and what he hath left us", he repeatedly underlines the importance of the book: "To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name / Am I thus ample to thy Booke, and Fame" (lines 1-2); "Thou art a Monument, without a tombe, / And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live" (lines 22-23); "...cheere the drooping Stage; / which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night, / And despaire day, but for thy Volumes light" (lines 78-80)<sup>7</sup>. One could argue that it is Jonson's repeated references to Shakespeare's book which first give the folio a kind of authority and solidity as a whole, a whole that everyone at the time was aware he had imposed upon his own *Workes* while Shakespeare had not.

## I

Jonson's publication of *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* in folio in 1616 marked not only a key moment in the career of the writer, but also a watershed in the history of print culture. His was not the first folio edition of a living poet's works to be published in England – Samuel Daniel's *Works* were published in

<sup>6</sup> Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Ben Jonson, "To the memory of my beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare", *Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, sig. A[4]

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1601– but it is significant that Daniel's volume included his "epic" *Civill Wars*, a number of long poems, a "Letter from Octavia to Marcus Antonius", only one "play", *The Tragedie of Cleopatra*, and certainly none of his masques. For the Elizabethans, plays were not literature in the sense that poetry was. A new generation of writers for pay was emerging at the end of the Elizabethan era and their plays were available in quarto and octavo forms and even court masques were published in small formats. The idea of a folio volume, however, still upheld the traditional barrier between "plays" and "poems"; a folio was reserved for serious literature: namely epic and poetry and serious readers, possessors of libraries and reading lecterns. Folios were large, unwieldy, expensive and luxurious. They were destined for aristocrats, the rich, the learned; smaller formats were akin to pamphlets: cheap, easily available and widely disseminated. Daniel's folio, then, adhered, for the most part, to the normative notion of what a folio ought to consist of. What made Jonson's 1616 Folio 'revolutionary' was its implicit assertion that everything the author wrote, including plays and masques, were worthy of publication as *opera*. In other words, Jonson seems to have perceived the folio format as an extension of the author, rather than the natural habitat for certain elite genres. The only folio collections of plays, at the time, were those of *classical* playwrights such as Plautus, Terence or Aristophanes. According to Mark Bland, it seems likely that Jonson and his publisher William Stansby looked to sixteenth-century continental editions of Plautus and other classical works as models for the creation of their folio volume<sup>8</sup>. The 1583 Paris edition of Plautus is very much like the books that Jonson himself is known to have owned and *The Workes* reproduces the layout of editions such as these. Jonson's decision to produce a folio, like Daniel's was, of course, a gesture signifying a certain literary ambition: a desire not only to imitate the ancients in their fame but also the "great" English poets who had been recently converted into "ancient" authorities themselves. Thomas Speght's edition of *The Workes* of Chaucer was published in 1598 in a handsome folio edition, with ornamental title-page, dedication, and prefatory matter, the combined intention of which was to place Chaucer among the foremost classical and European poets<sup>9</sup>. In 1609, Mathew Lownes brought out the first folio edition of *The Faerie Queene*, reissuing it in 1611 in an enlarged folio also containing, according to the title, "*the Other works of England's Arch-poët, Edm. Spenser; collected into one volume, and carefully corrected*"<sup>10</sup>.

Jonson therefore dared to publish his plays and masques in folio, a format up to that point very much reserved for certain genres and *dead* authors, who had

<sup>8</sup> Mark Bland, "William Stansby and the Production of *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson, 1615-16*", in *The Library*, 20, March 1998.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Speght, *The Workes of our Antient and lerned English Poet, Geffrey Chaucer*, London, 1598.

<sup>10</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene Disposed into XII. Bookes, Fashioning Twelve Morall Vertues*, London, 1609; *The Faerie Queen: The Shepherds Calendar: Together with the Other Works of England's Arch-Poët*, London, 1611.

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been acknowledged by posterity, not by themselves, as "great". In producing the 1616 Folio, Jonson was therefore "engaged in an undertaking unprecedented in the world of contemporary drama"<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, publishing himself meant the publication of a number of Jacobean court masques, a highly collaborative genre, as his *own* work, a point to which I shall return. It might be said that Jonson created a new paradigm within his own epoch in giving a play or masque the same status as "poetry"<sup>12</sup>. For these reasons, Jonson has become a central figure in what Joseph Loewenstein has called the "prehistory of copyright"<sup>13</sup>. The Folio and its publication, nearly a century before the first copyright law was passed in England (in 1709), raises a number of issues surrounding intellectual property, ownership, authorship, collaboration and early-modern print culture<sup>14</sup>. As Douglas A. Brooks has remarked:

