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## HUNTIA

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## Edition, issue, and state in botanical bibliography

WHEN A BOOK EXISTS in a number of variant forms the important question for a botanist is whether these forms may be arranged in a determinable priority. Whether they are called states or issues or editions even is generally of little interest to him. He usually does not even know how these terms are applied bibliographically. All he wants to know is whether there is evidence that this one precedes that or vice versa.

Nevertheless, if it is explained to him that these terms are assigned to books on the basis of their printing history, as Fredson Bowers has made clear in his work, *Principles of bibliographical description*, Princeton, 1949, and that they indicate priorities (or, what is equally important to him, contemporaneities), he should be willing to accept the terms and use them because they are relevant to his studies.

The reasons for their relevance to taxonomic literature are these: if the variant forms of a work which contains plant names can be shown to be issues, then names published in the first issue may have nomenclatural priority over those in later issues. If, however, the variant forms can be shown to be states then the question of priority of publication does not arise but, in general, the latest state may be of greatest nomenclatural significance. There are, of course, many instances of state in which it is meaningless to speak of sequence or validity since these may never be established and, in such cases, if a conflict of names arises it cannot be settled by appeal to the states alone.

Most of Bowers' examples are quite clear and significant for the botanist, but there are two categories which may cause difficulty since they upset the botanist's reasons for distinguishing state and issue. One is that which Bowers calls separate issue; actually, it is a prepublication issue in the sense that it is altered in form in some way before the day of publication and that all such variant issues are published simultaneously. The other category, which he places under "state," is actually a postpublication state, that is, a state in which alterations are made after the day of publication.

These usages violate some of the normal criteria for distinguishing state

and issue and, what is of more concern to the taxonomic botanist, violate precisely those criteria that are of importance to him in accepting the distinction. In other words, for nomenclatural considerations, there is little reason for him to distinguish two variants as issues unless he can raise the question of priority of publication of one over the other. There is no reason for him to distinguish two variants as states unless he can discard the question of priority of publication when considering them.

The question is whether it would be better to accept Bowers' usage of state and issue for the special cases that he defines, or to abandon it completely and simply call prepublication issues *states* and postpublication states *issues*. Before attempting to make a decision, it is necessary first to define an edition and an impression, since state and issue cannot be considered in isolation from these terms.

An *edition* is the total number of copies of a work printed from the same typesetting at any time. An edition is created by the printing of the work from a new typesetting, with or without any textual change. An *impression* is the total number of copies of a work printed at one time. Thus an edition can consist of several impressions separated from each other by a lapse of time.<sup>1</sup>

In modern times an edition will include any of the numerous forms in which the original typesetting may be reproduced, such as stereotypes of the original formes, photolithographic copies of the original sheets, and even impressions made from type cast by running the original Monotype perforated rolls through the type-caster. This may all be ignored in the period of hand printing. In that period there was only one method of creating a new impression of a work and that was by rerunning the original formes of type through the press. This requires that after the first impression is finished, the pages of metal type be set aside and stored until the time for the new impression. Very few printers, in the early part of the period at least, were able or willing to do this because it presupposes that the printer was rich enough to be able to set up a whole book in print at one time and to bear the expense of keeping the type out of use for a long period. Consequently, it is a relatively rare phenomenon and, in the period of hand printing, "edition" is almost always synonymous with "impression." When a book is reprinted from standing type that reimpression will constitute an issue, but it is far the least common kind of issue in the

<sup>1</sup> Successive impressions, separated by periods of time, are often designated in the publishing trade as reprints. By some publishers, each is designated an edition, and the so-called "editions" of these publishers are no more than successive impressions of a single edition. "Reprint" is a very misleading term and should not be used in bibliographical writing. [ED.]

period, and it is worth marking it especially as "issue" (reimpression).

If we are to keep the purity of the word *edition* (and this is a bibliographical prerequisite) for distinguishing works printed from different settings of type, then we have to distinguish between the processes of type composition and imposition. In composition, lines of type are built up into pages; in imposition, these pages are arranged in various ways into formes depending on the format of the work.<sup>2</sup>

All copies of a work printed from different typesettings are different editions, but all copies of a work printed from different impositions of the same typesetting are the same edition. That is, a work published both in folio and in quarto and differing only in the imposition, represents a single edition—not two separate editions. A brief examination of the type employed in the text (and this specifically excludes running titles, pagination, and even chapter or section heads) in two variant copies of a work readily discloses whether they are of the same typesetting or not.

When we consider the question of *state*,<sup>3</sup> we must bear in mind the following facts. In the period of hand printing, type was not set up in galleys but in pages ready to be built up in formes. Proofs were printed directly from the pages and it was common for the author himself to be present at the printing office to read the proofs. There was, however, no interdict against making corrections to a sheet while it was actually being printed off. Indeed, it was a usual practice. If the author came into the printing office and requested corrections in a sheet that was being printed the press was simply stopped, the correction made, and printing continued. The important point is that the uncorrected sheets would not usually be discarded, since this was an expense which the ordinary printer was not willing to bear. Ideally, the uncorrected sheets, being at the bottom of the pile, would be used last, and in normal circumstances would get on the market last and only after the corrected ones had been sold. But, the printer used them both and both were available on publication day. The result is that two variant forms of the same work could be published at the same time and these are distinguished as *states*.

<sup>2</sup> The type composition (the lines of type) as prepared for the text of a single page (exclusive of running heads, etc.) is termed a *typesetting*, and is the makeup of body type for that page.

