SHARP News
Volume 21, Number 3  Summer 2012

SHARP Dublin 2012

The Battle for Books  
Trinity College Dublin  
26-29 June 2012

Since my first SHARP conference in 1994, SHARP meetings have achieved a much higher intellectual standard, and the association has evolved from an embattled sub-discipline trying to assert its importance into an accepted part of the mainstream. As SHARP has ceased to be an avant-garde, it has also become a valuable network, which is after all what conferences are for. In recent years, SHARP has tried to “internationalise” itself. Dublin provided an opportunity to assess how far this initiative has come.

At the outset, Claire Squires and her militant accomplices offered a very pessimistic view of recent trends in the beleaguered public library system of the UK, justifying perhaps better than any other session why the conference was subtitled The Battle for Books. Nicholas Cronk gave an expert account of ways in which Voltaire managed his own celebrity, playing with his reading public, disowning books published in his name which he probably authored, and refusing to deny authorship of some we know he didn’t write. In a conference on The Battle for Books, censorship, or at least book trade regulation, was bound to be a prominent theme, and it was interestingly addressed by very coherent Czech and Dutch panels. The conference also brought the records of lending institutions into focus, from the ‘What Middletown Read’ project to Arnold Lubbers’ nineteenth-century Dutch reading associations.

As is often the case, the most interesting aspects of these sessions was what the speakers did not say. Only after persistent questioning of our Czech colleagues did we learn of the asymmetrical relationship between Czech and Slovak cultures, in which Slovaks read Czech books, but Czechs ignore Slovak literature. As for Middletown’s reading, researchers confront a sometimes insuperable problem: how to interpret library borrowings in relation to the books people bought. Does library lending mirror the patterns of home reading, or in contrast does it fill the spaces which home reading doesn’t cover? Only in discussion did this essential difficulty surface and it places important limitations on the significance of the research presented.

Dublin suggested that the internationalisation of SHARP hasn’t yet been realised. Whereas about 40 attended the Middletown session, only 4 turned up on Czech censorship: a clear indication of SHARP’s structural disequilibrium. And it is a little while since I participated in an “international” conference that was conducted entirely in one language. SHARP of course has a very well-defined linguistic identity and a strong Anglophone emphasis. Because of this narrow focus, SHARP conferences often fail to engage with a variety of historiographical traditions. Approaches remain conventional. A few years ago in Toronto, the trans-national turn was very much in evidence; but in Dublin, with a few notable exceptions, the door seemed to have been shut on this avenue of inquiry. Similarly, and again with a few exceptions, there was little on offer on the meaning of literacy, or on the history of writing practices.

Germaine Warkentin’s concluding plenary proves me wrong on a few counts. Instead of Anglocentrism, she offered a perspective ranging from the Plains Indians to Mesoamerica. She discussed problems of literacy by trying to connect literary competence with brain function and cognitive science. She attacked the question of writing by speculating on its place on the path of human evolution.

For me, Warkentin redeemed the conference. On the whole, it presented excellent material but lacked Warkentin-style adventure and the dangerous thrill of original approaches. SHARP’s success carries certain risks: especially the risk that the cutting edge of the history of books, reading and writing may increasingly lie elsewhere.

Martyn Lyons  
University of New South Wales

Just returned from Dublin and an enjoyable time at SHARP 2012. I only attended about half of the conference (5 out of 9 parallel sessions) due to an MS-like illness, meaning I had to pace myself and rest on alternate days. I must thank organiser Johanna Archbold for her advice on wheelchair accessibility, the Dining Hall staff for excellent food and service in an impressive venue, and my husband, Martin, who wheeled me around, explored Dublin on other days, and took lots of photos. Our hotel was in Pearse Street, near the north gate to Trinity College, so an excellent location. Generally we got around Trinity College well. The trickiest bit was the still fully cobbled path from the back of the Arts Building to the Long Room Hub and the Old Library.

On the Tuesday I attended three sessions. The first was about the fight for public libraries in the twenty-first century era of austerity and cuts. I particularly enjoyed Lauren Smith’s talk, with its detailed discussion of advocacy in action. The afternoon session was about digitising early modern sources, a nice crossover of my history and computer science backgrounds. Pip Willecox’s talk about digitising a transcript of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Stationers’ Register, the record of English copyright, was a delight. And my astronomer husband and I greatly enjoyed the astronomy content of Scott Schofield’s talk: an unexpected surprise.

