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Medievalism, the Beautiful Book, and the Arts and Crafts Movement

England and America around 1900

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As most bibliophiles will attest, there is a tangible, even tactile quality, and an emotional appeal (however diverse) in addition to any intellectual properties in the physical existence of a fine, visually interesting, or rare book. To the generation of young people coming of age in the twenty-first century with their love of BlackBerry devices, pervasive Internet communications, and other means of instant electronic gratification, this love of the hand-held book may seem a particularly nostalgic, even superfluous excess. And perhaps our love of the physical properties of books is in some respects arcane. But for me as for many others, there are numerous reasons to justify collecting and loving books (as one might collect any beautiful object), among them the quality of the paper (especially if it is handmade), the design of the type and text, an interesting cover or binding, the incorporation of intriguing illustrations or embellishments, and, of course, any historical significance (dare I add the attribute of a certain mustiness in older materials?).

Such qualities may induce in the bibliophile all sorts of irrational palpitations of the heart and soul along with an often irrational desire for ownership. For me as an art historian there is the added intrigue of investigating the particular stylistic threads that lie behind a book design or its illustrations: what sociologic and artistic influences motivated the designer or designers of the publication to pursue the direction they did. My objective here is to examine briefly the influence of Medievalism on the emergence of the concept of the beautiful book in the Arts and Crafts movement, first in England and then its impact in publication design in the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In all but two instances, I will reference books in my own collection for illustrating examples.

Fig. 1: Owen Jones, Gray's Elegy, *London: Longman and Col. 1846, chromolithographed pages imitating Medieval illumination.*

The emergence of the Arts and Crafts movement, first in England in the early 1860s and then on the Continent and in America by the late 19th century, was coincident to the surfacing of a number of artistic influences and related developments of the last third of the 19th century. Among these was the appearance of the Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic movements in England in tandem with a pervasive love of Medieval design in architecture, and in Europe (including England) the influence of Asian art, especially Japanese prints with their penchant for flat, decorative, linear surfaces and patterns. While Paris has traditionally been touted as the primary nexus for the development of what has been called Modern Art (Postmodern scholarship has made the concept more complex), we should not forget that England contributed significantly to the emergence of modern design in all of its applications, much of it through the Arts and Crafts movement.

By the 1860s, William Morris (1834-1896) was at the center of the discussion in England about the need to transform design and production. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) and John Ruskin (1819-1900) believed that the Industrial Revolution, underway since the invention of

See ***MEDIEVALISM****, page 2*

CAXTONIAN

MEDIEVALISM, *from page 1*

the steam engine in the late 18th century, was dehumanizing the populace. Traditional handicraft had been undermined, a growing group of intellectuals thought, by the piecemeal assembly practices of modern factories with their focus on mass production. The Industrial Revolution altered the nature of British society, especially for the working classes, who had shifted to the city from the rural countryside and subsequently often lived in unhealthy and crowded urban slums. Writing for the *Edinburgh Review* in 1829, in an essay entitled "Signs of the Times," Thomas Carlyle exclaimed:

> Our old modes of exertion are all discredited, and thrown aside. On every hand the living artisan is driven from his workshop, to make room for a speedier inanimate one. For all earthly, and for some unearthly purpose, we have machines and mechanic furtherances.... We remove mountains, and make seas our smooth highway; nothing can resist us.... Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also.... Men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavour, and in natural force of any kind.[1]

By the middle of the 19th century, art critic John Ruskin had also joined a chorus of voices concerned with the direction of art and design in England; in such immensely popular publications as his multivolume *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853) he proclaimed that the good (moral) and beautiful were intertwined. Historically, this symbiotic relationship in the arts, he thought, had reached its crest during the period of the great churches of the late Middle Ages where craftsman joined designer, fine artist, and theologian in creating the resulting *gesamtkunstwerk* that was the building in all its spiritually moving totality. Even before the impact of Ruskin's writings, the influential English architect/designer Augustus Pugin (1812-1852) concluded that Medieval architecture was superior to classical architecture because of its association with the Christian faith.[2] Some might recall that Pugin was responsible for most of the interior detailing and decorative effects of London's neo-gothic Houses of Parliament. It is also notable that Pugin was a convert to Roman Catholicism, one of several prominent Anglicans (including Cardinal John Henry Newman) who shifted their religious affiliation from the Church of England to the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Newman carried out his own highly publicized conversion in 1845.[3] In fact, the Victorian period in England was to experience a high church revival (incorporated in the Oxford and related Tractarian movements in which Newman was instrumental) and a sentimental attachment to things associated with Catholicism and Medievalism, a significant reason for the secret founding of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement by a group of artists and poets in 1848 as well as the establishment of the Arts and Crafts movement by Morris a bit later.

William Morris first read Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* in the 1850s while he and his friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti were students at Oxford University. The ideas expressed by Ruskin in his multi-volume series became the philosophic foundation of the Arts and Crafts movement. Rossetti was one of the founders of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, an organization that lasted less than a decade but had started to undermine the tired compositional formulas based on Raphael and his followers and still perpetuated as invincible in British academies in the 18th and 19th centuries. In contrast, the Pre-Raphaelites looked to late Medieval and Italian Quattrocento art as more genuine and less mannered. And the movement's attachment to stories and themes centered on the Middle Ages were to become part and parcel of the Arts and Crafts movement, evoked in Rossetti's dreamy Medieval fantasies and passed on stylistically to another young artist and friend of Morris, Edward Burne-Jones. At the same time, Morris was writing poetry in the same vein and published his first major book of poetry, *The Defence of Guenevere and Other Poems*, in 1858.

In 1861, with the financial assistance of several other individuals, Morris founded Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Company; in 1875 this was consolidated by Morris to become simply Morris and Company. Edward Burne-Jones, the architect and designer Phillip Webb, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (among several notable artists) all took active roles in the company, designing a range of public and domestic products, including furniture, stained glass, wallpaper, ceramics, rugs, and wall hangings then primarily hand-produced by the firm's craftsmen. By this time Morris was an avowed Socialist, and his concept of handicraft production was an expression of these ideas: "Apart from the passion to produce beautiful things, the leading passion of my life had been and is hatred of modern civilization."[4] Handcrafted objects, of course, could not really compete in cost with mass produced, industrial products; as Morris lamented, and as many of his contemporaries noted, most of his products could be afforded only by the wealthy. This was later especially true of his Kelmscott Press books. The American publisher J. S. Cushing wrote in 1896:

> Mr. William Morris deserves all credit for the success he has attained in reproducing the handmade books of past ages, and for re-awakening thereby an increased interest in book-making as an art.
>
> But his books, owing to their great cost, are not for the people. They are for the rich few only.[5]

(ABOVE) *Fig. 2: Owen Jones,* Gray's Elegy, *binding.* (BELOW) *Fig. 3: Owen Jones, page from* The Victorian Psalter: the "Psalms of David," *London, 1861.*

While my primary focus is on Morris's contribution to book design and its influence, it is interesting to note that the decorative approach he and his assistants took early on in designing floral patterns for wallpaper, rugs, and wall hangings foreshadowed the page embellishments he created in the 1890s for his Kelmscott Press publications. His decorative patterns are primarily flat, sharply curvilinear designs of flowers, leaves, and tendril shapes in overall replicate patterns that in their emphasis on the serpentine also presage the evolution of Art Nouveau during the last decade-and-a-half of the 19th century.

What are some of the influences that had an impact on Morris's approach to design? Ultimately important, as one might expect, was Morris's love of Medieval art and decoration, especially as found in early book printing and in late Medieval manuscript illumination. Such sources also reinforced, via Ruskin, Morris's particular philosophic approach to handicraft and design. But with the rise of mass production, concerns about the whole approach to design had been the subject of much discussion in England since the first quarter of the 19th century. The establishment of the first International Exposition of art and manufacturing in London's Crystal Palace in 1851 was, in fact, a watershed event underlying the need to address design education and standards.

Among the principal figures actively involved in debates about design standards in England was Owen Jones (1809-1874). He was instrumental in helping establish the 1851 Crystal Palace Exposition. After the exposition, he concluded that British design greatly needed improvement, primarily through the creation of schools and curricula that would teach good design:

> We have no principle, no unity; the architect, the upholsterer, the paper-stainer, the weaver, the calico-printer, and the potter, run each their independent course; each struggles fruitlessly, each produces in art novelty without beauty, or beauty without intelligence.[6]

Jones's several books on ornamentation were to be immensely influential throughout the 19th century, in particular his *The Grammar of Ornament*, first published in 1856 and still in reprint today. He helped to promote the adoption of flat patterns as the design standard in the English Reform Movement, and the techniques he advocated revolutionized the design of British carpets, fabrics, and wallpapers at mid-century, thus providing an important precedent for Morris's approach to such decorative objects beginning in the 1860s.[7]

Jones had also capitalized on, in fact perfected, the invention of chromolithography during the first half of the 19th century. He initially applied the technique to the reproduction of complicated Islamic ornamentation, a task that helped him realize the potential of the decorative united with script, but he also foresaw its use in the publication of elaborate and colorful books. With the assistance of the publisher John Murray, Jones pioneered the integration of illustration, decoration, and printing in the early 1840s, designing an array of gift books with texts illuminated in a manner imitating Medieval prayer books.[8]

Among these is his *Gray's Elegy*, published by Longman in 1846 (see Figs. 1 and 2). Both the binding and the interior pages are intended to evoke a Medieval book, the exterior cover a particular creation by Jones, which he called "relievo-leather," consisting of a thin brown leather surface embossed over a thickness of papier-mâché or similar material to suggest carved wood (Fig. 2). While his *Gray's Elegy* is only modest in size, some of his productions were larger and more elaborate, among them the masterwork *Victorian Psalter*, published in 1861 (Fig. 3).

Jones's various books in the 1840s and 1850s helped revive interest in Medieval script and calligraphy. This was also concurrent with the Pre-Raphaelite (especially Rossetti's) rediscovery of William Blake, especially Blake's illuminated books that were imitated later by several artists, including Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Walter Crane, Charles Ricketts, and, in the United States, Elihu Vedder, among others. Morris had himself discovered illuminated manuscripts while a student at Oxford. In fact, he tried his hand at illuminating several works, including a number planned, written out, and decoratively scripted, some on vellum, in the early to mid-1870s, many with the cooperation of Burne-Jones.[9]

Morris also admired early printed books (especially those of the third quarter of the 15th or early 16th centuries published by Venetian printers) because they were produced while the spirit of Medieval craftsmanship was still strong and often included decorative type or embellishments intended to compete visually with previous (or concurrent) illuminated manuscripts (see Fig. 4). Morris was an avid bibliophile, and although he often consulted early printed books in the British Library or in Oxford, by the end of his life, his library included an enviable collection of such works. After the founding of the Kelmscott Press in

See ***MEDIEVALISM****, page 4*

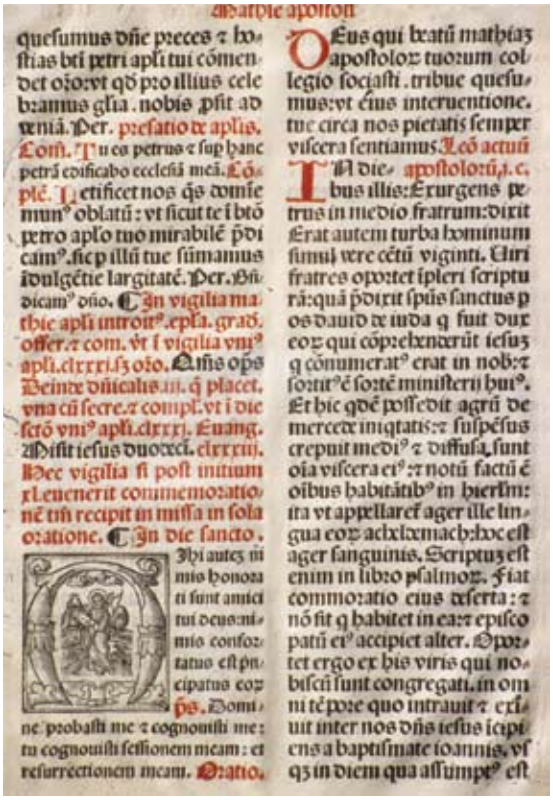
MEDIEVALISM, *from page 3*

1891, such books were closely consulted for details in font design, page embellishment, and page layout that Morris might use in the creation of his own books.

