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From the Editor

Remembering Charlton Hinman

ON MARCH 16 Charlton Hinman died in suburban Washington at the age of 66, drawing to a close one of the most remarkable careers in the history of humanistic scholarship. Born February 11, 1911, in Fort Collins, Colorado, Charlton Joseph Kadio Hinman earned degrees from Cornell University (A.B., 1931), the University of Oxford (where, as a Rhodes Scholar, he completed a B.A. in 1936, followed by an M.A. in 1939), and the University of Virginia (Ph.D., 1941). He held positions at three universities—Missouri (from 1937 to 1939), Johns Hopkins (from 1946 to 1950), and Kansas (where he served as University Distinguished Professor from 1963 until his retirement in 1975)—and he was revered by his students as a gifted and inspiring teacher. Hinman's academic endeavors were twice interrupted by military service: he distinguished himself in naval intelligence and communications both during World War II (from 1942 to 1946) and during the Korean conflict (from 1950 to 1952). It was his work as an officer in the United States Navy, in fact, that led to his invention of the marvelous collating instrument that now bears his name. Comparing aerial reconnaissance photographs for evidence of bomb damage in the Pacific islands during World War II, Hinman realized how valuable it would be to have a machine that would superimpose two corresponding images and, by means of alternating flashes of light, distinguish any variations between one image and another. With characteristic resourcefulness and perseverance, he perfected the tool he envisioned, and by 1952 he and the soon-to-be-famous Hinman Collator were successfully installed in the Folger Shakespeare Library. For most of the next decade, assisted by grants from the Guggenheim and Bollingen foundations, he collated as many as possible of the Folger's eighty copies of the First Folio.

The results are now legendary. As early as 1955, when Hinman demonstrated conclusively that the First Folio was typeset by formes and was therefore frequently deviled by compositional "adjustments" to compensate for errors in casting-off copy, it was clear that his work would revolutionize the study of Shakespeare's text. And so it did. When *The Printing and Proof-Reading of the First Folio of Shakespeare* appeared in 1963, it was immediately acclaimed as a "colossal task of analysis," "a brilliant and



Charlton Hinman, Special Collections

protracted piece of laboratory work," "the most important piece of Shakespearean bibliography of the past quarter of a century." Fourteen years later, we still stand in awe of an achievement that is difficult to describe with any adjective other than "monumental." And Hinman's instrument and research techniques have now been extended into numerous other areas by scholars eager to follow his lead. Among the non-bibliographical uses to which the Hinman Collator has been applied, for example, is the detec-

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tion of counterfeit currency by the United States Treasury Department. What we sometimes tend to forget, however, is what Hinman's eminent mentor, Fredson Bowers, recalled in the gracious eulogy he delivered in April at the New Orleans meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America: Kadio Hinman embarked on a great gamble when he decided to devote his career to an investigation of the printing and proofreading of the First Folio. What if his collations turned up little or nothing in the way of substantive variants? Would he have anything to show for "the most thorough technical study of a single printed book ever to have been made"? It was an undertaking of almost epic dimensions, and its rewards were at best uncertain. But Hinman refused to be daunted—even when it began to emerge that there were in fact very few Folio variants indicating stoppress correction (only slightly more than 500 in all the vast Folio, of which but a fraction were substantive in nature). On the basis of an extant corrected proof-page from the Folio *Antony and Cleopatra*, Hinman had hoped to turn up evidence for "a considerable amount of at least reasonably careful proofreading"—something like 10,000 press variants—that would be of immediate significance for modern editors and scholars. The yield he produced—as he noted in the lucid introduction to his 1968 *Norton Facsimile of the First Folio*, itself a splendid achievement—"was almost ludicrously short of expectation." Not only was the Folio not carefully proofread, Hinman discovered that, by and large, the proof-correctors that were made were more likely to introduce new error than to eradicate unreliable readings in the initial typesetting. Hinman didn't find what he had originally set out to find, then. But he pressed on and converted what must have been a crushing disappointment into a triumph of bibliographical detective work. Owing to his painstaking labors, future editors and scholars have a wealth of precisely-recorded information upon which to build, information pertaining to virtually every aspect of the printing process by means of which Shakespeare's

texts were transmitted to posterity. Thanks to Hinman, we now know the order in which the Folio formes were delivered to the pressmen, and the type-cases from which most of the pages were set; we know the approximate divisions of labor among the various compositors who did the setting (three of whom were first positively identified by Hinman); we know a good deal about the characteristics of several of the compositors, particularly Compositor E, the "penitence hand" whose presence in the Folio might still be undisclosed were it not for Hinman's meticulous and imaginative scrutiny; and we know much more than we did before about the different kinds of corruption and distortion the text is likely to have suffered as it passed through the hands of the Folio's printers. Happily, there is more to come. Before his retirement, Hinman had virtually completed a modern-spelling edition of Shakespeare's works, and this edition (which has been prepared with the collaboration of three other scholars, Myra Mallow Hinman, Robert K. Turner, and the late Paul Murray Kendall) is scheduled for publication by Norton before the end of the present decade. It all adds up to a tremendous legacy. But even more than we value his inestimable contributions to our understanding of the conditions affecting the transmission of Shakespeare's text, we are grateful for Kadio Hinman's example; his brilliant application of technical knowledge to the investigation of bibliographical problems, his pioneering advances in research methodology, his exhaustiveness and exactitude in the compilation of data, his clear-sighted judiciousness in the interpretation of evidence, the stylistic clarity and grace with which he explained his findings and assessed their implications, the openness and generosity with which he shared his work with other scholars. Nor will we forget his personal magnetism. As his wife Myra aptly remarked a few days after his death, "in his research, he boldly followed the facts where they led, and in his physical and spiritual trails he courageously stayed the course."

JOHN F. ANDREWS