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Contents

SHARP Dublin 2012  1
SHARP Business  2
Exhibition Reviews  5
E-Resource Reviews  7
Book Reviews  8
SHARP Prizes  15
Bibliography  16
Our final session of Tuesday was about nineteenth-century American library records and building databases from them. This was of particular interest to me because I built large databases for Scottish library borrowing records from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Christopher Phillips's talk on a library database project in its early stages was fascinating. James Connolly and Frank Felsenstein on 'What Middletown Read' were glimpses into the potential of such research, though their talks only made me want to know more, and their upcoming book should be eagerly awaited by many.

We didn't attend the reception in the Old Library, but headed back to our hotel, for an early dinner and an early night. It had been a long day.

On the Thursday we only attended morning sessions. Our first session was about eighteenth- and nineteenth-century library reading, in Trinity College Dublin, Leeds, and British garrison libraries. All three talks were interesting, and related to my PhD research. I emailed the garrison libraries speaker afterwards, indeed I emailed quite a few conference speakers soon after their talks - an advantage of having my iPad in Dublin with me along with free WiFi in our hotel.

We dashed out quickly because I'd spotted a book by one of my former supervisors I wanted to pick up in the publishers' area, hopefully for 50% off as a display copy. Got that, and had a chance to chat over coffee with Katie Halsey, a fellow library borrowings researcher from Scotland, with whom I'd hoped to chat.

Our final morning session was about digital genres, including self-publishing in the digital era, the Apple app store approval process, and print surviving in a digital age. This was a very well attended panel, and there was a lively question and answer section after the three talks. I'm actually very surprised, or perhaps 3, of the 62 sessions (each with typically 3 talks) touched on the issue. As I said at the session, and others there agreed, I feel very strongly that this is an area SHARP should engage with, and hope it will do more in future.

We left at 1pm, to explore the Old Library and for me to see some of Dublin. Sadly I had to miss the Friday talks. I wish I'd got to Germaine Warkentin's closing plenary and hope she publishes it soon! But overall I had a thoroughly enjoyable time at SHARP. Even with accessibility issues to overcome and the need to pace myself I think the trip was well worth making. Talks were inspiring, and Q&A sessions afterwards lively. I hope to make it to Antwerp – now wondering how cobbly the city is! – for my third SHARP conference in 2014.

Viv Dunstan
Dundee, Scotland

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**SHARP News** [ISSN 1073-1725] is the quarterly newsletter of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, Inc. The Society takes no responsibility for the views asserted in these pages. Copyright of content rests with contributors; design copyright rests with the Society. Set in Adobe Garamond with Wingdings.

**COPY DEADLINES:** 1 March, 1 June,
1 September, 1 December

**SHARP WEB:**
http://sharpweb.org

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**SHARP Business**

**Annual Report**

2012 is an important anniversary for SHARP – our memorable series of annual conferences now numbers twenty, beginning in the USA in 1993, and since then convening in Scotland, in England, in Canada, in Germany, in France, the Netherlands, and Finland. And now, we meet in Ireland. Still, this is only our second Annual Report. The Executive Committee of SHARP is happy to present updates to its members on the activities of our organization.

**List of SHARP’s elected officers:**
Board of Directors, with retirement dates (Board and Executive Committee members are elected for 8-year terms):

- Kevin Absillis, 2019;
- James Barnes, 2013;
- Jonathan Bengston, 2013;
- Robert Cagna, 2015;
- David Carter, 2013;
- Evelyn Ellerman 2017;
- Ellen Gruber Garvey, 2015;
- Priya Joshi, 2013;
- Lisa Kuitert, 2017;
- Fritz Levy, 2013;
- Alistair McCleery, 2015;
- Bob Owens, 2015;
- Shef Rogers, 2019;
- Sydney Shep, 2017;
- Gail Shivel, 2015;
- Alexis Weedon, 2017;
- George H. Williams, 2019;
- Paul Wright, 2015.