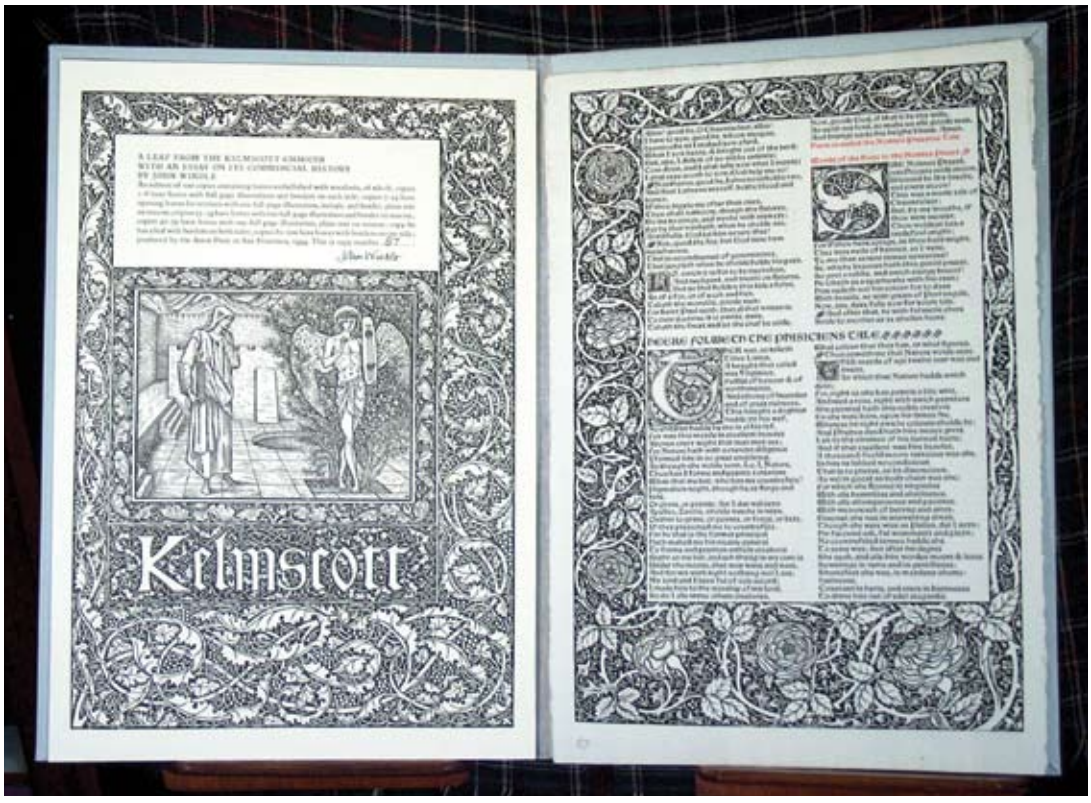
We have come to label the products of Morris's firm, as well as the handicraft work of a number of other artists and designers from the 1860s onward, as "Arts and Crafts" in style, but the term itself did not become official stylistic nomenclature until the establishment of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society in 1887, in part through the efforts of artist and illustrator Walter Crane.[10] Although Morris was initially lukewarm about the efforts of the organization, he eventually participated wholeheartedly in its wide-ranging program of lectures and exhibitions. Two Society-sponsored lectures in November of 1888 were specific catalysts in the establishment of the Kelmscott Press: Emery Walker's illustrated lecture on "Letterpress Printing and Illustration" (using lantern slides) and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson on "Bookbinding."[11] (Both men would later assist Morris at the Kelmscott Press, and together established the highly-respected Doves Press in 1900 after the Kelmscott Press closed when Morris died.[12])

Morris established the Kelmscott Press in 1891 with the help, in particular, of Emery Walker, a friend and neighbor in Hammersmith. It is ironic that the press, something he had long pondered, should have been founded so late in his life (Morris died six years after its incorporation), but during the brief period of its existence, Morris designed 66 books issued by the press, with a total of 23,000 books printed, all sold by subscription. They were to have enormous influence on the private press movement in the late 19th and 20th centuries and on the design of books produced by the commercial book establishment. Even those who criticized and reacted against Morris's often elaborately-decorative approach to page design (Cobden-Sanderson and the Doves Press is a good example) had to acknowledge his enormous influence. Of his venture in book publishing, Morris wrote: "I began printing books with the hope of producing some which would have a definite aim of beauty.... They should be easy to read and not dazzle the eye, or trouble the intellect of the reader by eccentricity of form in the letters."[13]

Looking at Morris's most typically-designed books, today, with their page surrounds of foliated decoration and stylized Medieval fonts, "clarity of text" and "lack of eye-dazzling effects" are not words we would use to describe them. Instead we would probably agree with publisher Holbrook Jackson who, in apparent admiration (the exact statement could have been used by Morris's critics), wrote in 1913, "The Kelmscott books look not only as if letter and decoration had grown out of the other; they look as if they could go on growing."[14] As an example, the crowning achievement of the Kelmscott Press, Morris's large folio edition of *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, published in 1896 (Fig. 5), with its elaborate borders, initials, and type, accompanied by 87 wood-engravings cut by W. H. Hooper after designs by Burne-Jones, provides us with Morris's supreme vision of the rebirth of the beautiful Medieval book. Morris used handmade paper crafted to specification by Joseph Batchelor. (The same paper labeled as "Kelmscott Hand-Made" was distributed commercially by Batchelor beginning in 1895, with Morris's approval, and used by several leading English private presses, including the Doves Press.[15]) Of the various fonts conceived by Morris, his so-called "Golden Type" was based on Roman

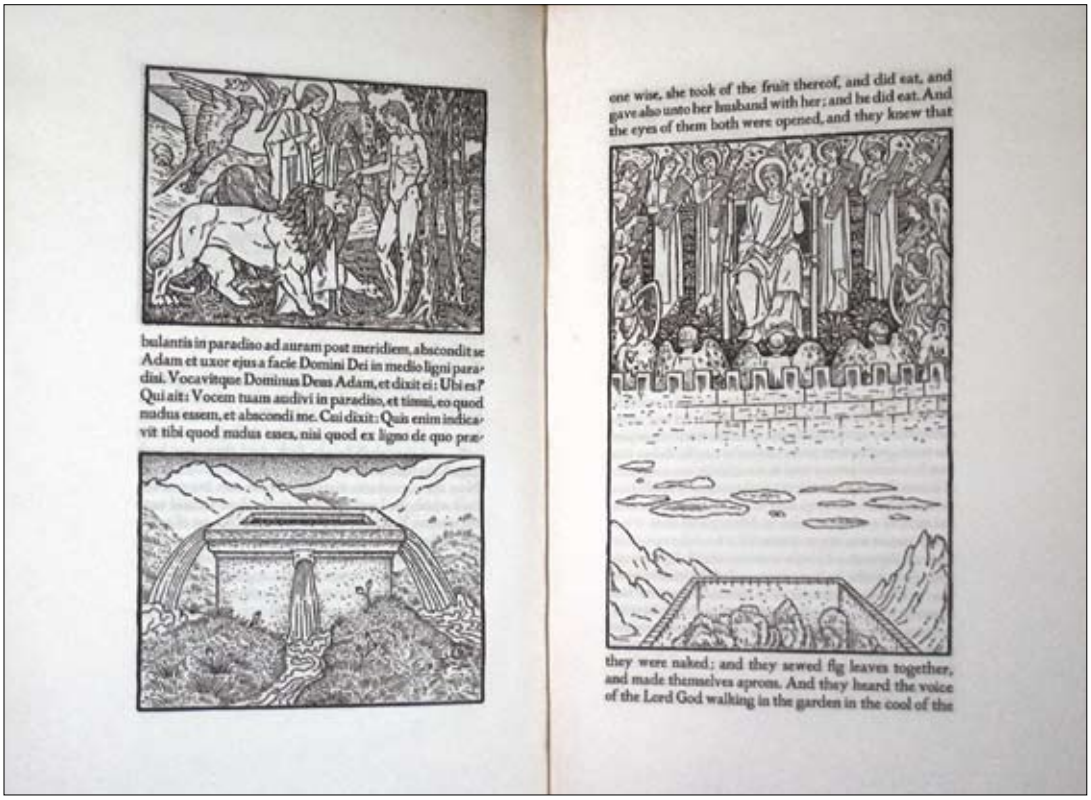


(RIGHT) *Fig. 4: One might compare, for instance, this leaf from a liturgical work published by Lucantonio Giuanta in Italy in 1520 with the sort of decorative fonts favored by Morris in his Kelmscott books.*
(BELOW) *Fig. 5: Folio leaf book, with original leaf (copy no. 87, recto) from the Kelmscott* Chaucer.



fonts used in Venice in 1476 by Nicolas Jenson and Jocobus Rubeus. Morris also admired the books produced by the pioneering English printer William Caxton, and designed some of his fonts as variations of those used by Caxton.[16]

Of the handful of artists who provided illustrations for Kelmscott Press books, Morris relied most heavily on Edward Burne-Jones, whose most prolific set of woodcut designs is found in the Kelmscott *Chaucer*. Burne-Jones, as noted earlier, reflected in his work the Pre-Raphaelite love of late Medieval and Italian early Renaissance art (often enhanced by a languorous, somewhat dreamy nuance influenced by Rossetti). In particular, Burne-Jones's stylized, elongated linear figures owe some debt to 15th and early 16th century woodcuts found in early printed books, a stylization also apparent in the schematic way drapery was represented in Romanesque and early Gothic sculpture (see Fig. 6).


bulantis in paradiso ad auram post meridiem, abscondit se Adam et uxor ejus a facie Domini Dei in medio ligni paradisi. Vocavitque Dominus Deus Adam, et dixit ei: Ubi es? Qui ait: Vocem tuam audivi in paradiso, et timui, eo quod nudus essem, et abscondi me. Cui dixit: Quis enim indicavit tibi quod nudus esses, nisi quod ex ligno de quo præ-

one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that

they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the

(LEFT) *Fig. 6: Detail of the Royal Portal, west façade, Chartres Cathedral, France.* (ABOVE) *Fig. 7: Edward Burne-Jones,* In the Dawn of the World, Being Twenty-Five pictures Illustrative of a Portion of the Book of Genesis, *printed by D. B. Updike, Boston: Merrymount Press, Charles E. Goodspeed, publisher, 1903 (edition of 185 copies), detail.*

This simplified, linear style, even more distilled of elaboration, is used by Burne-Jones in a late set of 25 designs illustrating a portion of the Book of Genesis and intended for a Kelmscott publication. Unfortunately, the project, not fully fleshed out, was aborted by the death of Morris. Morris would have been responsible for the design of the text and any page embellishments and decorative initials. The woodcuts completed by W. H. Hooper based on Burne-Jones's designs, however, were eventually resurrected and published in a limited edition by D. B. Updike (an early admirer of Morris) at the Merrymount Press in Boston in 1903 (Fig. 7). The letterpress of Updike's book is relatively simple, devoid of the floriated borders and decorative devices usually accompanying Kelmscott productions, highlighting even more the linear aspects of Burne-Jones's illustrations. (There will be more about Updike later in the article.)