For many scholars, Jonson's folio stands as a singular achievement of emergent authorial awareness [...]. Joseph Loewenstein asserts that "the 1616 folio marks a major event in the history of what one might call the bibliographic ego." Richard C. Newton singles out Jonson as the poet/author who "in an important sense 'invents' (discovers) the printed book by using the book to distinguish what is his." For Harold Love, "in the 1616 folio [Jonson] produced one of the great typographical monuments of his age".<sup>15</sup>

Love's statement that the 1616 Folio is a "typographical monument" describes it as being like a Gutenberg Bible or Mercator's *Atlas*, representative of a moment in the history of the print. "Monument" is often used by scholars when

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<sup>11</sup> Margery Corbett and Ronald Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-Page in England 1550-1660*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979, p. 150.

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly enough, for Jonson the terms "poet" and "poetry" describe a particularly wide range of genres, precisely, perhaps, to justify printing *ephemera* such as plays and masques in a folio volume, normally reserved for poetry. In *Timber, or Discoveries*, he writes: "hee is call'd a *Poet*, not hee which writeth in measure only; but that fayneth and formeth a fable, and writes things like the Truth. For, the Fable and Fiction is (as it were) the forme and Soule of any Poeticall worke, or *Poeme*." In *Ben Jonson*, C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (eds.), 11 vols., Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1925-1952) vol. VIII, p. 635 (lines 2351-55). All references to Jonson's works will be from this edition with volume, page and line numbers when necessary.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and the Prehistory of Copyright*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002. "The narrative of Jonson's career in England's public and published sphere is a constant scramble for vantage, from theater to press, from theater to banqueting house, from banqueting house to press, from quarto to folio – all of which can be described as a constant flight from publicity to privacy... Jonson's obsessive and various self-display is a revealing historical phenomenon... he yearned to control his own reception; as a result his writing and his behavior register crucial adjustments in the economic and cultural organization of intellectual property" (p. 93-94).

<sup>14</sup> See *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (eds.), Newark, University of Delaware Press, 1991; Richard Dutton, *Ben Jonson: To the First Folio*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas A. Brooks, *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 139.

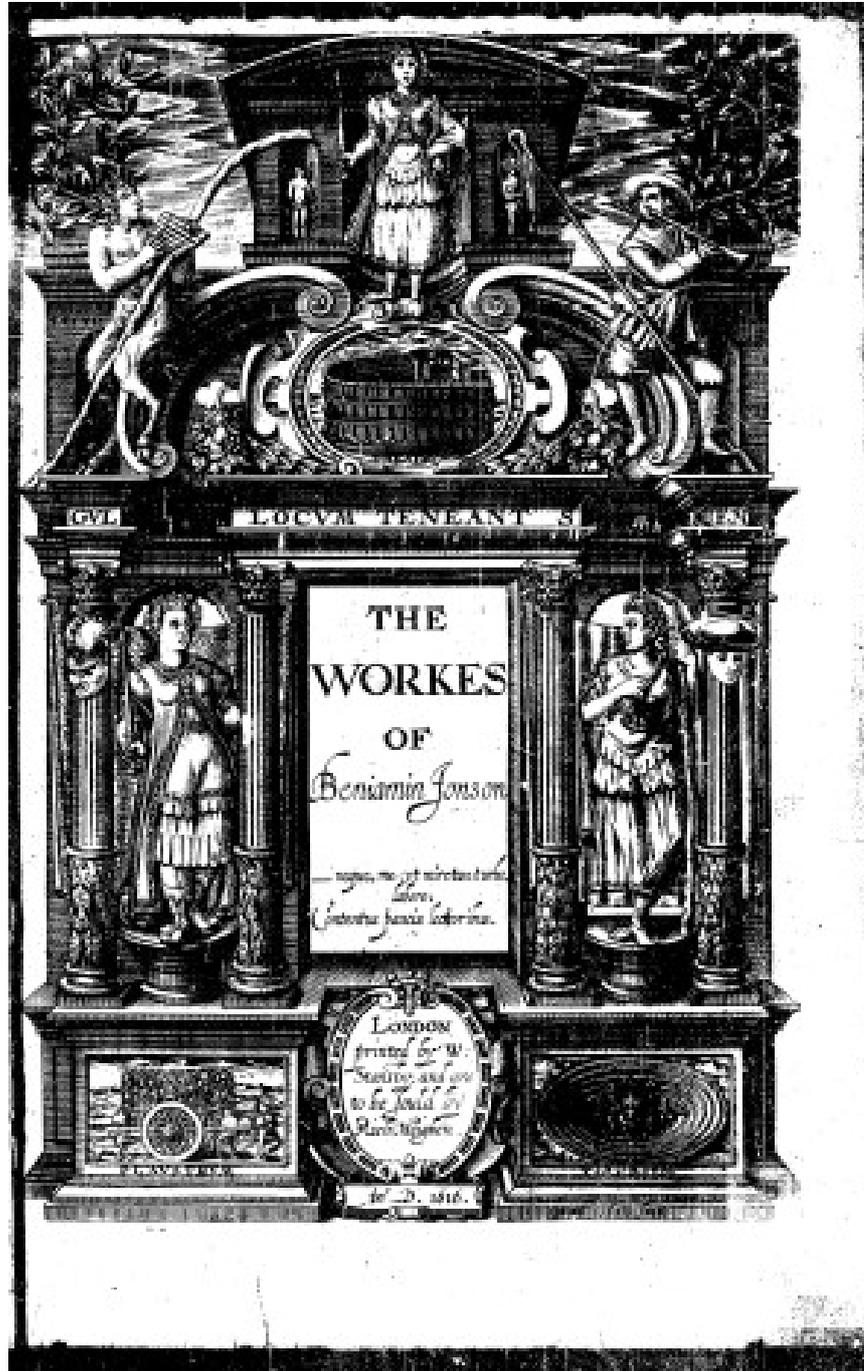
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evaluating and considering Jonson's folio. One does not need to look too far to find the reason. According to the authors of *The Comely Frontispiece*, many of the elements featured in the title-page of Jonson's Folio visually suggest that its author intended the book be seen as a monument or as monumental:

The presence of the obelisks, which are monuments, and the laurels, the traditional crown of the poet, is surely to signify the author's desire that the folio may bring him a poet's immortality. The pictures of the ancient theatre and the sentences from Horace proclaim the allegiance to the revered models and precepts of the classical drama and classical poetry by which his works, too learned for the vulgar, have deserved eternal fame.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Corbett and Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece*, p. 150.



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Clearly, Jonson's "theater" is being given a particular cast; no longer a piece of contemporary entertainment, the frontispiece situates it within the ancient dramatic tradition.

Yet, the hubris of gathering one's theatrical production and placing it in a calf-bound mausoleum was too much for some of Jonson's contemporaries. Thomas Heywood alludes directly to Jonson's (and perhaps indirectly to Shakespeare's) folio in his address "To the Reader," prefixed to *The Fair Maid of the West* (1631), "Curteous Reader, my Plaies have not beene exposed to the publike view of the world in numerous sheets, and a large volume; but singly (as thou seest) with great modesty, and small noise"<sup>17</sup>. In a punning epigram an anonymous writer demands: "Pray tell me *Ben*, where doth the mistery lurke./ What others call a play you call a work"<sup>18</sup>. Richard Helgerson considers Thomas Dekker's condescending evaluation of Jonson's publication of his *Works*:

'True poets,' Dekker wrote, 'are with Art and Nature crowned.' It is the passive construction, the 'are... crowned,' that particularly condemns Jonson. Unlike Dekker, Jonson obtruded himself on his work, manifestly seeking to make it an index of his laureate standing. As Owen Felltham was to charge some thirty years later, Jonson could never 'forbear [his] crown / Till the world put it on'. What Dekker, Felltham, and Jonson's many other critics fail to acknowledge is that given the poetic forms available to his generation he could attain the laurel only by reaching for it.<sup>19</sup>

As Helgerson aptly notes, Jonson's choice of literary forms did not lend themselves to his becoming a "laureate" poet. As a writer for the public and private theater and for the court, Jonson may be said to have been denied the appropriate genres with which to fashion himself in the image of the authors of antiquity<sup>20</sup>. Theater and masques were not bound in calf-vellum for the ages. Jonson did not write an epic, for instance, or philosophy or divinity like James I, whose folio, coincidentally enough, was also published in 1616<sup>21</sup>. With the exception of his books of poetry, the bulk of what Jonson wrote may be summed up in the word, *ephemera*. The desire to imitate the ancients and even his British predecessors in their literary posterity led to an effort to transform the transitory into forms that possessed some kind of natural longevity. And this effort to change one species of writing into another finds its *last stage*, the final stage of transmutation, in its publication in folio. Rather than allowing his fame to gestate in the womb of time, as Dekker implies, Jonson used all the alchemy at his disposal to hasten the process

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West*, London, 1631, n.p.

<sup>18</sup> *Wit's Recreation* [1640], sig. G3v.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton and the Literary System*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983, p. 101.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.102-103.

