



The duty of memory – ‘through Hell with dignity’

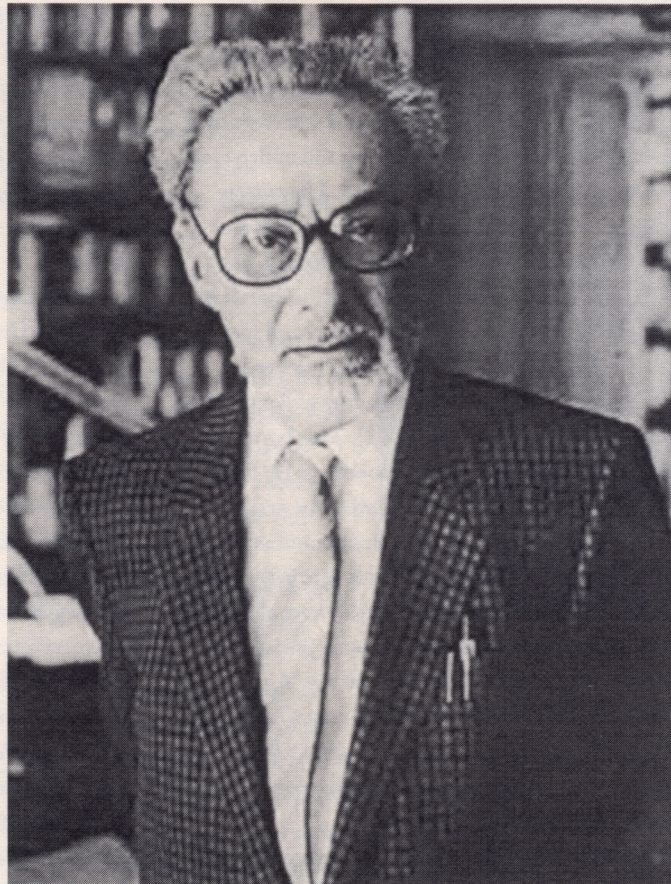
Pierre Ferrand

It is fitting that a compatriot of Dante has written what is perhaps the most effective account of the hell of Auschwitz. He was Primo Levi (1919-1987), one of the finest Italian writers of the last century, whose best known identity is that of a prime witness of the Holocaust, a word he disliked.

Levi, who believed in using words precisely and accurately, felt offended by the fact that “holocaust” means literally a “burnt offering” to the gods. As a nonbeliever, he could not accept gods who required human sacrifices. Nor could he agree with the thesis of some religious people that genocide was God’s punishment for sin, though they can quote the authority of a number of prophets for this concept. Indeed, he had serious reservations about prophets.

Levi needed to write his account of his year in Auschwitz to come to terms with his own traumatic experience, and because he felt that it was his duty to bear witness. He did this in 1946, in a fever heat, as soon as he had managed to return to his native Turin after a long and involuntary odyssey through Russia and Eastern Europe, which he describes with dry humor in his second book, *La Tregua* (The Armistice), written 14 years later.

Levi tells his story quietly, in a tightly controlled manner. He shows no self-pity and does not raise his voice. He does not clamor for revenge. There is a “duty of memory” because the extermination camps were an ominous sign of danger for mankind.



Primo Levi. Portrait by Jerry Bauer. Image from <http://www.inch.com/-ari/levi1.htm>

The book, published in 1947 in a small edition with the title, *Se questo è un uomo*, (If This Is a Man), consists of 17 brief sketches, which provide a sober picture, etched in granite, of the concentration camp process of dehumanization he had observed and experienced. It is an account of facts whose impact is cumulative.

Levi stresses that survival in Auschwitz was largely a matter of chance. He did not die there because he was lucky. He was transported to it in February 1944, when the Nazis felt an acute need for slave labor and were ready to defer the

gassing of Jews who were able to work, while continuing to exterminate children and old people, as well as the sick and the weak. Some Nazis helped to keep him alive because he was deemed useful as a research chemist. Still, in his case as in many others, despite and because of the Nazi attempts at ruthless exploitation, they did not succeed in getting anything of value out of him for their war effort.