Aside from Burne-Jones, Morris was attracted to the work of Walter Crane (1846-1915), an artist who began making his reputation as an illustrator with a series of so-called toy books, beginning in the late 1860s.[17] In the 1870s, Crane branched out into the lucrative arena of children's books, especially sought after by a Victorian society fascinated with the lives of children and their imaginative world. Crane created a number of elaborate and colorful gift books with wonderful illustrations, many imitating Medieval woodcuts.

Some of these books also focused on a fantasy of knights and courtly life in the Middle Ages, among them, *Queen Summer, or, The Tourney of the Lily of the Rose*, published in the same year that Morris established his Kelmscott Press (Fig. 8). In this work Crane was both author and illustrator. Although he was attracted to late Medieval art and (like Rossetti) was a passionate admirer of William Blake, he had a keen interest in Japanese prints and Asian decorative arts. This combination of influences made his personal style especially difficult to label, although scholars have associated him with both the Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau styles. As Crane himself noted about his flat, decorative style,

> It was the influence of some Japanese printed pictures given to me by a lieutenant in the navy…which I believe…give the real impulse to the treatment in strong outlines and solid tints and flat blocks, which I adopted with variations in children's books [from about 1870] onwards.[18]

See ***MEDIEVALISM****, page 6*

MEDIEVALISM, *from page 5*

Morris initially envisioned Crane illustrating a number of Kelmscott books, but the artist provided pictures for only one, the second edition of *The Story of the Glittering Plain*, 1891, the first book published by the Kelmscott Press. The delicacy and grace of Crane's work evidently did not adequately communicate in Morris's darker, more Medieval page format. Crane later commented that he doubted "if I was ever quite Gothic enough in feeling to suit his [Morris's] taste."[19]

Another artist who briefly caught Morris's attention in the mid-1890s was Arthur Joseph Gaskin (1862-1928). By this time, the reputation of the Kelmscott Press led Gaskin to contact Morris, and the artist persuaded Morris to provide an enthusiastic introduction to a book published in 1895 by the Birmingham School of Arts and Crafts, Dr. Neale's *Good King Wenceslas*. The thin tome was primarily a vehicle for Gaskin's Pre-Raphaelite approach to illustration (Fig. 9). Gaskin very much wanted to illustrate books for the Kelmscott Press and was initially asked by Morris to provide designs for the 1896 edition of *The Well at the World's End*. For whatever reason, Morris found Gaskin's results inadequate and Burne-Jones was asked to redo the illustrations.[20]

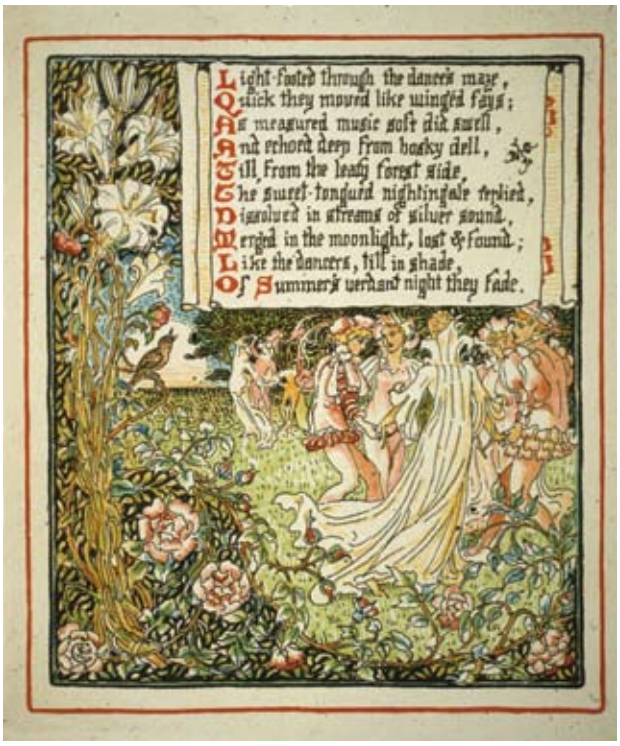
In 1892, Aymer Vallance brought a young, precocious and gangly-looking artist by the name of Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) to Hammersmith to show a portfolio of work to Morris. Vallance, who admired Beardsley's talent, thought that he might provide some illustrations for the Kelmscott Press. Morris, however, was only lukewarm in his comments and essentially dismissed the young man as unsuitable. Beardsley was deeply offended by his reception and carried a grudge against Morris for the rest of his short life (he died of consumption at age 25 in 1898, only two years after Morris).

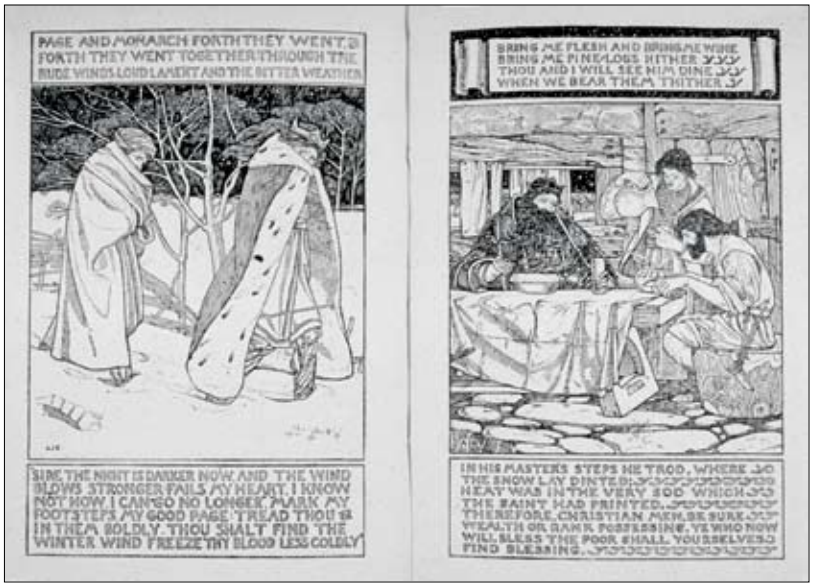
The opportunity for revenge presented itself within less than a year of Beardsley's visit to Morris when he was hired in 1892 by the publisher John Dent (on the recommendation of the bookseller Frederick Evans) to provide more than 350 drawings for an ambitious edition of Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. Because Beardsley's labor was at this point in his brief career relatively inexpensive (Dent was to gently but constantly badger Beardsley for the timely delivery of his designs), Dent's publication was more affordable than a comparable hand-printed book by the Kelmscott Press (the Kelmscott *Chaucer* followed the first edition of *Le Morte Darthur* by three years).[21] Dent's reproduction of Beardsley's drawings in a line-block, photo-mechanical, facsimile process (rather than a laboriously produced wood-engraving) was also cheaper by far than the production methods used by Morris. The photomechanical process, however, also tended to stress a broad, flat black-and-white contrast without the intermediate values and intricate linear effects found, for instance, in many of Burne-Jones drawings and Morris's intricate foliate borders for Kelmscott books. This bold contrast increased what critics have identified in Beardsley's work as the flowering of British Art Nouveau in the 1890s, found in his work for Dent, for the *Yellow Book*, *The Studio*, and numerous other publications prolifically (even breathlessly) produced by the artist during the last five years of his life. Beardsley believed strongly in the originality of his style and wrote after the completion of his *Le Morte Darthur*, "The truth is that, while his [Morris's] work is a mere imitation of the old stuff, mine is fresh and original."[22]

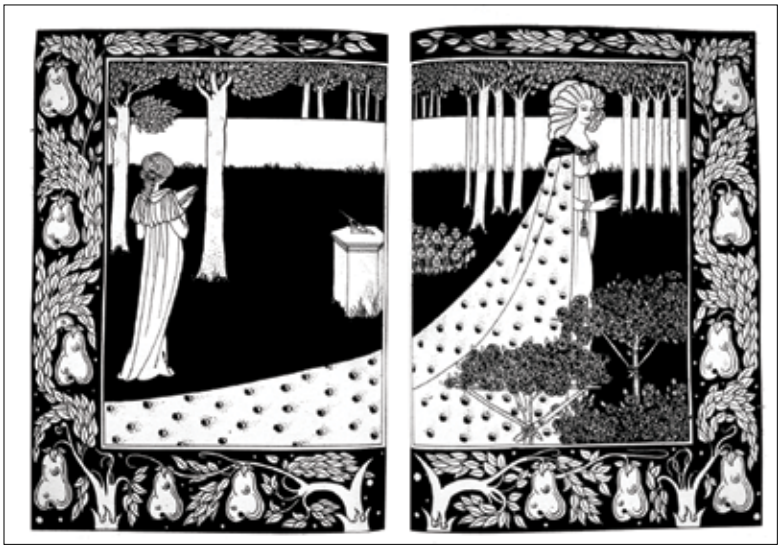
When Dent's *Le Morte Darthur* appeared, Morris and Burne-Jones were upset (and probably morally outraged), both construing Beardsley's designs as a perversely inspired parody of Kelmscott publications (which, indeed, they were). Morris declared that the book was an "act of usurpation," and briefly considered legal action.[23] Beardsley's often openly erotic imagery and bold massing of black and white curvilinear patterns certainly carried both Burne-Jones's more subtle, languid, Pre-Raphaelite sexuality and Morris's Medieval page format to extremes. These might have been disturbing to the older artists but were, at least in the short run, popular and influential among many in the art community during the mid-1890s.

The innovative manner in which Beardsley charged his designs with an erotic energy is clearly evident in one of his bold double-page spreads where he flaunts one of his typically buxom female figures, her flowing garment audaciously and asymmetrically binding the two pages together; he has framed the two pages with a meandering sequence of ripe,

(LEFT) *Fig. 8: Walter Crane*, Queen Summer, or, the Tourney of the Lily of the Rose, *London: Cassell & Co., 1891, detail.* (RIGHT) *Fig. 9: Dr. Neale*, Good King Wenceslas, *with illustrations by Arthur J. Gaskin, Birmingham: School of Arts and Crafts (Messrs. Cornish Brs.), 1895, detail.*







(UPPER LEFT) *Fig. 10: Thomas Malory,* Le Morte Darthur, *London: Dent, 3rd Ed., 1927, detail of Beardsley illustration.* (BELOW LEFT) *Fig. 11: Charles Ricketts,* The Life of Benvenuto Cellini, *2 vols., Vale Press, printed at London: Ballantyne Press, 1900 (310 copies), detail, frontise of Vol. 1* (BELOW RIGHT) *Fig. 12:* The Book of Job, *Introduction by Joseph Jacobs, illustrations by Herbert Granville Fell, London: J. M. Dent and Company; New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1896, detail, double page frontise.*

ALL men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, or which may properly resemble excellence, ought, if they are persons of truth and honesty, to describe their life with their own hand; but they ought not so attempt so fine an enterprise till they have passed the age of forty. This duty occurs to my own mind, now that I am travelling beyond the term of fifty-eight years, and am in Florence, the city of my birth. Many untoward things can I remember, such as happen to all who live upon our earth; and from those adversities I am now more free than at any previous period of my career—nay, it seems to me that I enjoy greater content of soul and health of body than ever I did in bygone years. I can also bring to mind some pleasant goods and some inestimable evils, which, when I turn my thoughts backward, strike terror in me, and astonishment that I should have reached this age of fifty-eight, wherein, thanks be to God, I am still travelling prosperously forward.

