

**Dr Peter Sillitoe, PDRA on ShaLT**

**25/11/11 Second Monthly Enhancement Report on the V&A Collections:  
Detailed Report on the Jonson 1616 Folio (*The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*)**

**NB: All images are from the *Early English Books Online* database and are not from the Museum's two Folio copies. Therefore these are not for reproduction and are for illustrative purposes only.**

Picking up from the last report and the National Art Library's copy of the Jonson 1616 Folio, this report enlarges on that one since I have now inspected the copies in special collections. Indeed, it is now clear that the library has two copies of the Folio, though one is in much better condition than the other (further catalogue details are given below).

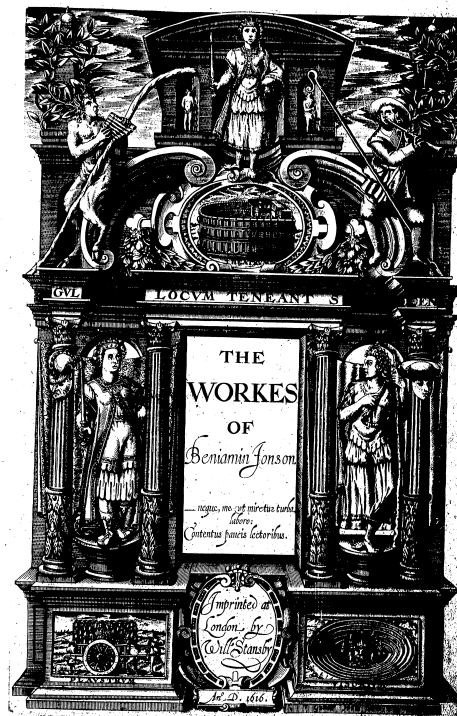
As was made clear in the last report: "the Ben Jonson Works / Folio from 1616 would seem ideal for use as a ShaLT image as well as for future Museum purposes. The Folio pre-dates Shakespeare's Folio (also in the V&A collections) by 7 years and so could be exhibited as an example of the importance of other playwrights in the early modern period. Secondly, the book is usually considered to be of immense importance in scholarly work (though not communicated to the public in any detail) as the Folio effectively represents the first time a professional English writer collected together his or her 'works' for general sale in print. This links to the fact that, unlike the posthumous Shakespeare Folio, Jonson put this collection of his own plays and poems through the press himself (there is clear evidence of his interest in the venture in various sources). Thus, the 1616 Folio may be said to be one of the very first occasions in which an English writer declared this new 'professional' status in public. It is highly likely that an image-based display on this book would be of educational benefit to the wider community via the V&A's use of the book for exhibition. Lastly, there are further opportunities here for narratives about 'theatre-as-industry' and

‘Shakespeare’s competitors’, as well as narratives linking performance to print and the need to ‘record’ theatre via publication.”

To my knowledge, the Jonson Folios have not been displayed or photographed previously by the Museum. Starting with the ShaLT project it is clear that as many images as possible should be captured for use on the website for a number of reasons, including issues surrounding authorship, patronage, print, media and so on. We could also point out that the only other ‘works’ that year (of a British writer) was the 1616 edition by King James (at end of this document).

Thinking specifically of future use at the V&A a copy of the Folio would sit well alongside the Museum's display copy of the 1623 Shakespeare First Folio for the reasons given above (pre-dating Shakespeare, issues about authorship, Shakespeare's rivals etc).