In a quarto there are four leaves and eight pages; the four typesettings for one side will be arranged in a manner to assure that, when the sheet is later folded and cut, the text of each page will be properly oriented and in register with that which may be printed on the back; the organizing of the typesetting is termed *imposition*. The imposition of the pages of type to be printed on one side of a sheet at one impression, fitted and locked into the enclosing iron frame (the chase), is termed a *forme*. Likewise, the particular orientation of the printed pages of one side of a sheet is termed a *forme*.

[Ed.]

<sup>3</sup> For the definition of *issue*, see p. 284.

Another method by which states can be produced is by cancellation. This method would be used to make corrections of sheets already printed off (that is, after the possibility of correction in press had passed). The printer would use blank leaves at the end of the work, or unused sheets, to print corrected versions. If the printed sheets had not been stitched it was a simple matter to substitute the cancellantia (the corrected sheets or leaves). If some copies of the work had already been bound the printer might not bother about them at all or he might lay the cancellantia in loose, when of course they might fall out and be lost. This would result in the production of two states, one without the cancellantia, and one with them, properly substituted, or even, possibly, a third state in which both cancellantia and cancellanda (the original, uncorrected sheets or leaves) are present.

Yet another way in which states can be produced is by change of imprint<sup>4</sup> on the title-page. A book might be published by several different publishers at the same time and sometimes instead of including all their names on the title-page, a certain number of copies would have the imprint altered to cite only the name of that publisher for whom those copies were intended.

Frequently, especially in the 18th and early 19th centuries, a book was printed on two kinds of paper, ordinary and large paper, or on laid and wove paper. Such variant forms of the work are sometimes referred to by botanists as "editions." This is quite indefensible. Sometimes a work—otherwise identical—was printed in two formats, quarto and octavo for example, and even by some bibliographers, they have been referred to as "editions."<sup>5</sup> As explained above, the word *edition* must be kept for distinguishing works printed from different typesettings and the question arises, what are such variant forms of one edition to be called?

Let us examine first the way in which issues arise. One is by re-impression from standing type but as already noted, this was not common. The more normal forms of issue occur when unsold sheets are put on the market again, that is, at some time after the initial publication, and as a distinctive act of publishing. The fact of distinctive publication is marked by the use of a new title-page and, since the original title-page is not in standing type, a newly printed cancellans title-page has to be substituted. The new title-page may be the only observable alteration and it does not matter

<sup>4</sup> The imprint is the identification, usually on the title-page, of the printer or publisher, and place of origin, and, usually, of the date of publication. [Ed.]

<sup>5</sup> Often, these were also referred to in contemporary literature by the publisher, or in announcements of publication, as editions. [Ed.]

whether there are any alterations in the text or not. It is possible for a title-page to be cancelled for purposes of correction in the course of printing, and before publication. This was sometimes done, but a printer would not in the course of printing print a cancel title-page for a later issue that had not even been envisaged. In other words, if a copy of a work is found with a cancellans title-page that is clearly printed as part of the original sheets, it must be regarded as a state, since the onus of demonstrating a work to be an issue rests with the person who used the term. Thus, the term *issue* can only be used for copies of a work that have a new title-page not printed as part of the original sheets.

Now we have some criteria for distinguishing states and issues, and we may proceed to frame some definitions.

An *issue* is created by the appearance of a work after initial publication from basically the same typesetting, with or without alterations in the text, *but with a cancellans title-page* which was not printed as part of the original sheets.

A *state* is created by the appearance of a work from basically a single typesetting, but with some alterations of text or title-page, and generally is made *during continuous printing and before publication*. [For expanded redefinition, see p. 285.]

We are now in a better position to judge what should be done with works which vary only in paper or format.

Bowers would classify works which vary only in paper as states. This agrees with the general idea of alteration in some forms of work before publication (though paper was not specifically mentioned) and also with the idea that the alteration was made during continuous printing. The two varieties of paper may have actually been printed alternately sheet by sheet, and in fact this would be what one would normally expect. The creation of two paper variants of a work is not then a temporally distinctive publishing venture and it is difficult to see how the word "issue" could be applied here in any sense.

Bowers considers works in a different format (that is, works in which the type-pages have been reimposed) to be special issues. However, the criteria which apply to the last example, apply equally well to this and for a taxonomist such variants are more like states than issues. It is, I believe, simpler therefore to call them states. Taxonomically, none would have precedence over another, although in references to them it would be necessary to specify which was intended because the pagination would differ.

We must therefore reframe the definition of state to cover these cases.

A *state* is created by the appearance of a work from basically the same typesetting, but with some alteration of text, title-page, paper, or imposition made during continuous printing and before publication.

The situation seems to be quite otherwise with the category labelled above as *postpublication states*. These are copies of works in which some change is made in the text after the date of initial publication. Suppose, for example, that, after the publication of a work the author wishes to change the name of a plant. A cancellans leaf is printed and substituted in the unsold sheets, and these are eventually introduced into sale. The alteration is not substantiated in any way by a new title-page; if it had been, the variant would clearly be an issue. Bowers calls this a state on the grounds that it is an attempt, belatedly, to create ideal copy. From a taxonomic viewpoint such a change of plant name would not be acceptable and for the botanist the two variants would be as distinct as if they had been issues.

In spite of nomenclatural considerations there are no bibliographical grounds for calling such a postpublication change an issue. If we accept "issue" for such changes in a work, the bibliographical concept of issue, as defined above, becomes meaningless. If accepted bibliographic practice is to be preserved, I think we must treat these examples as "postpublication states" and attach to them the same stringent requirements of proof that are asked for in applying the term "issue." Instances of this sort, involving changes of botanical content, do represent bibliographically abnormal situations. The normal case would be correction of the error before publication or correction after publication substantiated by a new title-page. Examples are, therefore, happily, rare.

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