<sup>21</sup> *The Workes of the Most High and Mightie Prince, James by the grace of God, King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland*, London, 1616.

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and induce the birth of his literary immortality within his own lifetime in order to leave as little as possible to the mercy of both contemporary and future readers' capriciousness.

## II

The 1616 Folio collected still unpublished material of Jonson's (such as a book of poetry, the *Epigrammes*, and *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman*) along with already published (in more popular forms) works together. The novelty of the 1616 Folio did *not* lie in the *printing* of plays or even masques. The novelty of the 1616 Folio, as hinted above, is Jonson's *redefinition* of a folio volume of *Workes* as a kind of sanctuary for the author's own, personal fame, a sanctuary he insisted on building for himself during his lifetime to protect his work against the fate of so many of Shakespeare's writings: the "frauds and stealthes of injurious imposters" and the deformation of ephemeral "copies", slipping from one hand to another, becoming lost, mangled and fragmented in the process.

To this end, Jonson clearly prepared a certain number of his works for their publication in the 1616 Folio. According to Richard Dutton, he first *selected* the pieces he intended to include and then *revised* parts of some of those pieces, such as the prologue to *Every Man In His Humour*, rewritten to emphasize its "clear ancestry in Roman comedy"<sup>22</sup>. For Dutton, the general principle behind Jonson's editing was "the promotion of the image of himself as a serious poet – something very different from a mere playwright"<sup>23</sup>. Helen Ostovich also argues that Jonson regularized *Every Man Out of His Humour* for inclusion in the Folio: "replacing its fluent and rhythmical stagecraft with a scenic structure that was more literary, controlled and fragmented. He thereby changed it from a play for *performing* to a text for *reading*" (my emphasis)<sup>24</sup>. The print medium served Jonson to reinscribe the performance into the text itself, dictating, through typography and print, the gestures and even the delivery of lines. This, however, does not necessarily mean that Jonson is a poet of the stage and not the page; rather, it shows the paradoxical perhaps, but completely compatible, use of the "page" to create a "stage". Considering the revisions and thoughtful reorganisation of the body of his work, we might very well see in the 1616 Folio an early example of what Thomas Tanselle describes as the author's "*new intentions*" as opposed to his "*final intentions*"<sup>25</sup>. These *new intentions*, while particularly visible in a large folio

<sup>22</sup> Richard Dutton, *Ben Jonson: To the First Folio*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Helen Ostovich, "'To Behold the Scene Full': Seeing and Judging in *Every Man Out of His Humour*", in *Re-presenting Ben Jonson: Text, History, Performance*, Martin Butler (ed.), Houndsmills, Macmillan, 1999, p. 76-92. I quote from Martin Butler's summary of Ostovich's argument in the introduction to the volume, "From *Workes* to Texts", p. 8.

<sup>25</sup> Tanselle, G. T., "The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention", *Studies in Bibliography*, 29,

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volume, represent, nevertheless, the *last* stage in Jonson's engagement with future readers beginning, in many cases, long before a work's inclusion in the 1616 Folio.

One particularly revealing aspect of Jonson's engagement with posterity was his printing in quarto and subsequent inclusion in the folio of a number of works which were originally not strictly his own. How a collaborative play or masque becomes the work of the "Author, B. I." opens us up to the way an author defined his property and that of others before the institution of copyright laws. Both playwriting and masque writing were, in the early modern period, extremely collaborative forms. In his preface, "To the Reader", in *Sejanus* (1605), first published in quarto and later included, with only minor changes, in the folio version, Jonson addresses the reader:

Lastly I would informe you, that this Booke, in all numbers, is not the same with that which was acted on the publike Stage, wherein a second Pen had good share : in place of which I have rather chosen, to put weaker (and no doubt lesse pleasing) of mine own, than to defraud so happy a *Genius* of his right, by my lothed usurpation.<sup>26</sup>

The *new* version of *Sejanus* is not that acted on the stage. It is a different work, one written by one "Pen" rather than two. We can never know the extent or the nature of the changes to *Sejanus*. We are simply assured, by one of the authors, that he has replaced the work of his partner with his own "weaker" pen so as not to be accused of "usurpation" in publishing the work under his name only. The weight of this preface to the reader is all the greater when the formerly collaborative play is subsequently included in a folio version of *one* author's work.