**Nominating Committee**

Carole Gerson;
Patrick Leary;
James Raven.
Executive Committee
Leslie Howsam, President
Ian Gadd, Vice-President
James Wald, Treasurer
Jyrki Hakapää, Recording Secretary (retiring 2012, replaced pro tem by Cornina Norrick)
Eleanor Shevlin, Membership Secretary
Simon Frost, External Affairs Director
Claire Squires, Director for Publications/Awards
Lee N. McLaird, Director for Electronic Resources
Bertram H. MacDonald, Member-at-large

2013 will be an election year; watch for the call for nominations and then for the online voting in advance of the Philadelphia Annual Meeting, where results will be announced.

Report of President and Vice-President
Leslie Howsam and Ian Gadd report that our organization remains strong, flexible and solvent – they thank all their fellow-members of the Executive Committee, as well as listowner Patrick Leary, editors Ezra Greenspan, Jonathan Rose, and Sydney Shep, review editors, archivist, bibliographer and all the others who volunteer some of the valuable hours of their academic lives to manage SHARP’s day to day activities. Amazingly, we have no paid staff, and the strong financial statement to the right of this column would look very different if that were not the case! We continue to expand SHARP’s outreach beyond our initial base in North America, the United Kingdom and Australasia, to Ireland, to continental Europe, Latin America and Asia.

Here are a number of current and future initiatives.

**SHARP Archives**. We have an archivist, Jim Kelly of the University of Massachusetts; and within the EC, archival records are part of the oversight responsibility of the Recording Secretary, Jyrki Hakapää. We held a productive meeting last year in Washington and will reconvene next year in Philadelphia, to discuss the management of, and access to, SHARP’s two decades of records, including both paper and electronic documents. Meanwhile, if you hold any SHARP records in your personal files, please let Jim or Cornina Norrick (taking over from Jyrki this year) know.

**Book History Online**. Many members of SHARP have used this valuable web resource, which was formerly based at the Royal Library of the Netherlands at The Hague. We are working with colleagues in the Netherlands, and hope to be able to help facilitate the transition of BHO to a new platform. Watch **SHARP News** and **SHARP-L** for updates over the next few months.

**China 2013**. SHARP is an Affiliated International Organization of the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS/CISH), which next meets in Shandong. Over the next few months there will be information and calls for participation in that conference.

**SHARP-RBS Scholarships**. Our new partnership with Rare Book School at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, has been a great success. The first scholarships – for graduate students and recent PhDs who wish to attend courses at RBS – have been awarded. The winners are Gabriel Fuchs of Columbus, Ohio, USA and Katarzyna Pleszcynska of Krakow, Poland. SHARP members are invited to donate to the Scholarship Fund, through the Rare Book School website.

Treasurer’s Report
The full financial report is available on request. What follows is a snapshot of our financial situation.

The figures for fiscal/calendar year 2011 show that SHARP is in a comfortable position. During that year, in terms of regular revenue and expenditure, we had income of about $46,500 and spent about $8,000. Income was a combination of membership dues and the royalties we now receive for publishing *Book History* (payments from J-Store and MUSE via Johns Hopkins University Press, for online usage of articles). Expenditures were *SHARP News*, the book prize, maintenance of sharpweb.org, professional affiliations, etc. We have over $200,000 in the bank.

Apart from the prudent management of past and present officers, we find ourselves in this position for two main reasons; the revenue from royalties, and the fact that the organizers of some conferences have been in a position to let SHARP share in the benefits of their stewardship of funds. Otherwise, membership income has remained steady, and the costs of publishing *BH* ($20 per copy including postage) and processing memberships ($8 per head) have not changed. Nor has the cost of printing and distributing *SHARP News*, which works out at about $6.60 per member, per issue.

Funds flow in and out according to the cycle of the membership year and the timing of annual conferences. Membership fees are collected by JHUP, who deduct a fee for their services and also deduct their charges for the publication of *Book History*, and pass the balance on to the organization. Similarly the money for the Conference Travel Grants is collected by one year’s conference organizers and forwarded, through SHARP’s books, to the next year’s group. Apart from the Conference Travel Grants, each conference is self-contained and managed by the sponsoring institution.