II

IT is true that men who have laboured with some show of excellence, have already given knowledge of themselves to the world; and this alone ought to suffice them: I mean the fact that they have proved their manhood and achieved renown. Yet one must needs live like others; and so in a work like this there will always be found occasion for natural bragging, which is of divers kinds, and the first is that a man should let others know he draws his lineage from persons of worth and most ancient origin.

I am called Benvenuto Cellini, son of Maestro Giovanni, son of Andrea, son of Cristofano Cellini; my mother was Madonna Elisabetta, daughter to Stefano Granacci; both parents citizens of Florence. It is found written in chronicles made by our ancestors of Florence, men of old time and of credibility, even as Giovanni Villani writes, that the city of Florence was evidently built in imitation of the fair city of Rome; and certain remnants of the Colosseum and the Baths can yet be traced. These things are near Santa Croce. The Capitol was where is now the Old Market. The Rotonda is entire, which was made for the temple of Mars, and is now dedicated to our Saint John. That than it was, can very well be seen, and cannot be denied; but the said

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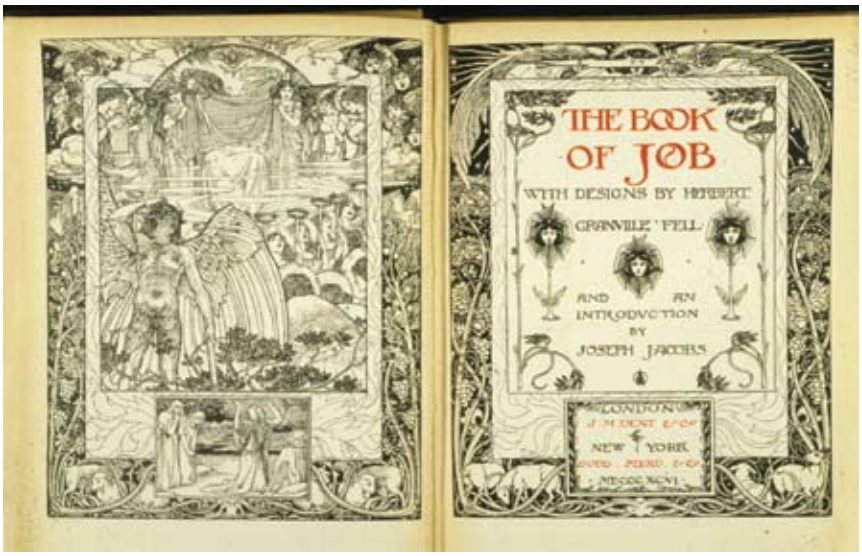


sexually-suggestive fruit and vines (Fig. 10).

Beardsley, the *enfant terrible* of the 1890s in England, was quickly identified with the seductive decadence fostered by Oscar Wilde and paralleled by the darker side of *fin-de-siècle* literature and art in Europe. In 1896 Crane perceptively noted that Beardsley's style was a synthesis of the "strong Medieval decorative feeling" of Morris and "a curious, weird Japanese-like spirit of *diablerie* and grotesque, as of an opium dream."[24] Unfortunately, Beardsley, associated too intimately with Wilde, whose *Salome* he had illustrated with so much erotic verve for its first English edition in 1894, found his star waning with Wilde's arrest and conviction in the spring of 1895.[25] In the backwash of this sensational affair, Beardsley was forced to resign as art editor of the *Yellow Book*; and it was, finally, only the patronage of publisher Leonard Smithers during the last three years of Beardsley's life that kept him, now suffering his fatal illness in seclusion in Paris, from near destitution.[26]

There were numerous emulators of Morris's Kelmscott Press by the close of the 19th century, both in Great Britain and in the United States. Charles Ricketts (1866-1930), who founded the Vale Press in 1896, was one of these, absorbing a variety of influences, among them Morris's propensity for ornamentation, including decorative initials and, sometimes, border surrounds featuring curvilinear tendrils as seen in the frontispiece of his *Life of Benvenuto Cellini* (Fig. 11). But Ricketts's ornamentation is lighter and more delicate in feeling than that typically found in Kelmscott books, in fact, closer in style to what was, by the mid-1890s, identified as Art Nouveau.

Herbert Granville Fell (1872-1951) and Bernard Sleigh (1872-1954) are too often overlooked in the pantheon of talented British illustrators at the turn of the century. They were gifted artists who, along with Beardsley and Ricketts, effectively announced the flowering of English Art Nouveau in the 1890s. Like Beardsley, Fell provided illustrations for books produced by Thomas Dent intended to compete in decorative quality with the more expensive Kelmscott books. Among them is *The Book of Job*, published in 1896.[27] Fell's decorations, including a gilt-stamped Art Nouveau cloth cover, 23 full-page illustrations and various half-borders and vignettes, is lavish and detailed in its execution. Fell had obviously looked closely at the much earlier, powerful illustrations William Blake conceived for his own *Book of Job*, and consciously imitated Blake, especially in the muscular, Michelangelesque angels that populate several of his own pictures (Fig. 12).

While William Blake may also lurk distantly behind some of Bernard Sleigh's figurative elements, it is certainly less obvious than in Fell's nearly slavish imitation of Blake, and Sleigh effectively converted a feeling for Medieval text and image into a charming Art Nouveau book design. Sleigh was born in Birmingham, and like Arthur Gaskin, under whom he studied, was associated with the

See ***MEDIEVALISM****, page 8*

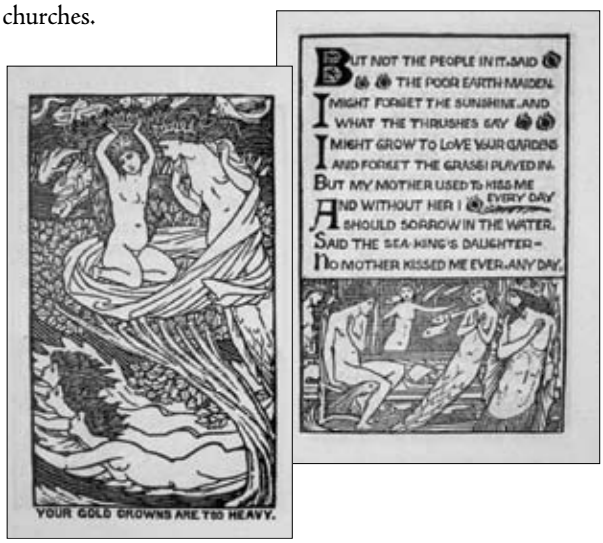
MEDIEVALISM, *from page 7*

city's Guild of Arts and Crafts. It was at the Birmingham Guild that he published his first illustrated book, Amy Mark's *The Sea King's Daughter*, in 1895 (Fig. 13). It is a slim, hand-printed little volume with the text made deliberately primitive in its stark, stylized simplicity and Medieval feel (far removed from Morris's claustrophobic approach to decorative design). In contrast, the curvilinear qualities of the small, flat, linear illustrations are full-blown Art Nouveau.

Looming much larger than either Fell or Sleigh in the British Arts and Crafts scene because of his multiple talents as famed artist and designer was Charles Robert Ashbee (1863-1924). Like Morris, he designed a number of products, and is, in fact, known best today for his metalwork and jewelry. His center of operations was the Guild and School of Handicraft, which he founded in London's East End in 1888. When the Kelmscott Press closed in 1898, Ashbee was able to acquire its presses and some other equipment (but not the type) for his Essex House Press, at that moment being established in the London environs.

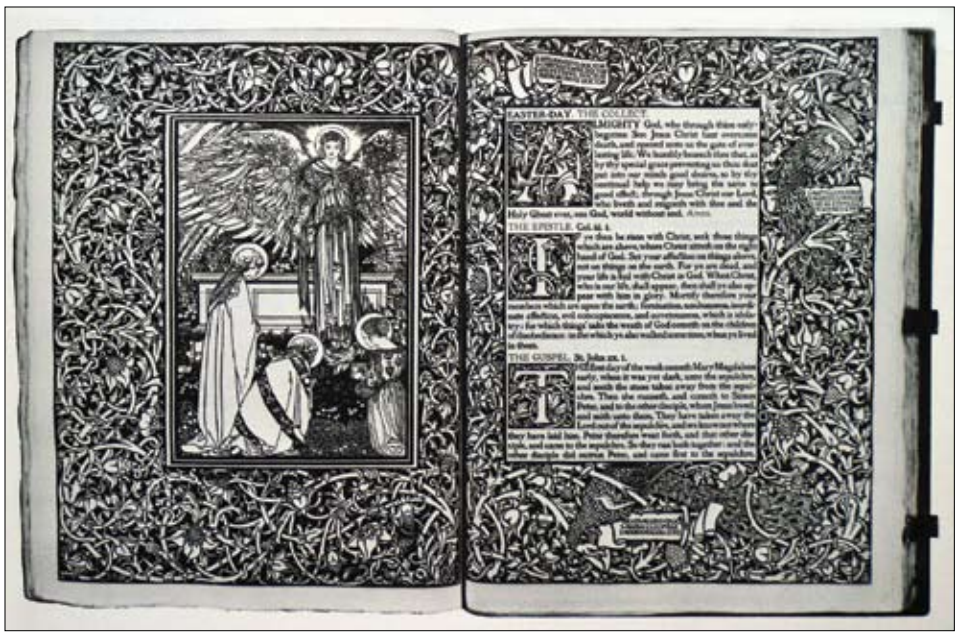
During its 11-year life, Ashbee's press produced 84 books and pamphlets in a style often emulating the luscious decorative qualities of Kelmscott Press publications. The most sumptuous and monumental of these books, intended to rival the Kelmscott *Chaucer*, was the *Prayer Book of King Edward VII* (*the Book of Common Prayer*) (Fig. 14), published by Essex House in 1903, and dedicated to Edward VII, who, as one might expect, received his own special copy. The Medieval stylization of the detailed, double title page decoration suggests the linear qualities of early printed books and the crisp figurative style of Romanesque sculpture (reference Fig. 6). On the left frontispiece, King Edward sits enthroned, surrounded by various symbols of Church and State, including coats of arms and reference to the countries making up the British Empire, printed in red. On the right page, Ashbee included depictions of the Tower of London, the Houses of Parliament, the west façade of Westminster Abbey, the dome of St. Paul's, and various other towers, some referencing Wren's late 18th century city churches. These linear images symbolize the traditional alliance of Church and State in the Empire. Overall, Ashbee's ambitious prayer book avoids those decorative qualities overlapping Art Nouveau that we see in the work of some other concurrent English Arts and Crafts practitioners; Ashbee favors a Medieval ambience that probably would have pleased Morris.