Primo Levi never makes any claim of having been a hero, but it is obvious that he came through hell with his essential humanity and dignity intact. The evidence of his work, and indeed his whole life, indicates that he was a man of transparent honesty and decency, the kindest of men, and exceedingly conscientious in his human relationships. He certainly was most conscientious in carrying out “the duty of memory”: of eye-witness to genocide. Like Coleridge’s *Ancient Mariner*, which he quotes repeatedly, he had an obsession to bear

witness. His testimony, never melodramatic, is direct and details the ugly facts, and does not mince words. Though shy and reserved by nature, he eventually taught himself to be an effective speaker about his experiences to the most varied audiences, including hundreds of talks to school children.

For a dozen years after its first publication, the little volume of less than 150 pages drew limited attention. While reviews were quite



Musings...

CAXTONIAN

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The pity of it all” seems an appropriate descriptor of our age. With the blessings of unimagined progress everywhere evident in human life, particularly in developed nations, we seem to have turned our backs on what brought us to this point and have reverted to a frame of mind we were once so intent on leaving behind.

I have watched the rise of radical conservatism, worldwide, and I have seen the surging power of strident religious groups of all stripes. I have studied the coy acceptance of bias in society and understand how easily it develops into prejudice. I have seen prejudice subtly emerge into malice and become hatred. And I have been a witness to hatred, like a malignancy metastasizing, to become the disease of violence and destruction, both personal and social.

Beyond observations, my thinking has been informed of late by my recent reading of Amos Elon’s marvelous *The Pity of It All* (2002). This book, the history of the Jews in Germany between 1743 and 1933, begins in the fall of 1743, with the arrival of 14-year-old Moses Mendelssohn, frail and sickly, at Berlin’s Rosenthaler Tor, “the only gate in the city wall through which Jews (and cattle) were allowed to pass.” We watch the rise of this young Jewish youth to become the intellectual leader of the “Age of Mendelssohn” — the “German Socrates,” as he was called. His devotion to studies launched a long series of successes making Jews and Germany nearly synonymous for the next 200 years.

We then meet Salomon Maimon, who arrived at Rosenthaler Tor in 1778. Befriended by the always-kindly Mendelssohn, Maimon became a “*Betteljude*, a mendicant, a wandering scholar ‘in search of truth,’ at once a genius and a wretch.” Kant considered him the best interpreter of Kant’s works, and Goethe attempted, without success, to bring Maimon to Weimar to “become a part of his intimate circle.”

We come to understand Heinrich Heine, a genius so complex and brilliant that no good biography of him exists, who fused German and Hebrew mythologies in his poetry. “No other writer,” Elon says, “has ever been so German and so Jewish and so ambivalent and ironic about both.” Germans and Jews were, Heine said, “Europe’s ‘two ethical peoples,’ who might yet make Germany ‘a citadel of spirituality.’” Or just the opposite.

And, of course, we meet German Jews Karl Marx, whose legacy marred the 20th Century, Albert Einstein, who gave us modern science, and Hannah Arendt, whose presence nurtured Chicago until her death in 1975.

After presenting the important Jewish personages in Germany, Elom concludes his important study with a description of the evening in May 1933, at the Brandenburg Gate, when Joseph Goebbels, under orders of the recently-investitured Adolph Hitler, held the first book-burning: not only would they destroy the people whom they hated; they would destroy their memory. The rest, as the saying goes, is history.

A passage in reference to the beginning of the American Civil War, from Carl Sandburg’s *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, Vol. I, (1939) seems appropriate: “Thus the war of words was over and the naked test by steel weapons, so long foretold, was at last to begin. It had happened before in other countries among other peoples bewildered by economic necessity, by the mob oratory of politicians and editors, by the ignorance of the educated classes, by the greed of the propertied classes, by elemental instincts touching race and religion, by the capacity of so many men, women, and children for hating and fearing what they do not understand while believing they do understand completely and perfectly what no one understands except tentatively and hazardously.”

The pity of it all in our time emerges from our failure, with so much at the very tips of our minds, to know and understand the whole of human history, to grasp the enormous devastations social hatreds have brought to humankind over the years. The test of our time is whether we can forge a fellowship of intellect, kindness, courage, and discipline to counter the increasingly pervasive sectarianism, self-righteousness, and malevolence of our age.

Robert Cotner
Editor

Ludwig Rosenberger Collection – a ‘political, social, and cultural history of Jews’

Sem C. Sutter

Fritz Stern...has argued that the history of the assimilated Jews of Germany was much more than the history of a tragedy; it was also, for a long time, the story of an extraordinary success: ‘We must understand the triumphs in order to understand the tragedy.’

Amos Elon, 2002

It is almost impossible with my life history not to become interested in the troubles of the Jewish people. It wasn’t anything but natural that a person thinks about the underlying problems.