As Treasurer, Jim Wald is working with the rest of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors to keep SHARP sustainable while it grows. We are now in a position to invest in studies of book history and book culture, whether by sponsoring research, graduate scholarships, or publication subsidies, making further investment in digital resources, or by contributing directly to the support of selected focused conferences. Decisions made at the Dublin meetings will be announced to the membership via SHARP-L and **SHARP News**. More will follow in the coming years.

Membership Report
A full range of membership statistics is available on request. Here is a snapshot of our membership situation.

In 2011–2012, our last full year (since membership begins and ends at the first of July), we had 1096 members, about the same as the previous year. Almost 80% of these are individual members, some of whom are paying higher fees as supporting or sustaining members; another 16% are students (whose fee does not include *Book History*). There are a handful of institutional members (mostly libraries).

Another way to break out membership is by geographic region. We have members in 34 countries: about 60% are in the United States; 10% each in Canada and the United Kingdom; the remaining 20% are scattered across the globe, with substantial numbers in Australia, Belgium, Finland, France and the Netherlands.

Membership fees are collected through Johns Hopkins University Press, which also handles the printing and distribution of our publications. It is now possible to renew automatically, and for two people living at the same address to have a Joint membership.

Members are surveyed from time to time about what SHARP does for them, and what they can do for SHARP. But in between these formal questionnaires, members are urged to...
keep in touch with the organization.

Eleanor asks both new and longstanding members to renew as soon as the notice appears from JHUP. Timely renewals make it possible for us to print just enough copies of SHARP News and Book History, and allow us to report more robust numbers to the institutions who collect subscription statistics.

Report of the Member-at-Large (Conferences)

Bertrum H. MacDonald works closely with the President and Vice-President in advising those who are considering a proposal for a SHARP conference, either focused on a regional or thematic subject, or the annual general-meeting conference.

The SHARP conference manual has been updated, and revisions will continue as each year adds to our collective experience.

In addition to the Dublin conference in 2013, reviewed in this issue of SHARP News, there was a highly successful SHARP-focused conference held earlier in June, at Nancy-Université, with the theme “From Text(s) to Book(s).” The organizer was Nathalie Collé-Bak.

For 2013, the SHARP EC has approved an application from the University of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia, for a conference to be held 18–21 July. The theme will be “Geographies of the Book.” Also for 2013, the EC has approved an application for a focused conference to be held in Le Mans, France (23–24 May). The theme will be “Texts, Forms and Readings in Europe,” from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. The organizer is Brigitte Ouvry-Vial of Université de Maine.

At our Dublin meeting, SHARP’s EC considered proposals for annual conferences for 2014 in Europe and 2015 in North America. We are also considering a proposal for a focused conference, to be held in Brazil in 2013.

Meanwhile, Bertrum and the rest of the EC welcome any advice from the membership about conferences. Should we perhaps be thinking of conferences limited to graduate students? Are there certain locations, or particular themes, which are ripe for a visit from the world’s book historians?

Report of the Director for Electronic Resources

As Director for Electronic Resources, Lee McLaird is responsible for SHARP’s rich and sparkling website, <http://sharpweb.org>, and for our highly-respected listserv, SHARP-L. The daily supervision of SHARP-L is ably handled by Patrick Learcy, who this year helped us navigate the transition to a new listserv “handler” and the sustainability of our electronic archive. We have recently appointed a liaison for Social Media, Jason Ensor, who will help enhance SHARP’s presence in the world of Facebook, Wikipedia and so forth.

The website is always changing, of course, and has been improved this year by two new features. The first is the addition of the SHARP Blog. Various members of SHARP have written short opinion pieces or quick reports on presentations, and readers have offered their comments. Claire Squires, who is responsible for the blog as one of SHARP’s publications, welcomes offers and suggestions for further contributions.

The second new feature is a new “Networking” page in the Discussion section, which allows for announcements from the Society’s Liaisons (both organizational and regional liaisons). For more on Liaisons, see below.

