

some of Brontë's own preceding numbering in a few instances (viz., xxv, xxvii, 269)—an approach that failed to recover a great deal of additional information about the earlier stages of the manuscript's composition and revision. A full representation of the numbers on the last leaf in volume 3, in order of their chronological written sequence as delineated above, would run as follows: A873.B873.C891.[D897].E323. That is: A873[CB pencil].B873[CB brown ink].C891[CB red ink].[D897; the final numbering sequence that was discontinued by CB].E323[the BM foliation].<sup>92</sup> In one glance, the sequence provides quite a bit of data—namely, that the manuscript had increased in size by 24 leaves between the time it was first copied out in full and then later revised.<sup>93</sup>

By examining the different states of the manuscript's leaf (and occasional page) numbering alongside the manuscript's paper stocks, one can readily establish the various stages at which the manuscript was copied out. The great majority of volumes 1 and 2 were copied onto Cream Laid writing paper,<sup>94</sup> while the majority of volume 3 was copied onto London Superfine letter paper. I believe that Brontë's use of these two principal paper stocks roughly corresponds to the two main periods when she copied out her manuscript.

Although it is generally known that Brontë wrote most of *Shirley* during two different periods, there has been some question within the scholarly community as to exactly when and why the interruption occurred between her two writing stints. Examining the manuscript, it is clear that Brontë finished copying out volume 1 in September 1848, as she adds her completion date (almost exactly a year before Taylor arrived in Haworth to retrieve the volume) at the end of the volume.<sup>95</sup> Volume 2 is undated, but is largely written on the same laid paper stock as volume 1. In her correspondence, Brontë indicates that she "laid aside" the manuscript while she herself was ill following the death of her brother, Branwell.<sup>96</sup> And in a later letter to George Smith, Brontë indicates that "two-thirds of 'Shirley'" had been written while her sisters still lived and were able to respond to

92. Brontë's leaf count is one leaf longer than that of the BM as she paginated the verso of BM leaf 267 (CB leaf 835) in volume 3 of the manuscript.

93. This must be qualified, as Brontë paginated the verso of one leaf: BM f. 267 of volume 3, as indicated in the previous note.

94. Approximately 92% (261 leaves) of the paper in volume 1 is Cream Laid, with the remainder consisting of 21 leaves of London Superfine (7%) used for the first chapter of the manuscript, one leaf (BM f. 215) introduced as part of the nineteenth-century rebind, and one leaf of the twentieth-century cream-colored wove paper introduced during the BL rebind. Approximately 92% (265 leaves, or 11 + 23 + 114 + 114 + 3) of volume 2 is made up of Cream Laid, with 4% London Superfine (11 leaves, or 5 + 4 + 2) and 4% Royal Superfine (13 leaves, or 12 + 1). Approximately 12% of volume 3 is made up of laid watermarked paper (38 leaves, or 24 + 14), with 6% Cream Laid (18 leaves), and the rest, or approximately 82%, London Superfine (267 leaves).

95. Volume 1 was completed in September 1848, as dated by Brontë on the last leaf of volume 1 of the manuscript.

96. Brontë writes to W. S. Williams: "My book, alas! is laid aside for the present; both head and hand seem to have lost their cunning; imagination is pale, stagnant, mute. This incapacity chagrins me; sometimes I have a feeling of cankering care on the subject, but I combat it as well as I can; it does no good." Margaret Smith believes that the letter was written on October 18, 1848, based on the source. *Letters*, 2:128. This is the same date Clement Shorter attributed to the letter; see p. 458 of *The Brontës: Life and Letters* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908).