The influence of William Morris on the expanding Arts and Crafts movement in the United States was enormous by the late 19th century. As early as 1881, Morris and Company established a showroom in New York City, and by the end of the century additional showrooms appeared in such urban centers as Boston and Chicago.[28] While Morris never visited the United States, Walter Crane, among other Englishmen, ventured across the great pond, lecturing on aspects of the Arts and Crafts movement in 1891. Beginning in 1901, pioneering American Arts and Crafts designer Gustav Stickley devoted the first issue of his influential journal, *The Craftsman*, to William Morris, the



(UPPER RIGHT) *Fig. 13: Amy Mark*, The Sea King's Daughter, *illustrated and decorated by Bernard Sleigh, published by the Birmingham Guild of Handicraft and printed by G. Napier & Co., Birmingham, 1895, detail double-page spread.* (CENTER RIGHT) *Fig. 14: C. R. Ashbee*, Prayer Book of King Edward VII (Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments), *London: Essex House, 1903 (copy 294 of 400), detail double Title Pages; binding of wood and leather with straps designed by Miss A. Power, Guild of Handicraft (copy formerly in the Wardington Library, Oxfordshire, England).* (BOTTOM RIGHT) *Fig. 15: Matthew Arnold*, Empedocles on Etna, A Dramatic Poem, *Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1900 (edition of 450 copies) , detail, title page.*

(FAR LEFT) *Fig. 16: Thomas Bailey Aldrich,* Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book *(W. S. Hadaway designer), Cambridge: The Riverside Press, printed by Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1896, detail binding.* (NEAR LEFT) *Fig. 17:* Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book, *detail, double-page frontispiece.* (BELOW LEFT) *Fig. 18: Daniel Berkeley Updike,* Altar Book, *Boston: Merrymount Press, 1896, detail, frontise pages.*



second to John Ruskin, and the third to the guilds of the Middle Ages.[29] The decorative design of the journal itself reflected Morris's tastes.

Almost immediately, Kelmscott Press books became coveted objects to possess among some American collectors, and Morris's decorative preferences were reflected in the work of a number of American publishers and book designers by the late 1890s and into the early 20th century. In 1900, Charles Ashbee visited the United States and was a guest at the Caxton Club in Chicago, where, as he later reported, the works of the Kelmscott Press were much talked about and admired by the members.[30] By extension, T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, whose Doves Bindery provided special bindings for a number of Kelmscott books, including copies of the *Chaucer*, served as a mentor to Ellen Gates Starr, co-founder of Hull House in Chicago. She spent more than a year as an apprentice to Cobden-Sanderson and then returned to Chicago in 1898, where she established a hand bindery at Hull House.[31]

Thomas Bird Mosher founded his press in 1891 in Portland, Maine, the same year that Morris founded the Kelmscott Press. But Mosher's early works were mostly in the prevailing Aesthetic style, and it was not until later in the decade that he began to reflect the influence of Morris. Shortly after the closing of the Kelmscott Press, Mosher issued a series of books modeled after a Kelmscott approach to design, among them Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles*, published in 1900 (Fig. 15). Mosher has very much imitated Morris's decorative approach to page layout, including foliate border surrounds, justifying his emulation of Kelmscott works with an American capitalist practicality in mind:

> Had William Morris lived one can scarcely doubt that he would have given us a reprint of Empedocles worthy of the theme and himself. It is with this view in mind that Mr. Mosher offers at a price within reasonable limits, an example of Kelmscott Press work for which one of the choicest – *Coleridges's Poems* – has been drawn upon for borders, initials, and format.[32]

It was in Boston, often culturally linked to England (especially through the literary ambience of Henry and William James), that Morris's approach to book design actually made its earliest impact on American bookmaking. For instance, the short-lived Boston-based journal *Knight Errant*, established in 1892 and very much resembling its English cousin, the *Hobby Horse*, mirrored the Arts and Crafts influence of Morris and his circle. The Boston publishing house of Copeland and Day, founded in the early 1890s, imitated Kelmscott ornamentation in a number of its books before closing in 1899.[33] But one of the most interesting Arts and Crafts-styled works was produced by the Riverside Press: Thomas

See ***MEDIEVALISM****, page 10*

MEDIEVALISM, *from page 9*

Bailey Aldrich's *Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book*, published in 1896 (Figs. 16-17).

It is a slim, very Gothic-looking volume designed by W. S. Hadaway. The book's cover (like that of Owen Jones's much earlier *Gray's Elegy*, see Fig. 2) is a brown leather, blind-stamped relief binding, imitating a Medieval devotional book, while the interior pages display rows of robed figures in rectilinear niches, framing Clarendon type, with red initials and red rulings offsetting the text. The sort of curvilinear foliate decoration that epitomizes so many Kelmscott books is totally lacking in this work (except for aspects of the binding), and it looks forward to the very stylized, Medieval character of Ashbee's later *Prayer Book of King Edward VII* (see Fig. 14).

One cannot consider the influence of Morris on Boston area book design without returning to Daniel Berkeley Updike (1860-1941) and his monumental *Altar Book*, published by his famed Merrymount Press in 1896 for the Episcopal Church (Fig. 18). It is the most serious effort by an American book designer during the heyday of the Arts and Crafts movement to compete in size and lavishness with Morris's concurrent Kelmscott *Chaucer* or Ashbee's later *Prayer Book of Edward VII*.[34] Updike began his publishing career in Boston in 1880, working with Houghton Mifflin. In 1891 he briefly joined the Riverside Press in Cambridge, only to leave within two years to establish the Merrymount Press.[35]

The large portfolio *Altar Book* was one of his first major publications after founding the press. Like the *Chaucer*, the *Altar Book* (printed by De Vinne in New York City), includes wood engravings, in this case created by British artist Robert Anning Bell, and decorative initials and Kelmscott borders, designed by American artist Bertram Goodhue. A recently-discovered key to the symbolism of the Altar Book, initialed by Updike, demonstrates the seriousness with which he approached what some might think of as decoration.[36] The same year that the *Altar Book* appeared, Updike visited England and made a pilgrimage to Kelmscott House. While Updike's early admiration for Morris's Medievalism affected his design of books during the nineties, it waned later at Merrymount Press as the more severe, unadorned approach to book design, seen early on especially in Dove Press productions, superceded the fussier, more dense Medievalism promoted by Morris. In spite of this, Updike never denied the importance of William Morris's initiatives on modern bookmaking.

As noted earlier, the influence of Morris's Arts and Crafts movement was omnipresent to many American designers as well as publishers around 1900. Mention has been made of its impact on Gustav Stickley, but in the realm of late 19th and early 20th century American Arts and Crafts production no designer was less under Morris's spell than Elbert Hubbard (1856-1915). Hubbard's first trip to Europe in 1894, during which he visited the Kelmscott Press, was a revelation. Back in America he almost immediately began publishing a series of journals, establishing the Roycroft Press in 1895 as part of a broad Arts and Crafts venture that soon emerged out of his Roycrofters community of East Aurora, New York. His press productions soon included books, both commercial and limited editions, as well as periodicals like his inexpensive and widely distributed *Little Journeys to the Homes of the Great*. With their deliberate Medieval look, his publications were designed to emulate Kelmscott publications. He employed a sizable group of assistants, including women who would hand-illuminate the initials of some of his limited edition books. An example is Hubbard's

THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE

TO A YOUNG MAN OF LETTERS WHO WORKED EXCESSIVELY.

SO LITTLE is really known about the action of the nervous system, that to go into the subject from the physiological point of view would be to undertake a most difficult investigation, entirely beyond the competence of an unscientific person like your present correspondent. You will, therefore, permit me, in reference to this, to leave you to the teaching of the most advanced physiologists of the time; but I may be able to offer a few practical suggestions, based on ♣ the experience of intellectual workers, which may be of use to a man whose career is likely to be one of severe and almost uninterrupted intellectual labour ♣ A paper was read several years ago before the members of a society in London, in which the author maintained that mental labour was never injurious to a perfectly healthy human organization, and that the numerous cases of break-down, which are commonly attributed to excessive brain-work, are due, in reality, to the previous operation of disease ♣ This is one of those assertions which cannot be answered in a sentence. Concentrated within the briefest expression it comes to this, that mental labour cannot produce disease, but may aggravate the consequences of diseases which already exists ♣ The difficulty of testing this is obvious; for so long as health remains quite perfect, it remains perfect, of course, whether the brain is used or not; and when failure of the health becomes manifest, it is not always easy to decide in what degree mental labour may have been the cause of it. Again, the accuracy of so general a statement cannot be proved by any number of instances in its favour, since it is universally admitted that brain-work is not the only cause of disease, and no one affirms that it is more than one amongst many causes which may impede the bodily functions ♣ When the poet Wordsworth was engaged in composing the "White Doe of Rylstone," he received a wound in his foot, and he observed that the continuation of the literary labour increased the irritation of the wound; whereas by suspending his work he could diminish it, and absolute mental rest produced a perfect cure. In connection with this incident he remarked that poetic excitement, accompanied by protracted la-

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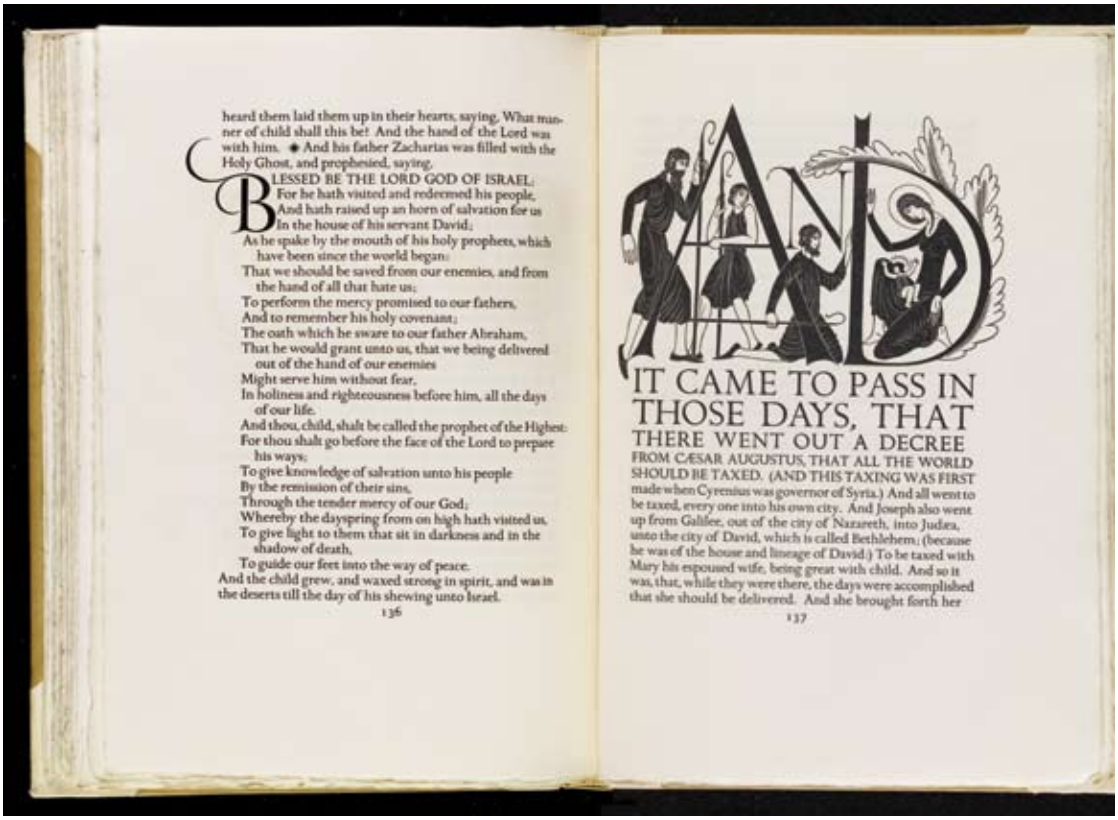


heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. ✤ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL;
For he hath visited and redeemed his people,
And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us
In the house of his servant David;
As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which
have been since the world began:
That we should be saved from our enemies, and from
the hand of all that hate us;
To perform the mercy promised to our fathers,
And to remember his holy covenant;
The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered
out of the hand of our enemies
Might serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days
of our life.
And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest:
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare
his ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people
By the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God;
Whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.
And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in
the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