## Title-page

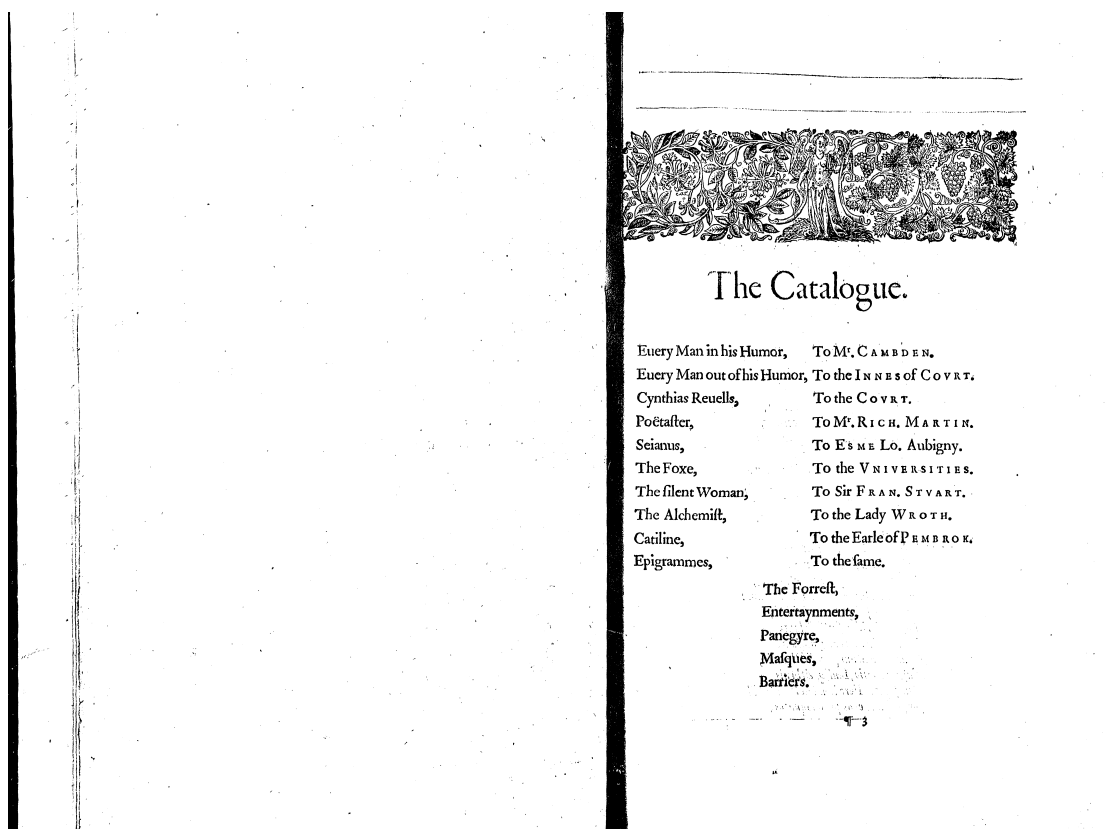


Were the book to be displayed open at a certain page Jonson's title-page would seem the perfect place to start, as its neo-classicism contrasts with the famous image of Shakespeare in the 1623 Folio (the Jonson image below is not contained in the two V&A copies that I have seen). Furthermore, a display for Jonson would be timely as CUP are currently completing a new complete works (edited by Martin Butler et al).

Also of note on the title-page: 'Benjamin' not 'Ben' is preferred, almost certainly for status and prestige. Of particular importance is the visual narrative with its neo-classical discourse, including the use of classical architecture, art, and stylistics, the image of the chorus, classical pillars, and the overriding sense of architectural permanence for this grand authorial project. Clearly, for Jonson, theatre, even public theatre, was to be taken very seriously from this point if not before, and the Romanesque structures articulate this perfectly. Note the Roman amphitheatre as Jonson and the printer seek to authorise Renaissance theatre by evoking the classical theatres of Greece and Rome. England's new theatre land is thus contextualised alongside the classical past and so privileged and glorified.

Generic pointers – tragedy and comedy are mentioned at the top of the page. Note also the satyr and elements of pastoralism.

‘The Catalogue’ (on p. 3)



This important page sets out the idea of a dramatic works for the first time (including also poetry). Important factors include the dedicatory sections. For instance, *Everyman out of his Humour* is dedicated to the Inns of Court (a useful image for the ShaLT website), whilst ‘The Fox’ (*Volpone*) is dedicated to the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and *Cataline* is dedicated to the Earl of Pembroke. A visitor to the Museum might find it interesting to note that the Folio does not separate plays generically as comedies, histories, and tragedies (as the 1623 Shakespeare Folio famously does). Rather, the reader is offered a choice between the drama of the theatres, poetry, entertainments, masques and barriers.

## Dedication (on p.6)

TO BEN. IONSON,  
on his *workes*.