Report of the Director for Publications and Awards

Claire Squires reports that our annual journal, Book History, continues to attract and publish quality scholarship. The editors are taking steps to increase the coverage of non-Western topics in articles. SHARP News also flourishes, with a rich quarterly array of reviews, co-ordinated by a team of book, exhibition and e-resources review editors. The SHARP Bibliography in the newsletter remains an important resource, supplemented by our presence in LibraryThing. Those most concerned with SHARP News are looking into the possibilities of eventually moving its content to an online platform.

The new SHARP Blog has featured various contributors, most notably the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of SHARP-L with reflections by Patrick Learcy.

The 2011 SHARP-DeLong Prize for Book History was won by John B. Hench, for Books as Weapons: Propaganda, Publishing, and the Battle for Global Markets in the Era of World War II (published by Cornell University Press). John was present at last year’s conference to receive his award in person.

This year’s book prize committee received almost 50 volumes, winnowed them down to a shortlist of 9, and announced the winner at the AGM. (See “SHARP Prizes,” p.15 in this issue.)

External Affairs/Liaison Report

SHARP has a strong team of liaison officers. Simon Frost’s portfolio relates to the regional officers (formerly called national liaisons) who do everything from simply supplying flyers and promotional material for local events, to mounting focused conferences with the SHARP stamp of approval. Simon has worked hard this past year to overhaul our team of Regional Liaisons (their names are appended here). Six new officers were recruited and elected. Material from their reports will appear in the various SHARP media over the next year.

Eleanor Shevlin, as part of her task as Membership Secretary, manages our liaisons with affiliated societies in various disciplines and interdisciplinary groupings, many of which host SHARP-sponsored panels which provide opportunities for outreach. She too has recruited several new officers. Some have created Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media pages to connect members of the other organization with their counterparts in SHARP.

SHARP Regional Officers

Australia: Nathan Garvey
Canada: Josée Vincent
Denmark: Simon Frost
France: Susan Pickford
Germany: Corinna Norrick
Iberian Peninsula: Benito Rial Costas
Ireland: Elizabeth Tilley
Israel: Barbara Hochman
India: (post remains open)
Italy: Loretta de Franceschi
Japan: Andrew T. Kamei-Dyche and Keiko Hori
Netherlands: Arnold Lubbers
New Zealand: Nikki Hessell
Slovenia: Miha Kovac
South Africa: Archie Dick
Sweden: Anne Steiner
United Kingdom: (post remains open)

SHARP Society Liaisons

American Antiquarian Society: Paul Erickson;
American Historical Association: Robb K. Haberman and Jessica C. Linker;
American Literature Association: Ezra Greenspan;
American Printing History Association: Casey Smith;
American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies: Eleanor F. Shevlin;
Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe

Harvard Art Museums
6 September – 10 December 2011
The Mary and Leigh Block Museum, Northwestern University
17 January – 8 April 2012

While we all know that books travel, disseminating information and in the process generating new ideas, prints are oft dismissed as just pretty pictures and viewed as arcane works on paper which are more appropriate to collectors’ cabinets than the study of the history of ideas. The subject of this exhibition is the parallel importance of prints, published singly, in series, and in books, to the production of knowledge. It focuses on the scientific experiments and discoveries of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in Northern Europe, and convincingly demonstrates how prints were essential, dynamic elements reinforcing practices of observation and experimentation. 

The exhibition stresses the evolutionary networks among artists and artisans, instrument makers, natural philosophers, cosmologists, mapmakers, historians, doctors, and botanists. Artists did not simply work in the service of other professionals and practitioners who designed the experiments and made the discoveries, recording and publishing their findings. Rather, artists created prints which modeled the practices of scientific observation. Paired with texts, prints provided visual representations which illustrated and sometimes re-performed processes. Occasionally, prints replicated scientific instruments on paper. The exhibition features prints used to make celestial and terrestrial globes as well as three-dimensional sun dials which could be constructed from paper. Medical practices such as surgery and dissection could be illustrated episodically or were presented in layers and lifted flaps in anatomical texts. In the gallery, the presentation of these devices and special formats with examples that viewers could manipulate was both helpful and entertaining. Dackerman’s selections for the exhibition show how prints functioned in tandem with texts as agents in the documentation and proliferation of knowledge. In diverse formats – maps, diagrams, and plans – the exhibition effectively demonstrates that prints effectively illustrated concepts not well suited to textual explanations.