Ludwig Rosenberger, 1980.

Over the course of some 60 years, Caxtonian Ludwig Rosenberger (1904-1987) formed a remarkable Judaica collection of some 17,000 titles. Its genesis, growth, and scope were inextricably and unmistakably intertwined with his own experiences and with the story of Jews in Germany so eloquently delineated in Amos Elon’s *The Pity of It All*. Throughout his life, Rosenberger thought deeply and read, almost incessantly it seems, about the political, social, and cultural history of the Jews and about approaches to “the Jewish question.” This he construed in its Zionist framing as the central issue for Jews living in the Diaspora — the Jewish dilemma, how to live with dignity and self-respect without having a national homeland — but also in its anti-Semitic sense — the Jewish “problem,” posed by a group with its own cultural identity living in an ostensibly homogeneous “host” nation.

The avid reader became an ardent collector, building and shaping the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica, which he donated to the University of Chicago Library in 1980. His collecting encompassed the social and cultural history of Jews throughout the world, and his Library includes sizeable sections devoted to France, Britain, Palestine, Israel, and the United States. But his own life experiences led him to understandable fascination with the significance

of German Jews in modern history and documenting this story became his passionate priority as a collector.

Born in Munich, young Ludwig attended a private boys’ Gymnasium, where he was the only Jewish student. After graduation, he completed a thorough two-year apprenticeship in the banking firm of Heinrich Aufhäuser and then worked in its securities division. As a teenager and young man, he took a serious interest in civic and Jewish affairs, becoming active in the local Zionist group. Early in 1924

Rosenberger quit his bank job and went to Palestine. When his initial experience in a kibbutz threatened his health, he moved to Jerusalem to work for a commercial shipping agency. He pursued his interest in Jewish history, enrolling in courses at the new Hebrew University and making contacts at the Jewish National and University Library, especially with Abraham Schwadron, curator of a large manuscript and portrait collection. Among the authors that especially influenced his thinking were Simon Dubnow, who introduced a sociological and economic approach to Jewish history, and sharp-witted journalist Shmarya Levin.

But the slow rate of emigration and squabbling among representatives of various Zionist groups in Palestine eventually brought Rosenberger to doubt the movement’s ability to solve “the Jewish question,” at least under conditions then prevailing. In 1928, he returned



Ludwig Rosenberger. This and all illustrations in this article from the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica, Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, through whose courtesy these illustrations are used.

to Germany, and late in 1929, he emigrated to the United States. After one year in New York, he moved to Chicago, which became his home for the rest of his life.

Established in Chicago in the housewares trade and eventually owning a wholesale business, Rosenberger pursued his reading, buying new, out-of-print, and rare books on subjects that interested him or sparked his curiosity. As he evolved into a sophisticated and systematic collector, he remained a voracious reader, at least intending to read everything he purchased, even at times when his rate of acquisition made this impossible.

Rosenberger bought imaginatively and sometimes nearly exhaustively, in specialized areas that fascinated him most. He would have agreed wholeheartedly with Elon’s thesis:

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favorable, the book did not sell. Its subject matter was not fashionable. Levi felt discouraged. He concentrated on his profession as a research chemist in a paint and varnish factory and became its manager, developing a number of new products. However, in 1958, the book was published again and has remained outstandingly successful ever since. Levi became world-famous after its translation into English and in many other languages shortly afterwards.

The American edition of this translation (otherwise excellent) is saddled with the somewhat misleading title, *Survival in Auschwitz*, which is not true to Levi's spirit. It was not intended as a Hollywood-like tale with a happy ending, but as a warning. I have given copies of it to my grandchildren and other young people, who wished to have an idea of what the German concentration camps were really about.

Just as impressive was his last published book, a searing series of essays, *The Drowned and the Saved*, in which he tries, among other things, to come to terms with what he calls "the gray zone," the ambiguity of human good and evil. Still, he makes quite clear where he stands, makes moral judgements, and simply states the brutal grimness of concentration camp reality in an unforgettable way. A superbly trained observer, this fine scientist analyzes the facts logically and in depth. His presentation and discussion of the process of dehumanization in the camps and on the way to them is perhaps the most authoritative and cogent ever written.