**M**ay I subscribe a name? dares my bold quill  
Write that or good or ill,  
Whose frame is of that height, that, to mine eye,  
Is head is in the sky?  
Yes, Since the most censures, beleevues, and faith  
By an implicit faith:  
Least their misfortune make them chance amisse,  
Ile wait them right by this.  
Of all I know thou onely art the man  
That dares but what he can:  
Yet by performance shoves he can do more  
Then hath bene done before,  
Or will be after. (such assurance gives  
Perfection where it lives.)  
Words speake thy matter; matter fills thy words;  
And choyce that grace affords  
That both are best; and both most fitly plac't,  
Are with new *V s v s* grac't  
From artfull method, all in this point meet,  
With good to mingle sweet.  
These are thy lower parts, what stands above  
Who fees not yet must loue,  
When on the Base he reads *BEN. IONSONS* name,  
And heares the rest from Fame.  
This from my loue of truth: which payes this due  
To your iust worth, not you.

Ed. Heyward.

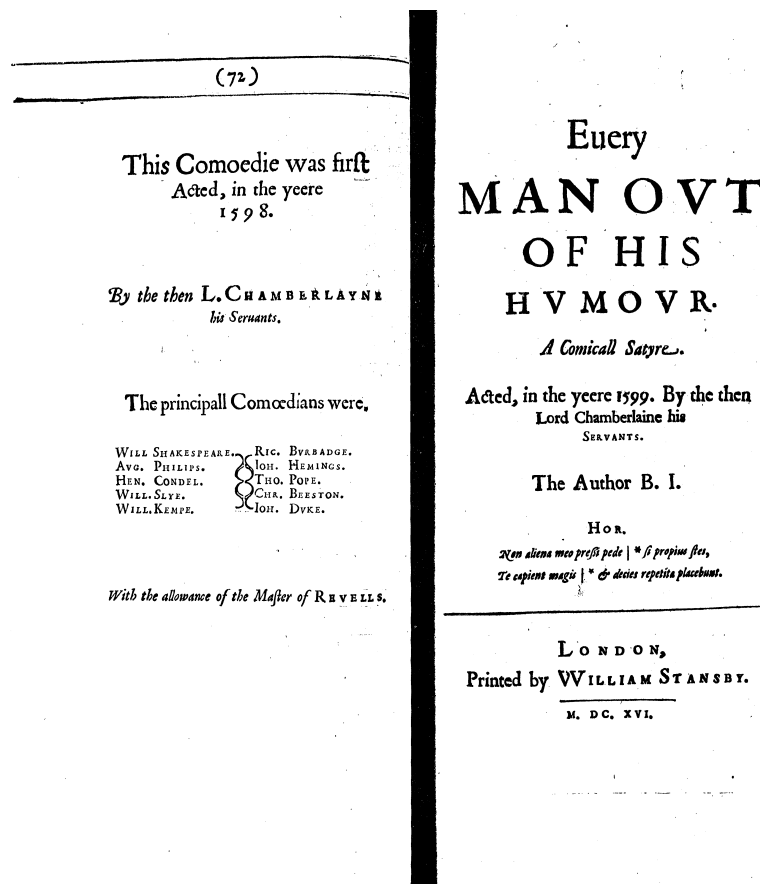
Vpon *SEIANVS*.

**S**o brags the wealth-controlling ieweller  
That he can store fumes from wicks of fumes and flames,  
As they accomplish: trauels doth confer  
From rich-winded soules, their wealthier gems;

So doth his hand enchaife in ammel'd gold,  
Cut, and adorns it beyond their native merits,  
His falsit flames, as thoue haile here world  
In more then golden words, this better'd spirit;  
So he entreasures Princes cabinets,  
As they wealth will their wished libraries;  
So, on the threates of the wide sea, he sets  
His courteous foot, for his shipwrecke prize;  
And through wild deserts, arm'd with wilder bogies,  
As thoue aduentur'st on the multitude,  
From the beggins, and enuoy'd bogies  
Of lyeing, swears to find most right, most true;  
And he, in stormes at sea, doth not endore,  
Nor in vast deserts, amongst wilder, more danger;  
Thoue, that would with vaine line fence,  
Slayne for her in every vices anger.  
Nor is this Allegorie vniuersally rackt,  
To this strange length: Onely, that it will ore,  
In estimatione merely, so will:  
And thy worke, in it selfe, is deare and rare,  
Wherein *MISERVS* had bene vanquished,  
Had hee, by it, for sacred soules aduanc'd,  
And through thy subtile wenes her graphicke thread,  
Containing therein, to be more entranc'd;  
For, though thy hand was scarce addrest to draw  
The fine-circle of *SEIANVS* life,  
Thy Muse yet makes it she whole sphere, and law  
To all State lines: and bounds ambition's strife.  
And as a little brooke creeps from his spring,  
With shallow trembling, through the lowly wades,  
As if he fear'd his streame abroad to bring,  
Least prophane feet should wrong it, and rude gales;  
But finding happy channels, and supplies  
Of other founts mixe with his modest course,  
He grows a goodly river, and descryes  
The strength, that man'd him, since he left his sources  
Then takes he in deligitous meades, and groves,  
And, with his two-edg'd waters, flourisheth  
Before great palaces, and all mens eyes  
Build by his shores, to greet his passages:  
So thy chiefe Muse, by courteous selfe-amplish,  
Which is a true merke of the truest merit;  
In virgin feare of mens illiterate bell,  
Slumbers left wingt, and sleep not from her spirit;  
Till, waken'd eternally, now thoue lett'st her free,  
Singing the fable circles of the Muses,  
And in the highest pitch of tragicke,  
Mak'st her command all things thy ground produces.  
Beside, thy voice hath this due respect,  
That it lets passe nothing, without offering,  
Worthie