The court masques present the self-styled author with a problem not only of one other 'Pen', as in *Sejanus*, but of a whole group of people working together on a particularly expensive and complex artistic project financed by the court. Jonson wrote thirty-six masques and entertainments and they represent a large percentage of his total output. His interest in printing them for posterity, as his own work, on the same level with his poems and plays, was therefore considerable. In order to do this, however, he had effectively to appropriate and convert what was a spectacle of song, dance and stage sets into a printed text. In *Hymenaei* (1606), he justifies his lengthy descriptions of what passed on stage by focusing on the ephemerality of the work of his collaborators. He places himself, as writer, in the position of being the sole means by which the reader might have access to a masque he has not seen:

Nor was there wanting whatsoever might give to the furniture, or complement; eyther in riches, or strangeness of the habites, delicacie of daunces, magnificence

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<sup>26</sup> Ben Jonson, *Sejanus, His Fall*, Herford and Simpson, vol. IV, p. 351.

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of the scene, or divine rapture of musique. Onely the envie was, that it lasted not still, or (now it is past) cannot by imagination, much lesse description, be recoverd to a part of that spirit it had in the gliding by. Yet, that I may not utterly defraud the Reader of his hope, I am drawne to give it those brief touches, which may leave behind some shadow of what it was.<sup>27</sup>

As in the preface to the reader of *Sejanus*, Jonson focuses on the superlative nature of those parts of an original *performance* of which the reader has been (and forever will be) deprived: whether it is the genius of the second "Pen" or the "divine rapture" of the arts of his various collaborators of the masque. What takes their place is the writer's own description ("brief touches") of the costumes, the scenery and even the dances. The writer becomes a kind of an eye-witness spectator of his collaborators' work. In describing what they had created, the writer expands his own text. Moreover, he inflates his own (literary) contribution to the masque by adding personal asides and filling up the margins with copious notes, which often referred his reader to ancient and contemporary sources concerning the plot and characters of the masque. In *Sejanus*, the writer is concerned with not *defrauding* his former collaborator by calling their joint work his own. In the masque of *Hymenaei*, he does not want to *defraud* the reader the chance to "see" a 'shadow' of what passed on stage<sup>28</sup>. In either case, the seemingly altruistic concern *not to defraud* either a collaborator or the reader paradoxically serves the writer in his effort to effectively cannibalize the collaborative effort of the many for the posterity and greater fame of the one.

If we compare a page from Samuel Daniels' published version, in quarto, of *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* and a page from Jonson's *The Masque of Queenes* (either from the quarto or the folio) we see an enormous difference in the way the two contemporaries conceived of the purpose of printing a masque. Daniel's *descrizione* becomes, in Jonson's hands, a veritable philological disquisition, encyclopedia and historical treatise. The printed masque in Jonson, furthermore, is the site of a (new) *stage* for the performance of authorial erudition and inventiveness, rather than the celebration of an aristocrat or a royal or the wonder inspiring masque sets, stage machinery or costumes. In *The Haddington Masque* we can see such an example of this staging of the "Author" in place of the spectacle.

<sup>27</sup> Ben Jonson, *Hymenaei*, Herford and Simpson, vol. VII, p. 229 (lines 572-582).

<sup>28</sup> On 5 January 1606. *Hymenaei* was a masque in honour of the wedding of the Earl of Essex with Lady Frances Howard.

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942 *Masques*

b Ferrum exar-  
cebat vasto  
Cyclopes in an-  
tro, Brontesq; Steropisq; & nudus membra Pyracmon, &c.

VVL CAN.

Sing then yee priests.

PYRACMON.

— Stay VVL CAN, shall not these

Come forth and daunce?

VVL CAN.

c As when Hom. Iliad. 2 makes  
Ybetis for her sonne Achilles,  
to visite Vulcan's houſe, he ſaies  
that Vulcan had made twenty  
Tripodes or Stools with golden wheels, to mouoe of themſelues, miraculouſly, and goe out, and returne ſuly. To  
which, the inuention of our daunce alludes, & is in the Poet a moſt elegant place, and worthy the remembrance.

Yes, my Pyracmon, pleaſe  
The eyes of theſe ſpectators, with our art.

PYRACMON.

COME here then, BRONTES, beare a CYCLOPS part;  
And STEROPES, both with your sledges ſtand,  
And ſtrike a time vnto them as they land;  
And as they forwards come, ſtill guide their paces  
In muſical, and ſweet proportion'd graces;  
While I vpon the worke, and frame attend,  
And HYMENS prieſts forth, at their ſeaſons, ſend  
To chaunt their hymnes; and make this ſquare admire  
Our great artiſier, the god of fire.