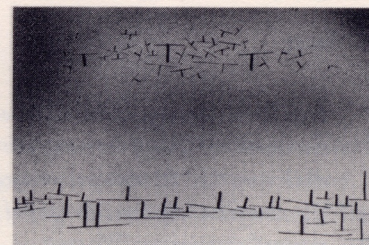
These two books are not for the squeamish nor for those who refuse to face fundamental moral issues. He states that "to divide people into black and white means not to know human nature." He admits that monsters exist, though they are comparatively rare. What is even more dangerous are the "ordinary people" who simply follow orders to do evil, or avert their eyes from it and do nothing. In one of his interviews, he confirmed that his thinking about this was close to Hannah Arendt's "banality of evil."

While not vindictive, he said that to love one's enemies and forgive them was not part of his vocabulary. An enemy, by definition, is

someone you cannot love as long as he remains an enemy. Levi believed in justice. "If I had Eichmann before me, I would condemn him to death." On the other hand, he rejected hate, "which is often confused with a desire for justice," but is a very different thing and an emotion that involves loss of emotional control. He opposed the idea of "collective responsibility" as well as blanket indictments as being the essence of the approach of the Nazis themselves.

Primo Levi, however, was not limited by his concentration camp experience and his lifelong reflections about it. One of his most admired works is *The Periodic Table*, a remarkable fantasy (and successful amalgam of chemistry and personal memoirs, notably of his youth as a Jew in fascist Italy), a book which was enthusiastically received by critics throughout the world. He also wrote a picaresque novel, *The Wrench*, a celebration of the work ethic he shared all his life, and another short novel, *If Not Now, When?*, which is a tale of the fight of Jewish partisans in Poland and Russia. (He had been himself a rather ineffective partisan fighter in Italy.) The balance of his output consists of short stories (many of them science fiction or allegorical), essays reflecting his truly encyclopedic interests, an anthology of his favorite writers, brief poems, and some 250 published interviews. He had a great deal to say and said it clearly, concisely, with great precision.

There are many aspects to this brilliant research chemist and writer, one of whose hobbies was mountain climbing and who, all his life, read voraciously in several languages, from Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* to Thomas Mann's *Joseph and His Brethren*, not to speak of T.S.Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, Sholem Aleichem, and Rabelais. He has said, indeed, that he felt closest to Rabelais and "salvation through laughter," and repeatedly described himself as a "centaur," a man of many moods and interests, who could write imaginative, ironic, and sardonic tales, satire, and picaresque narratives, as well as his straightforward accounts of the horrors of the Shoah. His whole work is eminently worth exploring.



Primo Levi

Se questo è un uomo
La tregua

EINAUDI TASCABILI

Cover of *Se questo è un uomo* LaTregua. From the collection of Pierre Ferrand.

Bibliographical Note: Most of Primo Levi's books and important interviews are available in English in good translations, though he is even more impressive in his masterly Italian. I have consulted the collection of his *Opere* in three volumes (Turin, Einaudi, 1987-1990), and also, among other books, the useful anthology, *The Voice of Memory: Interviews, 1961-1987*, edited by Marco Belpoliti, and Robert Gordon (New York, The New Press, 2001), which contains several interviews not included in Belpoliti's original (Italian) edition. Levi is incomparably the best source for understanding his own convictions and ideas as well as for what he chose to reveal of his life. Though most of his writings were autobiographical or had clear autobiographical implications, he was a very discreet and private person.

Last year, two biographies of Primo Levi were published in English: Carole Angier's *The Double Bond: Primo Levi: A Biography*, New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux (900+ pages), and Ian Thomas, *Primo Levi*, London, Hutchinson (some 650 pages). Another biography, originally in French, by Myriam Anissimov, has been published in the U.S. (1998), and is more than 450 pages long.



Primo Levi
I sommersi e i salvati



EINAUDI TASCABILI

Cover of *I sommersi e i salvati*. From the collection of Pierre Ferrand.

There have been other biographies in Italian and French.

Why Angier, Thomas, and Anissimov felt it necessary to be so long-winded is puzzling to this student of Levi's work and ideas. He was always brief and to the point. Also, I quarrel with the fact that all three biographers insisted on starting their books with his fall down the stairwell of his home in Turin in 1987, at the age of 66. This has been widely described as a suicide, though there is no conclusive evidence that it was anything other than an accident. Whether it was or not is chiefly of anecdotal interest since the meaning of one's life should be defined by what kind of person one is, one's relationship with one's fellow men (and women) and one's achievements. Primo Levi's life, character, insights, and contributions to literature continue to deserve celebration, regardless of what happened at the end.