This contains an interesting dedicatory poem to the completion of the Works and to Jonson himself, and so underscores the uniqueness of the venture at this time in theatrical history.

# Shakespeare and his Company (on p. 72)



This would be perfect for display in terms of Shakespearean contexts (or photography for the Museum's website) as the closing page for the play entitled *Everyman in his Humour* from 1598 features a notable statement about the performances as being those of Shakespeare's company: "By the then Chamberlain his servants".


Furthermore, the page then lists the 'principal comedians', and this includes William Shakespeare, together with Burbage, Condell, Slye, and Kempe. Note also the reference to the Master of the Revels who had licensed the play for performance in the earlier 1590s.

# Dedication to the Inns of Court

8r

TO THE NOBLEST  
NOVRCERIES OF HVMA-  
NITY, AND LIBERTY, IN THE  
KINGDOME:

The Innes of Court.

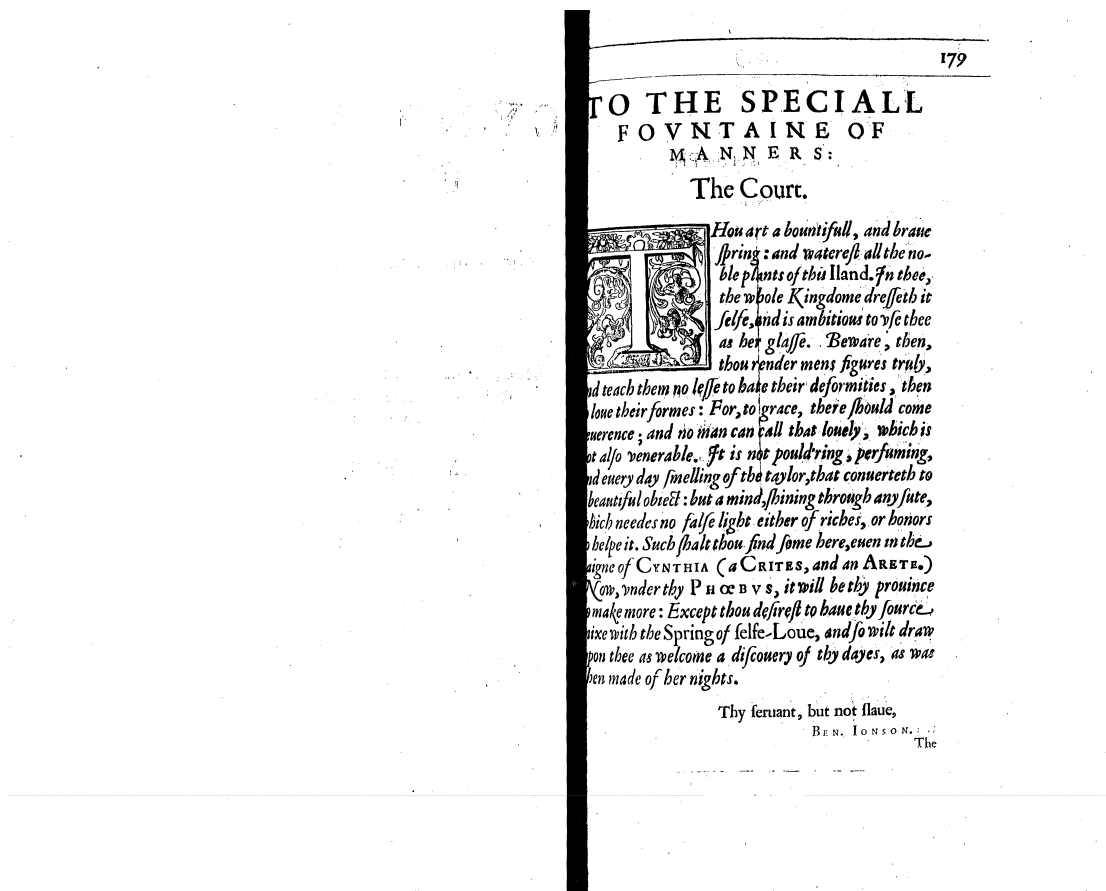


*Understand you, Gentlemen, not  
your houses: and a worthy suc-  
cession of you, to all time, as be-  
ing borne the Iudges of these  
Studies. When I wrote this  
Poeme, I had friendship with  
diuers in your societies; who, as  
they were great Names in learning, so they were no  
lesse Examples of liuing. Of them, and then (that I  
say no more) it was not despis'd. Now, that the  