136

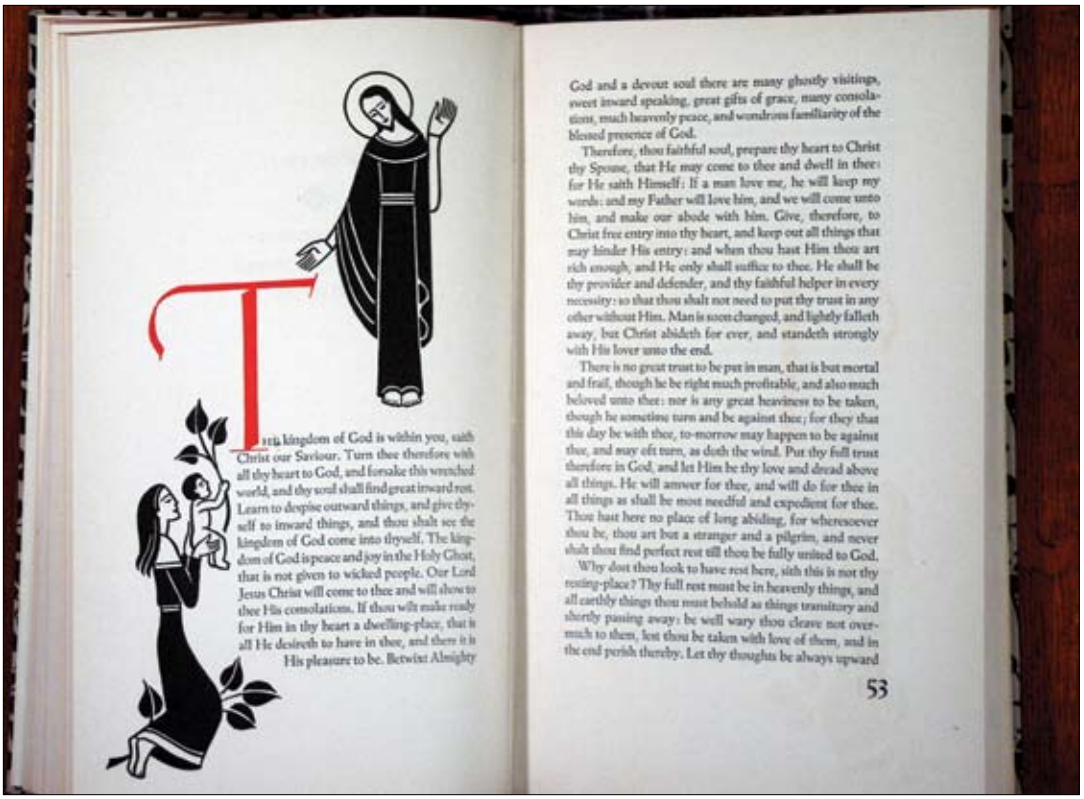
AND

IT CAME TO PASS IN THOSE DAYS, THAT THERE WENT OUT A DECREE FROM CÆSAR AUGUSTUS, THAT ALL THE WORLD SHOULD BE TAXED. (AND THIS TAXING WAS FIRST made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her

137

publication of Philip Gilbert Hamerton's *The Intellectual Life*, issued in a limited edition in 1899, with hand illuminations by Edith Andrews (Fig. 19). His various craft productions were popular and, until his untimely death on the *Lusitania* in 1915, he lectured across the country dressed in picturesque garb, probably intended to resemble the loose cloak frequently worn by William Morris.[37]

Cockerel Press, especially in the period of the 1920s and 1930s in England. Harold Midgley Taylor (1893-1925) founded the press in 1920 as a cooperative with three other partners, and when Taylor died four years later it was taken over by Robert Gibbings (1889-1958), who oversaw its operation until 1933. It was during the Gibbings period that the press produced some of its most famous and sought-after



(FACING PAGE, TOP) *Fig. 19: Philip Gilbert Hamerton,* The Intellectual Life, *designed by Elbert Hubbard with hand-drawn initials by Edith Andres, East Aurora: Roycrofters, 1899 (signed edition of 960 copies, copy no. 283), detail text page.* (FACING PAGE, BELOW) *Fig. 20: Eric Gill,* The Four Gospels, *Waltham St. Lawrence, Berkshire: The Golden Cockerel Press, 1931, detail pages 136-137 (Library of Congress image).* (ABOVE) *Fig. 21: Thomas à Kempis,* The Imitation of Christ, *Mt. Vernon, New York: Peter Pauper Press, n.d. (c. 1950-51), detail.*

While the popularity of Morris's rich Medievalism in book design had largely faded in England and the United States by the beginning of World War I, his ideals of the beautiful, handcrafted book as a work of art lived on in the 20th century, but adapted to more modern methods and a variety of decorative approaches. For instance, the Doves Press, discussed above, produced books whose design concentrated on type and layout rather than rich floriated scrollwork or illustrations. Doves Press books must have seemed very plain compared to Morris's, but they form a transition to the more austere tastes of Post-World War I book design.

Some creative assimilation of illustration and elaborate initials with an otherwise unburdened approach to text layout is seen in many of the books produced by the Golden

limited edition books, among them the *Four Gospels* designed by Eric Gill and published in 1931 (Fig. 20). Gill created both the typefaces and illustrations, and it was his innovative way of combining typography with figurative elements that has made this book generally considered the high point of Golden Cockerel publications.

Eric Gill (1882-1940) worked as a sculptor, stonecutter, typeface designer, and printmaker. His early training included classes at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London at the turn of the century, where he would have come into contact with the ideas of William Morris and other contemporary Arts and Crafts practitioners. These would influence his disposition toward the graphic arts and calligraphy where he made some of his most important later contributions. In

some respects his life paralleled that of some of the controversial personalities we have already touched on. Aside from his broad artistic interests, paralleling those of William Morris and Charles Ashbee, his personal life was full of striking contrasts. Like Pugin, he was a convert to the Roman Catholic faith and a deeply religious man, publishing during his lifetime a number of essays on the relationship between art and religion.[38] Like Beardsley and Oscar Wilde, his sexual proclivities were wide-ranging, although they remained out of public knowledge until the 1989 biography of the artist by Fiona MacCarthy.[39]

In his design of the *Four Gospels*, he, like Morris, references a Medievalism using the text introduction to scriptural passages as a scaffolding device for boldly black, stylized Gothic-looking figures that interact with elaborate initials. Gill's wood engravings look back to late Medieval art, including sculpture, early printed books, and manuscripts, while yet remaining consistent with the sparse, often sharp, clean lines of the prevailing Art Deco style of the late 1920s and 1930s. He did, in a real sense, carry on Morris's ideal of the beautiful, handcrafted book, and he did have some influence on several other artists, among them the Italian-American printmaker and illustrator Valenti Angelo (1897-1982).[40] The not-so-distant impact of Gill can be felt, for instance, in Angelo's much later designs for Thomas à Kempis's *The Imitation of Christ*, published by the American Peter Pauper Press in the mid-20th century (Fig. 21). While not as convoluted as Gill's figurative elements, Angelo's stark, flat figures and embellished initial share a kind of Medieval simplicity.

I have touched on only a few of the very fine and beautiful books that could have been included within my thematic thread of the influence of Medievalism and the Arts and Crafts movement on modern book design. Of course, many other stylistic threads could provide a point of departure for this literary sojourn because, as any bibliophile will attest, the fabric of book collecting is a broad cloth with a rich woven pattern. So much for clichés! During a recession we are encouraged

See ***MEDIEVALISM****, page 12*

MEDIEVALISM, *from page 11*

to go out and buy. Time to find money for the acquisition of another beautiful book.

§§

Except as noted, all photographs are by the author; all except Altar Book *and* Four Gospels *are of books in his collection.*

NOTES

[1] Quoted in Gillian Naylor, ed., *William Morris by Himself: Designs and Writings*, London: Little Brown & Co., 1996, p. 12.

[2] This is the central theme of Pugin's famous book, *Contrasts & True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, initially published in 1836.

[3] Newman was formally received into the Roman Catholic Church October 9, 1845, by Dominic Barberi, an Italian Passionist, at the College in Littlemore. A year later he proceeded to Rome where he was ordained priest by Giacomo Filippo Cardinal Fransoni and given the degree Doctor of Divinity by Pope Pius IX. On May 12, 1879, Newman was elevated to Cardinal by Leo XIII, who had succeeded Pius IX as Pope upon the latter's death in 1878. After Catholics were allowed to attend Oxford University from the 1860s onward, a Catholic club was formed, officially renamed the Oxford University Newman Society in 1888 in recognition of Newman's efforts in opening the university to those of Catholic faith.

[4] From an article, "How I became a Socialist," published in the June 16, 1894 issue of *Justice* and quoted in Karen Livingstone and Linda Parrys, eds., *International Arts and Crafts*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2005, p. 15.

[5] J. S. Cushing, "Notes on Morrisania," *Engraver and Printer*, March 1896, quoted in Susan Otis Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 19778, p. 35.

[6] Quoted in Gillian Naylor, ed., *William Morris by Himself: Designs and Writings*, London: Little Brown & Co., 1996, p. 20.

[7] Carol A. Hrvol Flores, *Owen Jones: Design, Ornament, Architecture, and Theory in an Age in Transition*, New York: Rizzoli, 2006, p. 29.

[8] Flores, *Owen Jones*, p. 38.

[9] Of these one-of-a-kind works, only two are known to survive intact today, among them Morris's *The Rubiayat of Omar Khayyam*, completed in 1872 on vellum and now in the British Library. The *Rubiayat* was a favorite text to illustrate by innumerable artists throughout the last third of the 19th and well into the 20th century in numerous private press and limited editions.

[10] On the founding of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society and its importance, see Karen Livingston and Linda Parry, *International Arts and Crafts*, p. 10; and Wendy Kaplan, ed., *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America: Design for the Modern World*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (distributed by Thames and Hudson, New York): 2004, pp. 34-41.

[11] William S. Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991, p. 74.

[12] An essential source for information on the establishment of various private presses and a chronologic listing of their publications from the late 19th century to 1929 is found in Will Ransom's *Private Presses and Their Books*, New York: Philip C. Duschnes, 1929, reprinted 1963.

[13] Quoted in Livingstone and Parry, eds., *International Arts and Crafts*, p. 21.

[14] Quoted in Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 133.

[15] Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 97.

[16] Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 37; a highly attended exhibition featuring Caxton's books opened June 30, 1877, at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), in celebration of the 400th anniversary of printing in England. Morris undoubtedly saw the exhibition. Later, the Kelmscott Press would issue five Caxton book reprints.

[17] Crane had, like Blake, been directed early in his life to the profession of engraver, and was, at the tender age of 13, apprenticed to the English wood engraver W. J. Lintot.

[18] John Russell Taylor, *The Art Nouveau Book in Britain*, Edinburgh: Paul Harris Publishing, 1979, p. 64.

[19] Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 156.

[20] Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 154. Ironically, Gaskin's illustrations did appear in one Kelmscott Press book, issued shortly after the death of Morris and just before the Press closed down.

[21] Beardsley's *Morte Darthur* was initially issued in half-crown monthly parts beginning June 1893, and then by Dent in two additional, bound editions (the cover also designed by Beardsley): a second edition in 1890s, after the first, and a third in 1927, with extra illustrations.

[22] Aubrey Beardsley, *Letters*, edited by Henry Maas, J. L. Duncan, and W. G. Good, Rutherford, New Jersey: 1970, p. 44, quoted in Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 285.