Angier's lengthy and voyeuristic book is an attempt to demonstrate by means of an unusually large dose of dubious assumptions and speculative interpretations that Levi was doomed to commit suicide since his teenage days. It is also the most self-indulgent biography since Edmund Morris on Ronald Reagan, with the biographer forever present

and even at the forefront of her book. Thomas is somewhat less irritating but almost equally misguided. I prefer Anissimov, who carefully chronicles Levi's life in its historical context, publishes a number of useful documents, does not delve much into Levi's private life, and largely avoids speculation. ❖

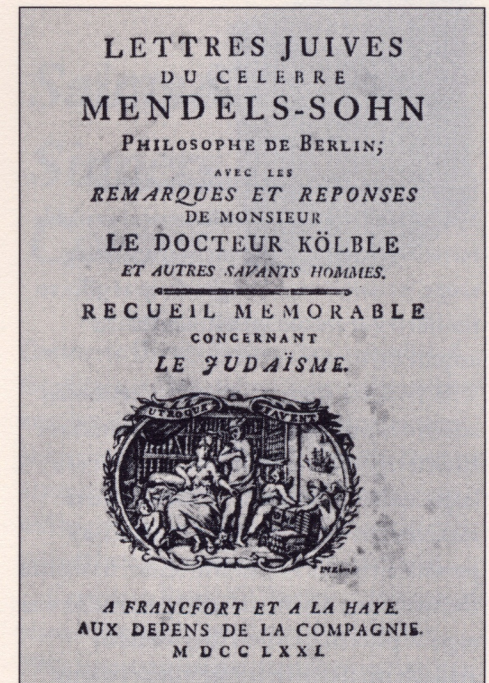
Rosenberger

Continued from page 3

"The major revolutions in European and American Jewish life during the nineteenth century, from religious reform to political Zionism, originated in Germany or Austria among Jews passionately devoted to German culture. As their own tribal idols crumbled, they did not simply borrow those of the Christian majority but invented new ones — communism, psychoanalysis, and other systems based on the utopian conviction that the world could be rationally reordered and vastly improved on a scientific basis." (p. 8)

Rosenberger wanted to read books by and about men and women who had distinguished themselves in arts and letters, like Mendelssohn and Heine, or pioneered in the sciences and social sciences, such as Einstein and Freud. While collecting major authors, he was also likely to notice a less prominent social reformer or to delight in a slightly off-beat figure, such as a Jewish chess champion. He had a keen and abiding interest in Karl Marx and in socialist and communist theorists and activists, whether or not they had acknowledged or repudiated their Jewish origin, and he sought works by or about democratic political figures from many lands: Benjamin Disraeli, Walther Rathenau, Léon Blum, and David Ben Gurion.

Some of these spheres, such as Marxist and socialist thought, lie outside traditional definitions of Judaica, but this did not concern Rosenberger. He discerned roots in Jewish



Title page of Moses Mendelssohn's *Lettres juives*. . . recueil memorable concernant le judaisme (1771), a rare French edition of the philosopher's reasoned refusal of J. C. Lavater's challenge to convert to Christianity. (See page 8 for additional illustrations for this article.)

history or reactions to it and wanted to know more. The same is true of his interest in the literature of conversionism and anti-Semitism. While books on these topics cannot be called Judaica, Rosenberger believed that both were such significant and persistent factors in Jewish history that a thoughtful and historically-minded reader could not ignore them.

Like most astute collectors, Rosenberger acquired his books from a great variety of sources. His business trips — to New York or to small Midwestern cities — typically included visits to local dealers, whether that meant H. P. Kraus, Argosy, or simple, one-room used bookstores. He pored over catalogs that he received from Europe, checking them carefully against his holdings. Gradually he discovered dealers with specialties akin to his own and cultivated long-term relationships with them so that they offered him sought-after or unusual titles directly and privately.

Ludwig Rosenberger's support for the University of Chicago Library dated from the early 1960s and correlated closely with his bibliographic and personal friendship with

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Primitive History – A forgotten ‘masterpiece’

Dan Crawford

Caxtonian Robert Rosenthal, Curator of Special Collections. As he discovered available materials that lay outside his own collecting scope, he sometimes bought them as gifts to the library or encouraged Rosenthal to acquire them.

