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Bibliographical terms and symbols

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Bibliographical terms

Accidental

A feature of a text, such as capitalization (frequently) or sometimes punctuation, which affects the formal appearance of that text, but does not affect its meaning. Compare with *Substantive*.

Broadsheet

A large, unfolded and undivided sheet of Broadside paper, printed on only one side. In a collation it is represented as 1°.

Cancel* or *Cancellans

A leaf inserted in a printed book in place of one which has been removed. The plurals are Cancels and Cancellantia. Sometimes whole *Gatherings* are replaced.

Cancelland* or *Cancellandum

The term used to describe the leaf which has been removed. The plurals are Cancellands and Cancellanda.

Casting-Off

A preliminary estimate of the number of words in a manuscript, made in order to determine approximately the number of pages of text which, depending upon the type size, will result.

Catchword

The first word (or the first syllable of the first word) of the next page of text, or, occasionally, the last syllable of the final word on the current page of text, set by the compositor, below the last line and running to the right margin, when he has completed a page, as a guide to the arrangement of the pages (which were not yet paginated) in the former. Also called Direction. Their occurrence varies greatly: sometimes on every page, sometimes only on versos, sometimes only between gatherings. They are virtually never used nowadays. They also occur in manuscripts, to help in the correct assembling of the leaves and gatherings.

Chain Lines

Discussed under *Wire Lines*.

Chase

A four-sided frame in which the type for a page or pages of one form is locked prior to its being placed on the press.

Collation

A statement of the format (size) of a book, of the number of gatherings, and of the number of leaves in those gatherings. The term is also used to describe a detailed comparison of the text of two or more copies of a work, be they manuscript or printed.

Colophon

The Inscription at the end of a manuscript or the short text at the end of a printed book, which usually gives the title of the work, the scribe's, or printer's, name, and the date and place of the completion of the writing, or printing.

Conjugate

A term used to describe two or more leaves which are, or were once, joined together. The word *Conjunct* is used similarly.

Countermark

The impression, made in laid paper, by a stitched wire pattern, added to the other half of the papermaker's mould to identify the maker. The practice began in the 16th and 17th centuries when *Watermarks* were losing their original significance.

Direction Line

The line, below the last line of text on a page, in which are to be found, in those books and pages which have them, both *Signature* (often near centre) and the *Catchword* (to the right).

Duodecimo

12°: a sheet of paper folded, in one of several ways, and/or cut, to produce a gathering of twelve leaves. Hence a book of sheets folded in that way— and so with *Folio*, *Octavo*, *Quarto*.

Edition

All the copies of a work printed from one setting of type, to which adjustments may have been made, and from which stereotypes or other mechanical copies can have been taken. It includes *Impressions*, *Issues*, *Reimpositions*, *Reissues*, and *States*.

Facsimile

A copy of a title-page in which the details *Transcription* of the original— fonts of type, capitals, line endings— are represented as faithfully as possible.

Fol. 3 or f. 3

Folio 3, the third leaf.

Folio

(i) The largest size of paper, and the largest size of book (elephant folio). The paper is folded once, and, in a collation, it is represented as 2°. (ii) A leaf (as above).

Format

The size of a book, determined by discovering the number of times the constituent sheets (or half-sheets, etc.) have been folded.

Forme

(i) The pages of type, as locked into the chase, which print one side of a sheet.
(ii) The matter printed on the paper from that typesetting.

There are two formes to all *Gatherings*, though parts of one, or parts of both of them, may be blank. They are: the inner (i), and the outer (o). The outer forme will always have printed on it the first and last pages in the gathering; and the inner will always have the second and the penultimate pages. These facts obviously do not apply to a *Broadsheet*.

Fp./Front

Frontispiece.

Gatherings* or *Quires

Collections of leaves, ranging from a single leaf to several sheets, which are gathered together for stitching as a unit. See also *Signatures*.

Headline

See *Running-Title*.

Head Title

The formal arrangement of type, at the head of the first page of text, in which the title is stated. Since, in books which are set from manuscript, this page is generally the first composed, the wording may differ from that used on the title-page.

