

the manuscript of *Shirley* has been bound and rebound, its paper stocks can offer substantial information about its production and Brontë's own writing practice.

Charlotte Brontë used four different varieties of high-grade stationery to copy out her manuscript. As described in more detail below, the writing paper she used was sold in quires or partial quires of nested bifolia. Each bifolium consisted of two leaves or four pages. Although the leaves in the manuscript are not uniform in height, at 18.3 cm wide they are now all uniform in width, suggesting that the manuscript was trimmed for the purposes of binding. These bifolia would have measured 38 cm wide or thereabouts when opened, but the size would have slightly varied among manufacturers. The four paper stocks included in the manuscript are:

- (1) London Superfine, a high-quality wove paper measuring 23.2 cm tall, with a blind-embossed stationer's crest often appearing, when visible, in the upper left-hand corners of the rectos of both leaves of the bifolium (though often much fainter, if present, on the second leaf) and containing the (embossed) lettering "LONDON | SUPERFINE" inside a circle; the crest features an embossed crown in its center;
- (2) Cream Laid, another high-quality paper of approximately the same height as London Superfine, and exhibiting chain lines and wirelines that appear to be real, as opposed to being made with a dandy roll; here, when visible, the embossed stationer's crest features the words "CREAM | LAID" within an oblong octagon, positioned as described above;
- (3) Royal Superfine, a smooth-surface (possibly glazed) laid paper that is noticeably shorter, measuring 22.65 cm; when visible, the stationer's crest contains the words "ROYAL | SUPERFINE", again inside a circle, featuring an embossed crown in its center, positioned as described above; and
- (4) A laid paper, likely made by the Whatman firm, with a crown, shield, and posthorn with a pendant cursive "W" watermark; its watermark is positioned as when appearing in a quarto format (i.e., across the fold and running parallel to the top and bottom edges of the bifolium);⁵⁹ a very small, round watermark crest frequently appears in the position where stationers' crests usually are embossed (i.e., the upper left-hand corner of the recto of the closed bifolium—or the crown side of the sheet), though *not* on second leaf of the bifolium (i.e., the "W" side); this paper measures 22.6 cm in height.

The average dimension of a leaf from the manuscript in its present state is about 18 cm wide by 23 cm tall—or about 7 by 9 inches. Using a dip pen, Brontë copied out her novels onto the rectos of these leaves when creating her fair copy manuscripts.

Prior to making her fair copies, Brontë's drafting process was quite different. She tended to use both sides of the leaf while initially composing her writing—sometimes drafting her manuscripts on smaller (and likely less expensive) papers and writing in pencil, as we can see in the portions of the manuscript for

59. Stationery was cut down from larger sheets; see below for more details on the original full sheet size.