In 1976, the library mounted an exhibition selected to portray the breadth and richness of Rosenberger’s library and to introduce it to a larger audience. By 1980, he had decided to make the University Library his collection’s permanent home. Still an avid reader, he wanted the books near him for consultation, and he was eager to place them where they would be available to scholars from the widest possible range of disciplines.

At his death in 1987, Ludwig Rosenberg endowed a chair for Jewish studies, strengthening instruction in this field at the university. But his most personal legacy is the library that grew out of his own life and experience. It will continue to touch and to educate generations of students and scholars, who, like him, are curious and open-minded readers. ❖

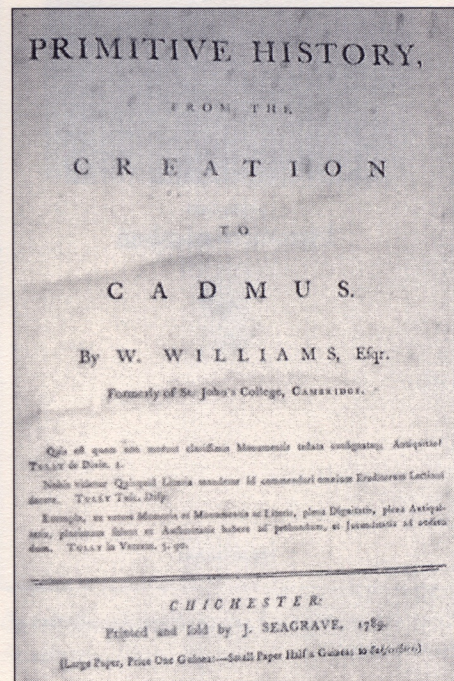
The University of Chicago Library maintains a webpage devoted to the Rosenberger Library [<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/rosen.html>] including an online version of the 1976 exhibition. Records of most titles in the collection are available online through the University of Chicago Library catalog [<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/h/1>]. Works in the collection are arranged by topic in a printed catalog prepared by Rosenberger: *Judaica: A Short-Title Catalogue of the Books, Pamphlets and Manuscripts Relating to the Political, Social and Cultural History of the Jews and to the Jewish Question ...* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1971; and *Supplement*, 1979).

At the end of his masterpiece, William Williams recalled how long and hard he worked to produce its 600-page bulk, pushing research into areas where the rest of the world was content simply to believe what it was told. He knew he would never again do anything so big or so important: this book was his legacy, his lifework, his monument. Eventually, he knew, it would be recognized as the landmark it is, and it would guarantee that his name would be remembered by generations born after he is dust. He cited verse to say so: “Old time, thou’lt soon demolish me; I these reprisals make on thee.”

What? You claim you have never heard of William Williams or of his great work, *Primitive History from the Creation to Cadmus*? There’s a reason for that. But writers stick together: it seems only right to pause and take one’s hat off to a man who thought his prose would survive his generation. We all feel like that; the fact that most of us are wrong about it makes this the more poignant.

William Williams, formerly of St. John’s College, Cambridge, had his *magnum opus* published by J. Seagrave of Chichester in 1789. His name, and the dedication of his book to the Prince of Wales, make it clear that he was Welsh, though he preferred the term “Cambrobriton.” (Research for this article turned up two dozen Welsh writers named William Williams; it seems to be a national characteristic.) He certainly has the poet’s skill attributed to the Welsh: unconventional spellings keep popping up. A phoenix is a “phenix;” the departure of Israelites from Egypt is “the Exod.” In poems, this is tolerable; in a 600-page lump of prose, it adds to the difficulties.

As to the subject of this prose, Williams was neither the first nor the last to try to explain the early history of Humankind. Not prehistoric humans: there is no prehistory. The complete history of Earth is available in the Bible, given the correct translation. (He preferred that used by Archbishop Ussher, who picked out a weekday afternoon in 4004 B.C. as the beginning of time.) The mythologies of ancient Greece, Egypt, Mexico, and other cultures add detail: we



Title page of Primitive History. From the collection of Dan Crawford.

merely need to realize that the Greeks, being deprived of divine revelation, had to interpret things on their own, so some of their basic outline came out wrong. Noah, for example, became Poseidon in their version. But the truth is there if, like William Williams, you can calculate properly.

Williams had correlated the writings of the Greeks and Egyptians and Chinese with those of Moses (“the famous general of the Israelites,” who was familiar with the records kept by Thoth, the grandson of Ham—you remember: Noah’s son) and had come up with a perfectly viable timetable. Here’s how it worked. If a legend mentions a painting, then that story took place after the Trojan War, since painting was invented *after* the fall of Troy. How did Williams know this? Williams had read everything and dovetailed the stories into continuous narrative. The author he brings to mind is Sir James Frazer, whose *Golden Bough* handles things differently, and at even greater length. But the scope of Williams’ knowledge is just as breathtaking.