At Harvard, the exhibition was installed in a series of rooms with selective narratives featuring monstrous, engaging, and poignant depictions of man and nature. At certain delightful moments the prints become an entertaining zoo-parade of curious and impressive specimens, beginning with images of beached whales, moving into the astrological images of animals that dwell above in the heavens, and punctuating the section on natural history with the impressive Great Lion, by Jacques de Gheyn II. Animal portraits in particular exemplify the overlapping agendas of art and science, adding to the reservoirs of knowledge while retaining elements of fable and folklore. In Hans von Gersdorff’s Feld büch der Wundartzney (Strasbourg: Hans Schott, 1540), Hans Wechtlin’s human portraits are expressive. Colored woodcut heads look appropriately apprehensive about cranial surgery, grimacing as the brutal instrument drills down into their heads. And just as texts are always subjective, the purpose of prints is to convey the concept, perhaps not always what was actually observed or observable. Thus verisimilitude was not the primary goal; often representations were adapted or simplified to present certain ideas more efficiently.

For those who were not able to view the exhibition, the catalogue is capacious and heavily illustrated. Echoing the stimulating presentation of the exhibition, it combines erudition in its advanced and imaginative scholarship with striking images of the astonishing array of graphic works and rare books that were on display in the gallery.

Marcia Reed
Getty Research Institute

Dickens and London
Museum of London
9 December 2011 – 10 June 2012

This exhibit – which should be called “London and Dickens,” as London is very much on display – is a powerful experience. Books are notoriously difficult to stage excitingly, and nearly illegible manuscripts are nearly impossible. Alex Werner, the museum’s Head of History Collections, met the challenge very imaginatively, borrowing from curatorial practices adopted since the stunning Byron exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum 40 years ago, which pioneered organizing an exhibit about a poet as a walk down streets through his life. Here London sets the scene; as Claire Tomalin, distinguished biographer, said recently in a...
Guildhall lecture, “London was Dickens’s canvas.” This exhibit establishes the theme by opening with three huge scrims onto which are projected foggy swirls that dissolve into pictures, some still, some moving, of streets, ships, clocks chiming, figures consolidating and dissolving: visual and aural analogues of Dickens’s night walks through foggy London town. Opposite, the watch house for Lincoln’s Inn adjoins two sets of earphones that allow a professional linguist to analyze what Dickens’s spelling of certain words (e.g., “a’n’t” and “an’t” for “ain’t”) tells us about class and regional accents. Thus from the beginning the public is enveloped in a sensory world. A tempting opening beyond the watch house takes one into a room lined with color-filled, spangled theatrical prints, climaxing in the stunning figured suit the great clown Joey Grimaldi once wore. Move on toward the “Home and Hearth” section, and one encounters many finely executed Victorian oil paintings of street and domestic scenes, and ends up facing Dickens’s writing desk. Above it, an animated version of R. W. Buss’s famous painting “Dickens’s Dream” brings many of the characters drawn by Dickens’s illustrators to life – a lively Paul Dombey contrasting to a supine Nell, for instance.

Along the back wall niches, dimly lit for conservation reasons, hold manuscript and proof pages corrected in Dickens’s hand, plus, mercifully, a print version of these passages from Dombey and Son, David Copperfield, Great Expectations, and Edwin Drood. Dickens’s blue ink curls of letters and cross-outs are virtually unreadable in this light. What compositors, working at night by candlelight, made of the sheets is hard to imagine, but they were incredibly fast and accurate, even though Dickens would occasionally lose his temper about a mistake that any highly professional compositor might have made. This long narrow passage also displays more paintings, including the marvelous George Elgar Hicks 1860 oil of The General Post Office, One Minute to Six, maps of London, and lots of big images of coaches, engines, railway cuttings, and ships, reminding us of what an international center of commerce and industry the mid-Victorian metropolis was. The penultimate space is devoted to death and dying; it supplies the paraphernalia of mourning, the reading desk Dickens used in his farewell performances, and the stunning large canvases, Applicants for Admission to a Casual Ward. This is the 1874 painting on the same theme as the “Houseless and Hungry” etching Luke Fildes published in the 12 October 1869 issue of the Graphic that moved John Everett Millais to urge Dickens to hire Fildes to illustrate Edwin Drood.