Impression

All copies of a forme, sheet, or book printed at one time from a setting of type.

Imprint

The statement(s), generally on the title-page or title-leaf, recording the city/cities of publication, the publishers' name(s) and address(es), the printer's name and address, and the date.

Incunables* or *Incunabula

Books printed in the "cradle" of printing; that is, in most of Europe, before 1501.

Issue

A temporal variation in a sheet or sheets of an edition, greater than a *Variant*. Examples are a cancel title-leaf, the addition of a preface, the absence of a subscription list.

Laid Paper

Paper, generally hand-made, which has chainlines, wire-lines, and watermarks. See also *Wove Paper*.

Lower Case

Small, as distinct from capital or upper-case, letters, (e.g., k l m n), so called because the types for them were kept in the lower part of the printer's case -- see Moxon, Plate I; McKerrow, Fig. 2. Compare *Upper Case*.

l./ll.

Leaf or leaves; the basic unit of paper in a book, formed either by using printed but unfolded sheets; or, more frequently, by using folded and/or cut sheets of paper.

ll.

Lines.

Mould

The rectangular wooden-framed tray, broader than it is long, the base consisting of a mesh of wires, in which paper is made.

Octavo

8°: a sheet of paper folded three times to produce eight leaves— an octavo half sheet has four leaves, and so on.

p. / pp.

Page/pages. A page is one side of a leaf; pages are both sides of one leaf, or one or both sides of two or more leaves.

Prelims

Preliminaries: the introductory (front) matter (title-leaf, preface, table of contents, & c.) before the beginning of the text of a book, usually paginated with roman numerals.

Press Figure

Originally a symbol (+, *, &c.) but later usually an arabic number, generally found, in or below the *Direction Line*, on a page which is without a signature. They are known to have been used in Great Britain from at least 1629-1866, but they are commonest in 18th-century British books. Though once thought to have related to the press on which a forme was printed, they are now believed to indicate the pressman responsible for working that forme. It enabled the master printer (i) to know how much pay was due to whom, and (ii) to assign responsibility for errors.

Quarto

4°: a sheet of paper folded twice to produce four leaves.

Quires

See *Gatherings*.

r

Recto. In western books, the first (or right) side of a leaf as it occurs in a normal opening.

Reimposition

The modification, within the chase, of the formes of type (by reducing, or increasing the space between the pages of type) which together make up 2 book or pamphlet so that they can be printed on either a larger or a smaller size of paper.

Rule

The strip of type which is used either to heighten the aesthetic effect of, or to aid in the understanding of the words printed on the title-page. The piece used can vary greatly in length, shape, and size: some titles are enclosed in a double or single rule, as well as having the words of the title separated from the author's name, which, in turn, is divided from the volume number or edition statement, and/or the imprint. The varieties, and their names, may be seen in *The Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors* (Oxford, 1981), under the *rule*.

Running-Title

The two lines of type, running across the head of two pages of an opening in a book, which together make up the title of that book, &c. A self-contained single line of type at the head of a page, as for instance in a dictionary, is called a headline.

Sheet

A unit of paper, as produced by the maker, or as cut to need. The size of a hand-made sheet is limited by the size of the mold, which is in turn dictated by the reach of a man's arms. (Whatman's *Antiquarian* sheets (173), measuring 53" x 31", were made with "The Contrivance," later known as "The Bellows," an apparatus that enabled more than one man to work the mould). There is no such limit on machine-made paper.

Sig.

Signature: a term applied (i) to the printed symbol, generally a letter (either upper or lower case) accompanied, after the first leaf, by a figure (arabic or roman), which appears at the foot of the recto of the first few leaves of a folded sheet; and, (ii) by extension, to the sheet or lesser gathering itself. In signature D, the second leaf is (probably) signed, and always referred to, as D2. Signatures aided binders in collating books before binding to ensure that they were perfect, and can be similarly used by bibliographers, book collectors, etc. R.B. McKerrow usefully suggested that the \$ sign be adopted to refer to a signature or signatures.