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In the first chapter, he discussed the timing of comets, the fitting of the planets of the Solar System into the six days of Creation, the speed of Earth's movement (this became plot material when discussing Methuselah's age), the speed of light, the movement of columns of ether, the possibility that other planets in the Solar System were habitable, and the possibility that the Earth itself was *not* habitable. (Well, actually, he was being as logical as you could possibly desire. See, Earth has these oceans, where no one can live, at least nobody who matters, and these vast deserts where nobody important lives, and the poles, where no one lives, so it would be wrong to say other planets are completely uninhabitable when it's possible that they also have zones that are suitable for...well, anyhow, he reasoned that the planets have to be there for *some* good reason.)

And that's just the first chapter. A browse through the pages that follow show how Irish Goths (or Scythians) introduced cannibalism to Europe, how Chinese and English could be proven to be closely related if one traced words to their Hebrew roots, how Aztecs, Tartars, and Arabs were all descended from a Celtic tribe that itself descended from Shem (you really must keep these sons of Noah in order), how to escape a crocodile since it, like the shark, has difficulty turning, and why education of the young has gone straight to pot. (The government doesn't control education as much as it should.) One wonders what the Prince of Wales made of all this; Prinny was not one of the deep thinkers of his day.

The concept is rather appealing, and *Primitive History* could easily be a fascinating read, an encyclopedia of one man's notion of how the universe works. If William Williams had paused in his research to learn something about how to write, he might have achieved this. But like a number of authors who spend their lives in research, he is unwilling to let a scrap of information escape. Here follows a sample paragraph. You can see what he was getting at; whether or not he got around to it is in the eye of the beholder.

"Nicander Colophonius mentions a tradition alluding to the human fall, that 'the crime of Prometheus was his persuading mankind to resign to the Serpent their privilege of renewing their constitution'. Dr. Slare's grandsire, at 86 years old, had new teeth, and his hairs became black; may not some diet aid this restorative aptitude. Menander says that woman occasioned the affliction of Prometheus. The Dragon in Nonnus tasting the juice of the grape is a fable evidently deduced from the Serpent tasting the original fruit in Eden. From an imperfect tradition concerning the tree of life, the Pagans acquired their idea of Moly, and from Paradise, their golden age."

Ah well. Williams knew his book would be subjected to ridicule: he was ahead of his time. Like other authors he mentions — Homer, Socrates, Galileo, Bacon, Locke, and Newton — he knew he'd be understood by a later, wiser generation. He made his book available in two editions; over two centuries later, research turns up two copies besides the one that appeared somehow in Iowa. Both of those copies are in the British Library (Prinny's copy is no doubt one of them.) Maybe the generation that would appreciate William Williams, formerly of St. Johns, has not yet been born.

True wisdom wasn't appreciated in his age, he said: it was all a matter of publicity. Real research didn't stand a chance against authors who could afford to make a lot of noise and public display. But one day, he knew, books would be appreciated for their contents. Perhaps he does deserve posthumous respect then: if not for the contents of his book, then for that optimism. ❖

September luncheon and dinner programs announced

The 2003-2004 Caxton year will begin with a luncheon program, September 12, 2003. Steve Tomashefsky will speak on "Parlement of Fowler," focusing on dictionaries of English usage, some of which predate H.W. Fowler's classic.

The first dinner meeting will be on September 17, 2003, with Richard Christiansen speaking on "Overtures: Bits and Pieces in Process from a History of Theater in Chicago." Theater reviewer for 24 years with the *Chicago Tribune*, Christiansen will share his expertise and memories.

Saints & Sinners Corner



Caxtonian George Ranney, Sr., a member of the club since 1941 and our most senior ranking member, died this past year, according to word just received from family members. Mr. Ranney, a lawyer, steel executive, and an outdoorsman, will be greatly missed, and members of the club extend their sincerest sympathy to the family.

Caxtonian Roger W. Barrett, a collector of manuscripts and a member of the club since 1941, is now our longest-standing member. We extend to him good health and best wishes.