But there is one further climax: an exceptionally moving and observant twenty-minute film by William Raban, picking up on the theme of night walks and houselessness. “The Houseless Shadow” uses visuals obtained at night over five months in 2011 to accompany the reading of passages from Dickens’s celebrated 1860 essay, “Night Walks.” I’ve never seen contemporary images of London paired with Dickens’s prose, and even the costumed scenes in the best films have a distinctly artificial look. These shots do not. The dripping awnings and gurgling gutters, the wrapped blankets of night sleepers, the lonely lit windows, the river changing from dark ripples to sparkles of sunlight, and the sky yellowing into dawn as St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields and St. Paul’s keep watch – all these scenes are stunningly evocative of Dickens’s world. The Museum will, I hope, make a DVD available for purchase.

What is available now is a splendid accompaniment to the exhibit: a very large book written by Werner and Tony Williams that features over 200 archival photographs, only some of which are incorporated in the exhibit. They are all hauntingly evocative of the world Dickens’s pen drew – the excitement of the city, its signs and shows and people and streets and vehicles, the huge ships and mechanical contrivances, the slums and parks and markets and palaces. Anyone teaching a Victorian course could make use of these vivid pictures. The combination of exhibit, which I fear will close before this review is printed, and film and book that I hope will endure beyond it, produces an indelible impression of Victorian London. The printed word is far from being at the printed, and film and book that I hope will endure beyond it, produces an indelible impression of Victorian London. The printed word is far from being at the

Las Biblias de Sefarad: las vidas cruzadas del texto y sus lectores

Bibles of Sefarad:
The Crossed Lives of the Text and Its Readers

Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid
27 February 2012 – 13 May 2012

Organised by the Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, part of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC), one of Spain’s premier research institutions, this relatively small but relevant exhibition presents a selection of books written, read, and beheld by Spanish Jews, Hebrew scholars, and conversos (converted Jews living in Christian Iberia) during the later Middle Ages. Many of the books are here on view for the first time outside of their places of origin. As the title suggests, this is a focused exhibition with thirteenth- to fifteenth-century Hebrew bibles from Spanish collections making up the core of the display. However, this material does not represent the full extent of treasures on offer. The exhibit highlights the richness of a variety of Spanish collections, not only that of Spain’s Biblioteca Nacional itself, but others of the country’s great libraries as well, including the monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial, the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, and the Archivo Histórico Nacional. Some of the most intriguing manuscripts hail from lesser known collections, however, such as the capitular archive of El Burgo de Osma (Soria), the Museo Lázaro Galdiano, and the Biblioteca Histórica de la Universidad Complutense, Madrid, which inherited the medieval library of the university at Alcalá de Henares.

Text panels provide historical context and introduce thematic sections of the exhibition dedicated to Romance bibles, learning, biblical exegesis, reason and revelation, and polemic, to name a few. The visitor’s movement is controlled by way of temporary walls, which form hallways and direct linear movement through the space. It is at the start and finish that some of the exhibition’s most beautiful illuminated manuscripts may be found. A bible in medieval Castilian known as the Biblia de Alba is among the first that viewers encounter. This 1430 translation with glosses by Moses Arragel of Guadalajara from Maqueda (Toledo) now resides in the collection of Madrid’s Biblioteca del Palacio de Liria. It was open to ff. 236v–237r, a beautifully illuminated page displaying the temple implements. But...
what a pleasant surprise on my second visit to find a different opening (to ff. 356r–357v) featuring a delightful illumination of Jonah and the Whale!