Printer, by a doubled charge, thinkes it worthy a lon-  
ger life, then commonly the ayre of such things doth  
promise, I am carefull to put it a seruant to their plea-  
sures, who are the inhericers of the first fauour borne it.  
Yet, I command, it lye not in the way of your more  
noble, and vse-full studies to the publike: For so, I shall  
suffer for it. But, when the gowne, and cap is off, and  
the Lord of liberty raignes; then, to take it in your  
hands, perhaps may make some Benchers, tainted with  
humanity, reade: and not repent him.*

By your honourer,  
 BEN. IONSON.  
 G 2 The

This will be of use as a ShaLT image.

Dedication to the Elizabethan court (on p. 179)



1599 dedication "To the Special Fountain of Manners: The Court". This could be of interest in terms of links between public theatre and the elite world of the court.

Interestingly, note how Jonson signs off "Thy servant, but not slave".

*Sejanus and the King's Men (p. 438)*

(438)

This Tragedie vvas first  
acted, in the yeere  
1603.

By the Kings Majesties  
SERVANTS.

The principall Tragedians were,

RIC. BURBAGE.	WILL. SHAKESPEARE.
AVG. PHILIPS.	IOH. HEMINGS.
WILL. SLV.	HEN. CONDELL.
IOH. LOWIN.	ALEX. COOKE.

With the allowance of the Master of REVELLES.

VOLPONE.  
OR  
THE FOXE.

*A Comædia.*

Acted in the yeere 1605. By  
the K. MAJESTIES  
SERVANTS.

The Author B. I.

HORAT.