State

A description often applied to differences of detail in engravings or etchings, etc., and, in printed texts, to variations not large enough to constitute an issue, or impression, or edition. These smaller differences, sometimes the result of press-correction, are also known as *Variants*.

Substantive

A textual variation, generally concerning a word or words but sometimes capitalization and punctuation, which affects the meaning of a passage. Compare with *Accidental*.

tp. or tl.

Title-page; title-leaf.

Upper Case

Capital letters (e.g. K L M N), so called from their being kept in the upper part of the printer's case. See also *Lower Case*.

v

Verso, the second (or reverse) side of a leaf. Compare *r*, *Recto*.

Variants

Differences (usually comparatively small) found in the text when two or more copies of a piece of printed matter are compared, which are the result of either (i) accidental or (ii) deliberate alterations made in the course of printing.

Watermark

The impression made in a sheet of hand-made paper by a pattern in wire stitched to the centre of the wire mesh in one half of the mould. Originally used as a trademark for a mill or area, watermarks subsequently often incorporated a name or initials. Still later, the *Countermark* was attached to the other half of the mould to carry the maker's name. Watermarks are generally to be found in the better laid papers, and sometimes in woven papers, whether they be made by hand or machine.

Wire Lines

The closely-set wires forming the base of a mould, used in the making of paper by hand, which provide a bed solid enough to retain the embryonic sheet, but open enough to allow the water to drain through. They run horizontally in the mould, whereas the chain lines run vertically. Both sets of wires— *Chain Lines* and *Wire Lines*— leave an impression in one side of the sheet of paper.

Wove Paper

(i) Paper made by hand in a single- or doublefaced wove mould. There the wires of the bed of the mould were affixed diagonally and were of the same size, unlike the right-angled disposition of the (larger) chain lines to the (smaller) wire lines in a mould for *Laid Paper*. Wove paper was first made in the eighteenth century, probably about 1754 or 1755 by James Whatman the Elder, for the use, in his *Virgil*, 1757, of John Baskerville (ii) the term is now applied principally to machine-made paper.

Bibliographical symbols

1°	An unfolded sheet, or broadsheet
2°	A sheet folded once, with leaves half its original size.
4° or 4to	A sheet folded twice, with leaves a quarter of its original size.
8° or 8vo	A sheet folded thrice, with leaves one-eighth of its original size
12° or 12mo	Duodecimo. As noted above, there is more than one way of folding the sheet to produce the 12 leaves of a duodecimo.
D ²	A gathering, signed D, with two leaves.
D2	The second leaf of such a gathering.
2D2	The second leaf of a gathering signed DD, Dd, or, very occasionally '2D'. It is usually only in the later alphabets—e.g., "6D"—that an arabic numeral is used with a single uppercase letter, instead of six (or however many it may be) upper-case letters, or upper-case and lower-case letters.
\$3	The third leaf of a gathering; or, if so specified, the third leaf in a series of gatherings— e.g., \$3 A-G.
π	Greek letter "pi"; used for an unsigned leaf (or leaves) or gathering(s) in the <i>Prelims.</i> of a book; similarly used to distinguish the letters of a subordinate alphabet of signatures in the prelims., which are later used again in the main body of the text.
χ	Greek letter "chi"; used for an unsigned leaf (or leaves) or gathering(s) in the body of a book; or, as sometimes happens, for the second of two identically signed gatherings, when it is clear that the printer has not simply omitted a letter of the alphabet in the signing.

Paper Sizes

Crown 8°	One-eighth the size of Crown paper (originally, paper marked with a crown), i.e., one-eighth of 15" x 20" or 7-1/2" times 5"; ordinarily, novel size.
Foolscap 8°	Leaves of 6-3/4" x 4-1/4", pocket-sized books.
Demy 8°	Leaves of 8-3/4" x 5-5/8", "serious" books.
Royal **	Leaves 10" x 6-1/4", illustrated books.