*Here, the muſicians attir'd in yellow, with wreathes of marioram, and veiles, like HYMENS prieſts, ſung the firſt ſtaffe of the following Epithalamion: which, becauſe it was ſung in pieces, betwene the daunces, ſhew'd to be ſo many ſeueral ſongs; but was made to be read an intire Poeme. After the ſong, they came forth (deſcending in an oblique motion) from the Zodiack, and daunc'd their firſt daunce; Then, muſique interpos'd (but varied with voyces, onely keeping the ſame Chorus); they daunc'd their ſecond daunce. So after, their third, and fourth daunces; which were all full of elegancy, and curious demice. The two latter were made by M. T H O. G I L E S, the two firſt by M. H I E. H E R N E: who, in the perſons of the two Cyclopes, beat a time to them, with their hammers. The tunes were M. A L P H O N S O F E R R A R O S C O's. The deuice and all of the ſcene, M. Y N I G O I O N I S b i u, with addition of the Trophizes. For the inuention of the whole and the verſes, Aſſertor qui dicat eſſe meos, Imponet plagiaro pudorem.*

*The attire of the maſquers, throughout, was moſt gracefull, and nobles; partaking of the beſt both ancient and later figure. The colours carnation, and liluer, enrich'd both with embroidery, and lace. The dreſſing of their heads; feathers, and jewels; and ſo excellently order'd, to the reſt of the habite, as all would ſuffer vnder*

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*der any deſcription, after the ſhow. Their performance of all ſo magnificent, & illuſtrous, that nothing can adde to the ſcale of it, but the ſubſcription of their names.*

The Duke of LENOX. Earle of ARVNDELL. Ear. of PEMBROKE. Ear. of MONTGOMERY. Lo. D'AVBIGNY.	Lo. of WALDEN. Lo. HAY. Lo. SANKRE. Sir. Ro. RICH. Sir. Io. KENNETHIE. Mr. ERSSKINS.
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EPITHALAMION.

V P youthes and virgins, vp, and praife  
The god, whoſe nights out-ſhine his daies;  
HYMEN, whoſe hallow'd rites  
Could neuer boaſt of brighter lights:  
Whoſe bands paſſe libertee.  
Two of your troope, that, with the morne were free,  
Are, now, wag'd to his warre.  
And what they art,  
If you'll perfection ſee,  
Your felues muſt be.  
Shine HESPERVS, ſhine forth, thou wiſhed ſtarre.

What ioy, or honors can compare  
With holy nuptials, when they are  
Made out of equall parts  
Of yeeres, of ſtates, of hands, of hearts?  
When, in the happy choyce,  
The ſpouſe, and ſpouſed haue the formeſt voyce!  
Such, glad of HYMENS warre;  
Liue what they are,  
And long perfection ſee:  
And ſuch ours bee,  
Shine HESPERVS, ſhine forth thou wiſhed ſtarre.

The ſolemne ſtate of this one night  
Were fit to laſt an ages light;  
But there are rites behind  
Haue leſſe of ſtate, but more of kind:  
Loves wealthy cropps of kiſſes,  
And fruitfull harueſt of his mothers bliſſes.  
Sound then to HYMENS warre:  
That what theſe are,  
Who will perfection ſee,  
May haſte to bee.  
Shine HESPERVS, ſhine forth thou wiſhed ſtarre.

*Louis*

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The "priests of Hymen" (as this is a wedding masque) are called forth by the masque character, Vulcan, to "sing"<sup>29</sup>. Pyracmon, "one of the Cyclops" (lines 17-18), wonders aloud if the priests will not dance as well: "Stay, Vulcan, shall not these / Come foorth and daunce?" (lines 323-24) to which Vulcan responds: "Yes, my Pyracmon, please / The eyes of these spectators, with<sup>e</sup> our art" (lines 326-27). At this point in the text, at precisely the moment when the dancers would have begun to dance in the historical masque, the reader of the masque text is referred to the marginal note "c" in which Jonson describes a spectacle out of Homer's *Iliad* :

As when Hom. *Iliad* makes *Thetis*, for her sonne *Achilles*, to visit *Vulcans* house, he fains that *Vulcan* had made twenty *Tripodes* or stooles with golden wheeles, to moove of themselves, miraculously, and goe out, and returne fitly. To which, the invention of our daunce alludes, & is in the *Poet* a most elegant place, and worthy the tenth reading. (note "c", line 327)