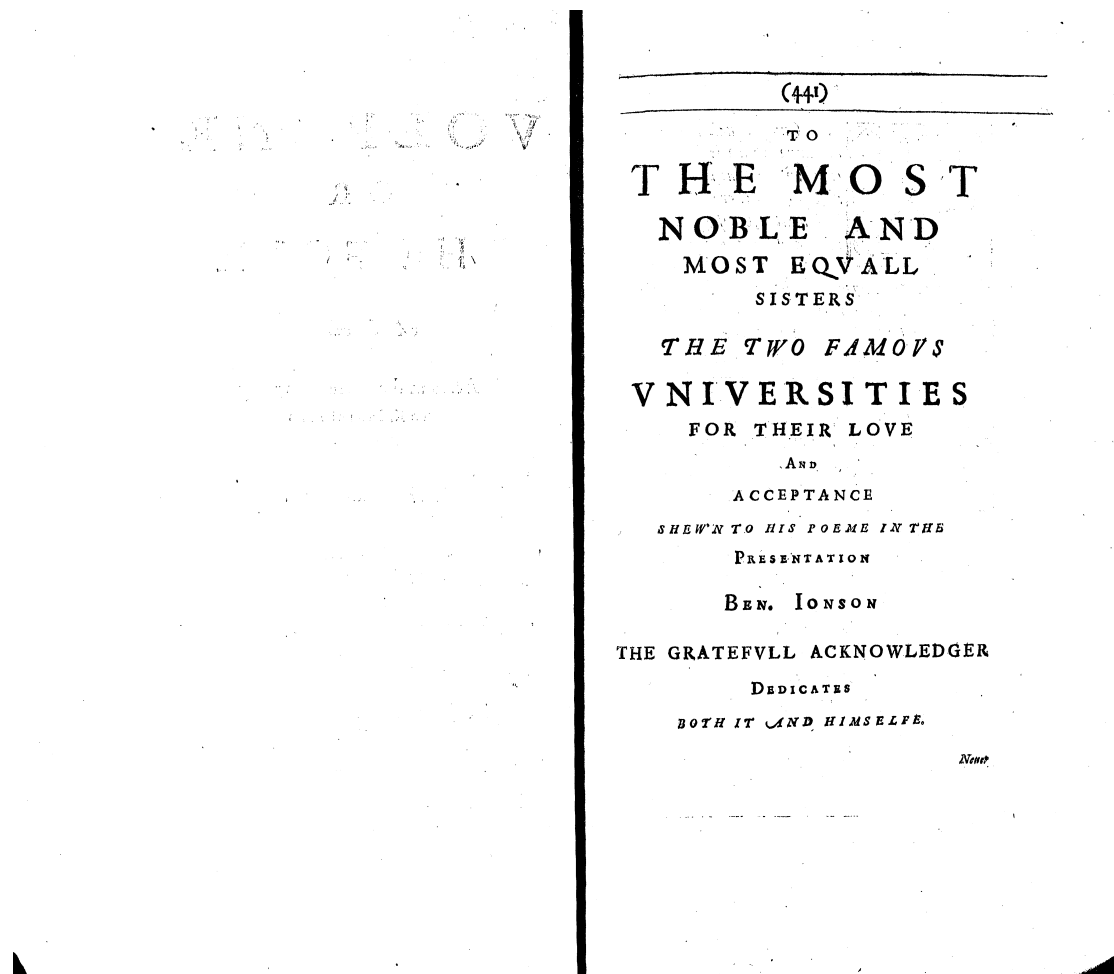
*Simul & iucunda, & idonea dicere vult.*

LONDON,  
Printed by WILLIAM STANSBY.

M. D C. KVI.

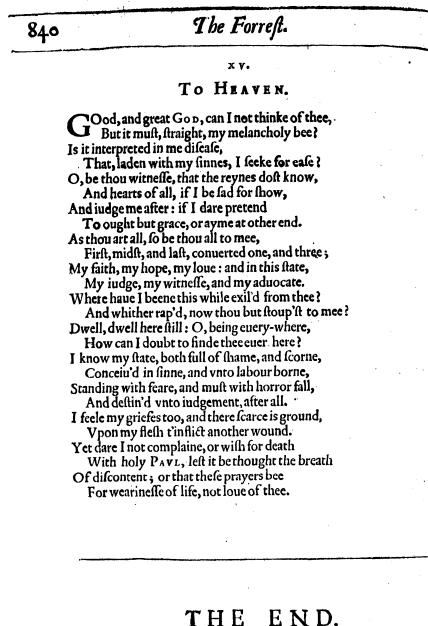
This page features the phrase "By the King's Majesties Servants". It also lists actors, including Shakespeare, Burbage, Heminge and Condell.

Dedication to the Universities (on page 441)



This will be of use as a ShaLT image.

## Entertainments (on p. 841 onwards)



PART OF THE  
KINGS  
ENTERTAINMENT  
IN PASSING TO  
his  
Coronation.

The Author B. I.

M A R T.  
*Quando magis dignos licuit spectare triumphos!*

L O N D O N,

M, DC. XVI.

This introduces us to the idea of drama at court or in a civic context excluding the theatres. As the Dyce collection includes various rare and important quartos of such entertainments this issue will be returned to in a future report, but for now it is worth stressing that the Folio contains various courtly and civic entertainments including the *Part of the King's Entrance in Passing to his Coronation* (James I) as well as various courtly masques from p. 891 onwards.

NB: The better edition is the one in the Clements Collection (CLE L11).

The Forster edition is not in such a good state and is catalogued as 2 volumes – vol 1 is simply the 1616 Folio, vol 2 is actually the 1640 Second Folio (Forster S Fol 4689)

*Works of King James I (also 1616)*