[23] Taylor, *The Art Nouveau Book in Britain*, p. 94.

[24] Walter Crane, *Of the Decorative Illustration of Books Old and New*, London: George Bell, 1896, p. 221, quoted in Taylor, *The Art Nouveau Book in Britain*, p. 94.

[25] Wilde had homosexual relationships with numerous men, most memorably with Alfred Taylor and Lord Alfred Douglas; he was finally convicted May 25, 1895, after a mistrial, on charges of "gross indecency" and sentenced to two years' hard labor. In the parlance of British legislation at the time, gross indecency implied homosexual acts *not* including sodomy, which was an offense under a separate statute.

[26] Although the cover of Vol. 5 (April 1895) of the *Yellow Book* uses Beardsley's design, his name is omitted, having been included for the last time on the journal's previous number (Vol. 4). Eventually self-exiled (like Wilde) in Paris in seclusion, Beardsley, perhaps contemplating his coming death, wrote to Smithers in March of 1897 that he had converted to Catholicism, made his first confession and received at his bedside his first sacrament. It is ironic that on his deathbed in Paris in November 1900, Wilde was, like Beardsley, baptized into the Roman Catholic church and given Extreme Unction, according to a friend, Robert Ross (Ross's letter to More Adey, dated 14 December 1900; see A. Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis, eds., *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde*, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2000, pp. 1219-1220)

[27] Fell's *Book of Job* was published simultaneously by Dent and Dodd as a companion to *The Book of Ruth*, also lavishly decorated, in this instance by William Brown MacDougall. See Peter A. Wick, ed., *The Turn of a Century 1885-1910, Art Nouveau – Jugendstil Books*, Cambridge: Harvard University, Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, The Houghton Library, 1970, pp. 36-37.

[28] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, p. 20.

[29] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, p. 20.

[30] Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, p. 275.

[31] Wendy Kaplan, *The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe & America*, p. 251.

[32] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, p. 196.

[33] This is most emphatically demonstrated in Copeland and Day's 1894 issue of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *The House of Life*; see Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, pp. 41-42.

[34] As Joseph M. Bowles, writing in the American journal *Modern Art*, said of the *Altar Book*: "[it is]…to me the most interesting piece of bookmaking yet produced in this country. The renaissance in printing as in itself a fine art has found no more sincere and devoted follower than Mr. Updike….; *Modern Art*, IV (Autumn 1896), pp. 124-125, quoted in Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, pp. 84-85.

[35] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, p. 76.

[36] Discussed on the blog of the Providence Public Library Special Collections Department, http://pplspeccoll.blogspot.com/2009/04/symbolism-of-altar-book-part-i.html

[37] Thompson, *American Book Design and William Morris*, p. 171. After Hubbard's death, his son carried on the business for another 23 years.

[38] His book, *Christianity and Art*, was published in 1927.

[39] Fiona MacCarthy, *Eric Gill*, Faber & Faber, 1989. Gill's attentions wandered to relatives and animals. His papers and library are archived at the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library of UCLA.

[40] Valenti Angelo, born in Massarosa, Italy, was brought to New York City in 1905. While he was still living at home, his family moved to California, and at the age of 19, Angelo moved to San Francisco. As an artist he was largely self-taught and provided his first book illustrations for the San Francisco-based Grabhorn Press in 1926. He went on to illustrate hundreds of book, some of them children's books, which he began to write and illustrate in 1937.

FINA BRAY, *from page 13*

tainer in Paris, who was known as "Bronze Venus" or, simply, "La Baker." Also, through the Edward Bakers, Fina was related to Mary Todd Lincoln. Fina had a shelf of books about the Bakers, and Mary Todd, and some family relics. She particularly enjoyed the connection of living in Batavia, the site of Bellevue Place, the sanatorium to which Robert Todd Lincoln entrusted his mother for treatment.

Finally, she loved her cigarettes. Typically Fina only smoked two or three cigs each day, but she anticipated each and every one. I suspect that she always thought it was not properly lady-like to smoke, but it seemed to help the first martini of the evening go down.

Serially, she had Bichon Frise dogs, and she loved every one – although I could not tell them apart.

I never see a Bichon Frise without thinking of Fina, and I am sure that I never will.

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Josephine "Fina" Baker Bray: Caxtonian and bookseller

Thomas J. Joyce

Fina Bray died peacefully at home in February. She was born in Pasadena, California in 1927. She was reborn as a Caxtonian in 1995.

In the early 1980s I placed a help-wanted ad in the Kane County Chronicle newspaper for my Geneva, Illinois old & rare bookshop. The advertisement lured with the triple promises of low wages, flexible hours, and an interesting place to work. That was when Fina Bray walked into my life and made it better.

Mrs. Bray had never worked in retail before, but she was willing to try it. She came by her interest in books honestly, almost genetically. At the time, her nephew, Anthony Bliss, was the first Special Collections Librarian at Northern Illinois University. Tony's mother, Fina's sister, Amelia, had married Cary Bliss, then the Director of the Huntington Library in Pasadena. Cary's father was Henry Huntington's original librarian. Today Cary's son is one of the rare book chiefs at UCLA.

Fina, too, had worked at the Huntington, but she never sought a library degree. Fina's husband, Bill, was a naval commander in WWII, and afterward worked as a scientist for Sandia Corporation in New Mexico. While Bill was stationed in Washington, DC, Fina found work at The Folger Shakespeare Library. Her favorite anecdote concerned Mr. Charlton Hinman. Prof. Hinman later achieved global renown for his landmark researches into the textual history of Shakespeare's First Folio.

To pursue his research, which involved a page-by-page, word-by-word scrutiny of every first folio he could put his hands upon, he had to invent the Hinman Collator device. His work was VERY IMPORTANT. He was not to be trifled with. On one night in particular, as the Folger closing time was imminent, and Fina was tasked with getting everyone out of the library, Hinman refused to go, and even tried to "pull rank" on Fina, claiming that he out-ranked her husband; Hinman ordered her to leave him alone. Fina was not intimidated, nor was she impressed with naval officers in her library; she arranged for guards to guide Mr. Hinman to the exit forthwith. Mr. Hinman never again tried to pull rank on her.

Fina with husband Bill in the early 1980s

In July of 1983, I moved my business to the South Loop. Josephine could not move with me, although she did continue to assist me for projects such as the Printers Row Book Fair and the International Antiquarian Book Fair at the Palmer House. While at Joyce and Company Fina handled the book search operations. She decided she could continue that activity on her own, and she founded "J. Bray Book Search." This was in the excellent tradition of Chicago book search firms most excellently represented by Reinhold Pabel as early as 1948, when he established The Chicago Book Mart as a search firm. [Note: Pabel was a German POW incarcerated outside Peoria during WWII. His memoir, *Enemies Are Human* (1955), describes his adventures as an escapee, finally working at Kroch's & Brentano's].

Astonishment is what I felt months later when I first learned that my long-time friend and fellow Caxtonian, Charley Shields, had owned and operated The Chicago Book Mart for almost two decades. And it was for sale. I urged Fina to buy it from Charley to acquire the credibility and brand name that it would bring with it, to make her a serious player in the trade. Fina and Bill bought it as a retirement project for the two of them. In addition to the Book Mart's legendary yellow mailers, they later bought a desktop computer to both speedup and simplify the tasks of creating and mailing their monthly list of Books Wanted. Fina worked hard to learn the exasperating intricacies of the computer.

Her husband, Bill, a communications scientist, tried to help, but his Parkinson's disease did not allow his body to perform what his fine brain wanted it to do. Their son, David, did what he could to help, but ultimately they were swept aside by the technologies that all but eliminated printed lists for digital book searches. There were fewer and fewer bookshop owners who would read the lists and respond. Gradually the Chicago Book Mart was shelved.

Ace bookman Terry Tanner and I first heard the name of author Frank Waters at a publication party for The Swallow Press, at Van Allen Bradley's Heritage Bookshop, then on Michigan Avenue. Terry went on to befriend Frank Waters, and eventually wrote the bibliography of Waters (published by David Meyers in 1983). But Fina had read and begun collecting Frank Waters works back in the 1950s when they were living in Los Alamos, New Mexico. She had quite a nice collection of this Native American author who should be known by anyone with an interest in the American Southwest.

Before joining The Caxton Club in 1995, Fina was an active member of the west suburban bibliophilic group, The DOFOBs (The Damned Old Fools Over Books). In addition to myself, other proud Dofobs included Susan Hanes, Frank Piehl, the Cotners, JoAnne Baumgartner, Jean Larkin, Colleen Dionne, and Charles Miner. It was not unusual to find them carpooling into Chicago, picking up members from as far west as Sycamore, trying to beat the rush hour traffic. Dofobs are known for their love of books, food, adult beverages, and the company of each other, and Fina combined them all when she frequently hosted Dofob meetings in her home.

Two more characteristics of Fina were intimately tied to her family surname of Baker. They were descendants of Edward Baker of Springfield, Illinois, a close friend of Abraham Lincoln. Born Josephine Baker, Fina took a mischievous pleasure in sharing a name with the between-the-wars, sultry superstar enter-

See ***FINA BRAY,*** *page 12*

Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Bernice E. Gallagher
(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

"2009 Chicago Tribune Printers Row Lit Fest" (more than 200 booksellers from across the country display new, used and antiquarian books, representing diverse ethnic and cultural communities as well as different languages and genres, with 100 free literary programs), Dearborn Street, from Congress to Polk, Chicago, information at www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/events/printersrow , June 6 and 7.

Because of construction affecting the Special Collections Research Center gallery at the Regenstein Library, no exhibitions are planned for the academic year 2009-2010. There is still time, however, to view three exhibitions currently displayed: "East European Jews in the German-Jewish Imagination from the Ludwig Rosenberger Library of Judaica" (documents tracing the experience of German Jews), Rosenberger Library of Judaica Gallery, through June 22; "On Equal Terms: Educating Women at the University of Chicago" (archival material relating to women at the University as members of an intellectual community), Main Gallery, through July 14; "Our Lincoln: Bicentennial Icons from the Barton Collection of Lincolniana" (documents and artifacts that include a handwritten page from the young Lincoln's "Sum Book" and one of the few surviving letters written by Lincoln to his wife Mary Todd Lincoln), through June 26; all in the Special Collections Research Center, Joseph Regenstein Library, University of Chicago, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705.

Printer's Row Book Fair
From the Tribune Web site.

"Modern and Contemporary Works on Paper" (heralding the opening of the Modern Wing, an exhibition of modern and contemporary works rarely exhibited due to their sensitivity to light, including ephemera and artists' books from the Ryerson Library's prized Mary Reynolds Collection), Department of Prints and Drawings, Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600, ongoing.

"Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago" (part of a citywide celebration of the Burnham Plan Centennial, including maps, diagrams, perspective drawings and watercolors, historically significant and artistically exceptional, many of them in fragile condition and rarely displayed publicly), Gallery 24, Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600, through December 15.

"Fruitful Abundance: Pomologies from the Rare Book Collection" (examples of botanical illustrations of fruits and herbs found in books from the Lenhardt's Rare Book Collection), Lenhardt Library, Chicago Botanic Garden, 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe, 847-835-8202, through August 9.

"Lincoln Treasures" (a year-long centennial celebration exhibiting many of the museum's most prized Lincoln artifacts and documents), Chicago History Museum, 1501 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-642-4600, ongoing.

"Tall Man of Destiny: Images of Abraham Lincoln" (images of Lincoln made during his lifetime and from his death in 1865 through to today, all from the Chicago Public Library's Grand Army of the Republic and Civil War Collections), Special Collections Exhibition Hall, 9th Floor, Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300, through 28 February 2010.