This marginal note reveals an aspect of Jonson's method of appropriation. First, the poet has not hesitated to use "our" to describe the dance, presumably created by the choreographers, Thomas Giles and Heironimo Herne. Second, he locates the origin of the masque staging in a book written by "the *Poet*", Homer. The spectacle, in other words, is inspired by the book and, for the reader deprived of the actual spectacle, the writer suggests returning to the book, and again and again, to read, as it were, the dance in the ancient text. The irony is, of course, that it is only in a *book* that the dance can ever be found again. While the early modern author suggests a return to the Homeric text, the implicit suggestion is that Jonson's text is equally worthy of being read and reread, since it is *his* description of the masque spectacle that is all that remains of it. Furthermore, we might take the authorial claim that "our daunce" alludes to Homer, with a grain of salt. Did Giles and Herne really have a passage from Homer in mind when creating their dance? Or, rather, is it the writer, who as part of the appropriation of his collaborators' work, informs posterity of the source of the choreographers' invention when it might very well simply be the writer's own version? A version, which, as we have seen, happily links the early modern poet with "the *Poet*", Homer.

At one point in *The Haddington Masque*, Jonson refers to his collaborators directly by name and actively acknowledges their independent contributions to the masque in performance. After describing the costumes of the musicians ("attir'd in yellow, with wreathes of marioram," lines 338-39) the music ("varied with voyces," line 345), and the dances ("full of elegancy, and curious device," lines 347-48), Jonson gives each of his collaborators their due:

The two latter [dances] were made by M. THO. GILES, the the two first by M. HIE. HERNE : who, in the persons of the two *Cyclopes*, beat a time to them, with their

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<sup>29</sup> *The Haddington Masque* celebrated the nuptials of Lord Ramsey, Viscount Haddington and Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe, daughter of Robert, Earl of Sussex.

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hammers. The tunes were M. ALPHONSO FERRABOSCO'S. The device and act of the scene, M. YNIGO IONES his, with addition of the Trophaees. For the invention of the whole and the verses, *Assertor qui dicat esse meos, Imponet plagiaro pudorem.* (lines 348-355)

In contrast to the occultation of the collaborators in *Sejanus* and *Hymenaei*, Jonson here finds a place for the names of his collaborators in his text, just before the list of the names of the aristocrats who danced in the masque. Jonson gives credit to each of the artists for their parts. Yet, he gives himself the lion's share : "the invention of the whole", as well as the "verses". This notion of "the invention of the whole", or the governing "conceit" of the masque would become the key bone of contention between himself and Inigo Jones, who eventually would claim for *himself*, as "designer", the *disegno* of the whole, which amounted to the same thing as Jonson claimed for himself in the word *invention*. The seeds of the famous "Quarrel" between the poet and the architect were being sown in such comments in the middle of the published masques – masques subsequently included in the writer's folio volume. The ethical problem raised by the implication that the writer is author of the *whole*, while the choreographer, architect and musician are authors only of *parts*<sup>30</sup>, leads Jonson to follow up his claim to "the invention of the whole and the verses" with a Latin citation: "[A]ssertor qui dicas esse meos, Imponet plagiaro pudorem," ("May he take up their claim who says they are mine, and make the kidnapper (*plagiaro*) ashamed of himself"). This sudden appearance of a Latin justification at the end of the delicate apportioning of each artist's contribution to the masque is worth a closer look.

The Latin citation is a loose rewriting of the last line of Epigram 52 in Book I of Martial's *Epigrams*, in which the poet addresses one Quintianus:

Quintianus, I commend you my little books – that is if I can call them mine when your poet friend recites them. If they [Martial's little books] complain of harsh enslavement, come forward to claim their freedom and give bail as required. And when he calls himself their owner, say they are mine, discharged from my hand. If you shout this three or four times, you will make the kidnapper (*plagiaro*) ashamed of himself.<sup>31</sup>

In Epigram 52, Martial likens his poetry to a slave that has been given its

<sup>30</sup> And 'bit' parts at that, for Jonson does not hesitate to note that both choreographers played *Cyclopes* on stage in order to direct the dancers. It seems, furthermore, that one of the choreographers may have been "Pyracmon" who, like all the Cyclopes, serves and takes his orders from the master forger, Vulcan.

<sup>31</sup> "Commendo tibi, Quintiane, nostros – / nostros dicere si tamen libellos / possum, quos recitat tuus poeta: / si de servitio gravi queruntur, / assertos venias satsique praestes, / et, cum se dominum vocabit ille, / dicas esse meos manumque missos. / hoc si terque quaterque clamitaris, / impones plagiaro pudorem." *In Martial: Epigrams*, D. R. Shackleton Bailey, (trans. and ed.), *The Loeb Classical Library*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 79-81.