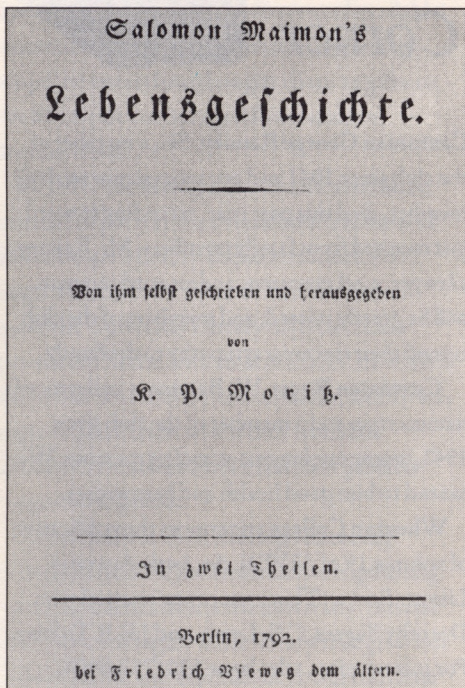
Wheaton College announces the publication of volume 19 of *SEVEN: An Anglo-American Literary Review*. This issue contains articles on Dorothy Sayers, C.S. Lewis, and J.R.R. Tolkien. For information, telephone 630/752-5908.

The *Chicago Tribune* noted on April 3, 2003 (Sec. 5, p. 3) that the fine Caxton Club Exhibition, "Inland Printers: The Fine Press Movement in Chicago, 1920-1945," which had been at Columbia College since its opening, has moved to the Chicago Cultural Center, where it will run through June 29. The article failed to mention that this is a Caxton Club exhibition.

The June 5, 2003 issue of *New City* published the annual "Lit50" list, the selective subjective ranking of "Who Really Books in Chicago." Six percent of the list were Caxtonian in nature; Mary Dempsey, Chicago Library Commissioner came in #4; Brad Jonas of Powell's Bookstore in Chicago was #25, and Jack Cella of Seminary Co-Op Bookstore, was #42. Congratulations to our Caxtonian celebs! And who was Numero Uno? Why, of course, Joe Parisi of *Poetry* was at the top of the list. Congratulations to Joe, as well.

The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, will offer a course in "History of the Book," August 4-8, 2003, on the U-C campus. Sidney Berger of Simmons College will teach the course. For information regarding it, telephone 217/244-2751.

Bookmarks...



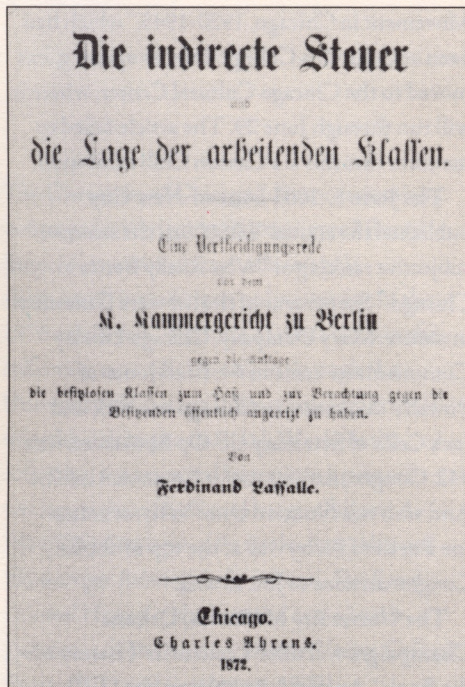
Title page of *Lebensgeschichte* (1792), Salomon Maimon's colorful autobiography.



Title page of the first edition of Heinrich Heine's *Buch der Lieder* (1827). Its critical success, says Elon, "made Heine the best-known, best-loved poet after Goethe."



Title page of the first French edition (1872-75) of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*. Rosenberger assembled a remarkable collection of Marx first editions.



Title page of *Die indirecte Steuer*, a pamphlet in which socialist Ferdinand Lassalle maintained that indirect taxes were regressive. Rosenberger helped detect that the Chicago: Charles Ahrens imprint on this 1872 edition was false.



Page from Johannes Boeschenstein's *Hebraeae grammatica*, *Elementale introductorium in Hebraeae litteras Teutonice & Hebraice legendas*. (1514).



Frontispiece of a book on "Jew Suess Oppenheimer," court Jew of the Duke of Württemberg, published shortly after his hanging in 1738. His story became the basis for a sympathetic novel by Lion Feuchtwanger (1925) and a Nazi propaganda film (1940).