"Rodin: In His Own Words" (selections from the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation include 36 bronzes, books and letters, giving insight into the artist's thoughts on art and the art world during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries), Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-915-7600, June 13 through August 16.

"Buckminster Fuller: Starting with the Universe" (an exhibition of Fuller's extraordinary body of work, from his geodesic domes to books popularizing the terms "spaceship earth" and "synergetics," organized by the Whitney Museum of Art in association with the Department of Special Collections at the Stanford University Libraries), Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, 220 E. Chicago Avenue, Chicago, 312-280-2660), through August 9.

"The Artist's Telescope: Science Fiction and Illustration" (a selection of books and magazines displaying artists' perspectives on science fiction, from its beginnings to the mid-1970s), Charles Deering McCormick Library of Special Collections, 3rd Floor, Northwestern University Library, 1970 Campus Drive, Evanston, 847-491-7658, through June 30.

"Your Pal, Cliff: Selections from the H. C. Westermann Study Collection" (art work, sketchbooks, printing blocks, personal papers and correspondence by Westermann, a central figure in post-World War II American art and known to the art world as "Cliff"), Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 5500 S. Greenwood, Chicago, 773-702-0200, through September 6.

"To See Reality in a New Light: The Art and Activism of Marion Perkins" (includes art work as well as original correspondence, rare photographs and memorabilia relating to Chicago Renaissance artist and social activist Marion Perkins) from the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection, Exhibit Gallery, Woodson Regional Library, 9515 S. Halsted Street, Chicago, 312-747-6900, through December 31.

Bernice Gallagher will be happy to receive your listings at either 847-234-5255 or gallagher@lakeforest.edu.

Caxtonians Collect: Anthony Mourek

Fifty-fourth in a series of interviews with members

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

"I'm terribly diseased," Anthony Mourek confesses. "All collectors have a psychiatric problem, and it probably can't be cured. I have a particularly bad case."

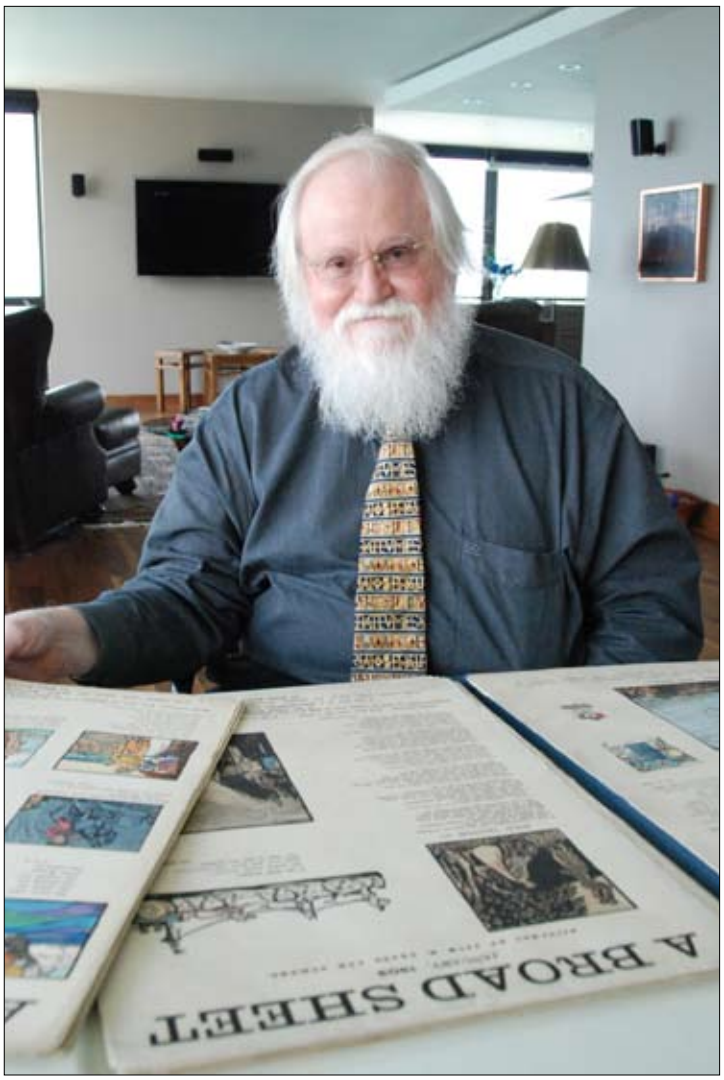
It all began when he was a youngster. His father happened to know Ralph Newman, the legendary Lincoln scholar and book dealer. Newman had a huge stack of original drawings by John T. McCutcheon, the famous Chicago *Tribune* cartoonist, and gave Mourek's father one of them. In turn, Mourek's father gave the drawing to his son.

Thus began Mourek's career as a collector. His first collecting method was to write to practicing political cartoonists, asking for originals. "When I started, the artists often would give them away for free. One local cartoonist, John Fischetti of the Chicago *Daily News*, seemed to consider it a point of honor that he give the original drawing of his cartoons to the first person who asked for them. Fischetti actually called me and asked for my approval to give *my original* to President Johnson. I said yes but later regretted my answer when I saw original cartoons displayed outside of the restrooms at the LBJ Library."

A relative died when Mourek was in his early twenties. "Everyone in the family got small legacies. One cousin bought a car and another invested in commodities. But I used it to make my first real purchases of drawings, which I have to this day."

He has what at first seems to be a wide variety of collections. There are Japanese Meiji prints, a variety of Irish-related items, an Ethiopian hide painting. My theory – not his, let me hasten to say – is that the two unifying elements in his collections are polemicism and what is sometimes called "the mark of the hand." The first you might call political, although a wide variety of points of view are represented.

Take the Meiji prints. These are large, colorful woodblock prints, typically triptychs, sometimes with words and sometimes only pictures. They were produced in Japan in the second half of the nineteenth century, at a time of great upheaval in Japanese life. Though some appear at first to be purely decorative, nearly all have an agenda: to encourage people to dress and behave more like Westerners, or to build jingoistic support for the war with China and Russia. They were produced using an elaborate process in which the woodblocks received variable inking, leading to a wide range of tones being produced from each plate.



Photograph by Robert McCamant

Or take his large collection of books and broadsides created by Jack B. Yeats. There is a complete run of "A Broad Sheet," published monthly by Elkin Matthews and a complete set of "A Broadside" produced monthly by Lily and Lolly Yeats' Cuala Press. Both publications were poems plus illustration, but often there was a political point to either the drawing or the poem. And every one of the 300 copies issued each month was hand-colored.

There are original political cartoons by many different artists, from McCutcheon and Fischetti locally to the Polish book illustrator Arthur Szyk. "Back in the 1980s, I used to say I had a thousand political cartoons. Now I don't say."

He has a host of variations on the theme of *Punch*, the English journal of humor, including *The Leprochaun*, which did much the same thing for Dublin that *Punch* did for London, and *Japan Punch*, which was produced – in English! – by Charles Wirgman and other westerners living in Japan in from 1862 to 1887.

He has a complete set of propaganda posters and pamphlets created by the U.S. Public Affairs Office for the 1967 South Vietnamese election. He got them much the way he got his first cartoons: by writing to the Public Affairs Office and requesting them!

Mourek supports his addiction with a family business in Elmhurst, A. Mourek Management, Inc., which does real-estate management. He is winding it down, however; they managed to sell off their own properties before the present downturn.

In addition to the Caxton and Grolier Clubs, Mourek has devoted a great deal of time and effort to the Manuscript Society. He served as its president for a while, which means that he is an ex-officio board member for life. He was responsible for it joining the Fellowship of Associated Bibliophilic Societies (FABS) and the Society's representative on the FABS council. Though his collection is not typical among Manuscript Society members, he considers his cartoons original documents.

Mourek had a major setback two and a half years ago, when he fell while walking out the side door of the Union League Club. "There was no ice, water, or snow. I'll never be sure how I managed to fall. I twisted myself,

See ***CAXTONIANS COLLECT,*** *page 16*

Bookmarks...

Luncheon Program
Friday June 12, 2009, Union League Club
James Tomes
"WWI Letters to 'Dear Mother' From a Soldier and Poet"

Caxtonian Jim Tomes (publisher, attorney, genealogist) returns to continue the fascinating stories of his relatives, many of whose published and unpublished writings reside in the Newberry Library. As Jim prepared to move to the city in the 1990s he came upon a box of "stuff" his father had previously given him, including letters his dad had written to his own mother. Especially intrigued by his father's portrayals of the life and emotions of a battlefield soldier, Jim, historian that he is, began to dig and found that Wilfred Owen, one of WWI's outstanding battlefield poets, served in a British infantry unit next to his father's during the battle of the Hindenburg line in September and October, 1918. After the battle Owen's unit replaced Tomes's American unit at the front and Owen was killed two weeks later, one week before the end of the war. Armed with Owen's story, some of Owen's letters to his mother and of course his poetry, Jim proceeded to write a biography of his father and a short commentary of the significance of the poetry and the short life of Owen. Jim's book, *Dear Mother*, addressed to his four children, now exists in book form with many photographs. Listen as Jim, with powerful first-hand accounts and remarkable poetry, lights up this important and personal history.

Dinner Program
Wednesday June 17, 2009, Newberry Library
Travis McDade
"The 'Lunacy' of Book Theft: A Chicago Story"

Continuing the theme of our April symposium on Book Crime, we bring you a fascinating tale with a distinctly Chicago connection. The history of American book theft is sprinkled with as many misnomers as it is interesting characters. In the early 20th Century, the most prevalent idea about book thieves (still with us today in a muted form) is that they were "lunatics." This was a common diagnosis offered by doctors, lawyers, judges and the press. Our speaker will discuss this faulty idea of book thieves, its implications and how its origins might well be with the case of one Chicago man.

Travis McDade is Curator of Law Rare Books at the University of Illinois College of Law. He is author of one book, *The Book Thief: The True Crimes of Daniel Spiegelman*, and several articles on the subject of book crime. At Illinois, he teaches a class called Rare Books, Crime & Punishment.

The June luncheon will take place at the Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (in the main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30 pm. Luncheon is $30. Details of the June dinner: it will take place at The Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton St. Timing: spirits at 5 pm, refreshments at 6 pm, program at 7:30 pm. Price: $55. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; ***reservations are needed by noon Tuesday for the Friday luncheon, and by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.*** *See www.caxtonclub.org for parking and transit information.*

CAXTONIANS COLLECT, *from page 15*
perhaps because I was trying to preserve my computer, which I was carrying." But the consequences were quite bad: ruptured tendons in both legs. Several surgeries at Northwestern University Hospital and countless trips to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago have brought him back quite a way. He is proud to have been to London on his own in the last few months.

He and his wife, Karole, now have an apartment on Lake Shore Drive, not far from the Institute, in addition to their suburban home and a small apartment in Dublin, Ireland. "Recently our son visited the Lake Shore apartment," Mourek says. "He looked around and said, 'This is worth keeping…but of course the art work has to go.'"

Which brings us to a problem of many inveterate collectors. Mourek is 66. He knows he will not be here forever. What to do with the collections? "It's a particularly acute problem for collectors of cartoons," he explains. "Libraries don't really like to acquire big flat items that are hard to store and protect. But art museums don't want cartoons, because most of them don't consider cartoons to be art!"

So, it's an open question, and suggestions are welcome.

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Steven Levitin '07
died on January 19.
A remembrance will appear in a future issue of the *Caxtonian*.