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freedom: "'To send forth from the hand' was to make free a slave"<sup>32</sup>. Yet, this freed slave, or book exposed to the public, might require protection by another who will defend him against possible 'kidnapping' or plagiarism. Martial tells Quintianus that *he* must be an *assertor* who takes up the poet's verses' claim; it is up to Quintianus to shout and make the plagiarist known to the public. The concept of an "Assertor", which Jonson takes from Martial, was a part of Roman law:

ASSERTOR, or ADSERTOR, contains the same root as the verb *adserere*, which, when coupled with the word *manu*, signifies to lay hold of a thing, to draw it towards one. Hence the phrase *adserere in libertatem*, or *liberali adserere manu*, applies to him who lays his hand on a person reputed to be a slave, and asserts, or maintains his freedom. The person who thus maintained the freedom of a reputed slave was called *adsertor*.<sup>33</sup>

In demanding an "Assertor", or defender, for his part of the masque, Jonson is clearly alluding to the Roman custom regarding manumitted slaves. Jonson, however, does not specify any individual as Martial does. He leaves the role of *assertor* to *whomever* will recognize the writer's right to claim the invention and verses for himself. The fact that the writer has published his writings in a folio volume, with justifications and explanations, means that the work of the *assertor* is made relatively easy. Jonson's request that someone come forward to assert that his verses are indeed his is made all the easier since the author has already done so very publicly himself.

Let us consider Jonson's citation of this passage from Martial in its era. We do not see the writer looking toward a patron: the folio, interestingly enough, is not dedicated to anyone. *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*, published in 1616, has no dedication and no dedicatee. Jonson had just been granted a pension by King James I, and the king would have been a most natural dedicatee. Instead, Jonson kept the original dedicatees to individual plays already published in quarto and dedicated a number of poems (many of which had not been previously published). However, the 1616 Folio as a whole is not dedicated to any individual. In 1629, Jonson goes one step further by ostentatiously dedicating his play to the reader instead of a patron: "If thou bee such, I make thee my Patron, and dedicate the Piece to thee"<sup>34</sup>. The title-page announces that the play, not unlike a newly manumitted slave, has finally been "set at liberty". This liberty is one that the play has found in print. The reader will be reading a play:

As it was never acted, but most negligently play'd by some, the King's Servants.  
And more squeamishly behold, and censured by others, the Kings Subjects. 1629.  
Now, at last, set at liberty to the Readers, his Majesties Servants, and Subjects, to

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 81.

<sup>33</sup> *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, William Smith, (ed.), London, 1851, p. 143.

<sup>34</sup> *The New Inne*, Herford and Simpson, vol. VI, p. 397.

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be judged. 1631. By the Author, B. Jonson.<sup>35</sup>

Readers are opposed to the actors and spectators, both deformers and perverters of the piece, either by their 'negligent' playing or 'squeamish' watching and censure. Collaborators of all kinds, whether other artists, actors (or anyone who recites out loud), and spectators are all possible "kidnappers" of the authorial text. The book is in danger of being deformed and pirated and needs someone to take up its claim to freedom. But, why the reader? The problem with patronage, as Jonson knew, was the political fortunes and misfortunes of aristocratic patrons. Robert Cotton, for instance, temporarily in disgrace because of his tampering with the evidence in the Overbury affair, is not included in Jonson's list of dedicatees to the plays. Jonson himself complained to John Selden that he had mistakenly overpraised certain aristocrats who later showed themselves not to deserve such praise<sup>36</sup>. The ephemerality of these public reputations proved that such individuals were perhaps incapable of defending the authorial text in posterity, a posterity that could very well judge them differently. It is this problem of who can best be trusted to take on the role of the *assertor in libertatem* that reveals, I believe, the crisis of patronage for Ben Jonson, leading ultimately to the dedication of *The New Inne* to an anonymous "Reader" rather than a patron. Jonson's long line of prologues and prefaces to his readers throughout his career, but also his continual references and asides to them, as in *The Haddington Masque*, can be seen to have led ineluctably to the ultimate substitution of the reader for the patron. The substitution of the many for the one, or the anonymous for the specific is not, however, a democratic move on the part of the author. Instead, it can be seen as an authorial effort to concentrate the power to influence judgement in the writer rather than in an outsider, whether that outsider be a patron or, as in the case of the editors of the First Folio, a "Friend". While a specific patron, even a close friend, is always beyond authorial control, the *future* reader, on the other hand, is very much controllable by the writer. For the reader, deprived of the "other side of the story", namely that of the other collaborators, witnesses and testimonies, cannot help but attribute to the writer what the writer has already asserted for himself.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, p. 395

<sup>36</sup> See Ben Jonson, "Epistle to Master John Selden", *Underwood* (xiv), Herford and Simpson, vol. VIII, p. 159.