Curated by Dr. Javier del Barco, a specialist in Hebrew philology, Biblias de Sefarad largely features manuscripts that are not heavily illuminated. Through ample didactic material, engaging display, and even the very lack of illuminations he invites viewers to behold the beauty of Hebrew script itself, an invitation driven home by the few but excellent examples of micrography on display. The exhibition ends with a colourful and precise fifteenth-century illumination of interlace (f. 248v) in a book of biblical commentary by the thirteenth-century commentator Rashi, now in the collection of Madrid’s Museo Lázaro Galdiano. Also of note in the section dedicated to polemic is the 1463 Fortalitium Fidei contra inductus saracensos aliosque Christiane fidei inimicos (Fortress of the Faith Against Jews, Muslims, and Other Enemies of the Christian Faith) by Alsonso de Espina but copied by García de San Esteban de Gormaz, and from the archive in El Burgo de Osma. The illumination on folio 1 recto interprets the battle against the enemies of Christianity (namely heretics, Jews, Saracens, and demons) as a literal feat of arms with a dizzyingly crowded image rendered all in black ink and simple, poignant red highlights for such details as the flames burning figures at the bottom left of the scene.

This is primarily an exhibition of and about books and the text contained therein. However, a series of other, fragmented objects offer a poignant reminder of the precarious position of the Spanish Jewry during the later Middle Ages. These include the fifteenth-century Sefer Torah fragments discovered when remodeling a house in Toledo, which had likely been hidden for fear of the Inquisition. Other examples are the fragments of fifteenth-century synagogue lamps cleverly displayed in vitrines that also hold reproductions of manuscript illuminations showing similar lamps in use. Finally, a series of sculptural fragments from synagogues, bearing Hebrew (and in one case both Hebrew and Arabic) inscriptions, similarly offer a tantalising look at the richness of Jewish art. (These are originally from Toledo but are now housed in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional.)

For those who are interested in more information, I highly recommend the beautifully produced catalogue, which not only presents the excellent scholarship that supports the exhibition but is incredibly reasonably priced at a mere €25 for hardback.

Amanda Doutseth
Courtauld Institute of Art, London

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**E-Resources Reviews**


The Octavo compact disc containing Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* (London, 1755) is easily activated, and within seconds an astonishing replica of the original text -- including the leather cover and decorative binding -- is visible from page to page. The clarity is so fine and the mottled aging of the paper so sharp that it seems nearly tactile. The opaque yellowing edges indicate its fragility and genuine antiquity. The careful script is a reminder of another time, the archaic spellings intact, the letters recognizable, but seem both ornate and rugged compared to modern print.

For the book lover, bibliophile, and archivist, the Octavo provides instant connection with the work of the British master and his painstaking labor of love with words. The disc itself works on any computer via Adobe Reader, and simply inserting the disc and clicking on the icon "Johnson's Dictionary" enables the user to open the book and examine every page, as if he or she were holding the text and binding. The dictionary icons are divided in two parts and are easily maneuvered by dragging/clicking onto the desktop. It takes a few minutes to download on any laptop. For the impatient, this feature may be a set-back. However, once the dictionary opens, there is not a centimeter of this book that is not visible for examination, including the leather spine. The pages can be scrolled, or for closer scrutiny, a section list offers commentary, letters, visual guides, history, and even information on the binding and collation. In some ways, this facsimile is more advantageous than obtaining permission to use the real book because the disc is so easily available to anyone with a laptop. The Octavo disc offers the curious or the scholar an opportunity to examine the depths of the book without time limit, and each page can be magnified up to 300%. The digital tool is straightforward and accomplishes the task of looking up a word or reading commentary. The freedom to study the evolution of the English language and admire Johnson’s dictionary are is extraordinary and democratic via the disc.

The archival purist -- the one who primarily values the physical book -- may experience a vague dissatisfaction in using the Octavo disc, for it is after all a virtual book experience. The human sense knows the difference immediately, no matter how finely the facsimile is presented on the screen, even when it can produce the likeness and sound of pages turning. Part of this vague dissatisfaction is that the Octavo's untouchable icon underscores not only the low likelihood that we will have an opportunity to handle the original dictionary from 1755, but also the idea that our human touch is arguably too destructive in the pursuit of the book's preservation. There is therefore a tacit remonstration in this teasing image that seems so real and available in its digital form.

Samuel Johnson's dictionary was conceived and designed as a tool to organize information, and its evolution in this particular digital archive is a paradox. The advantage of using the Octavo compact disc is of course its wide distribution for the opportunity of its use. While it is not the genuine book being passed hand to hand, it is the sturdier method of viewing and using Johnson's original work. The viewer can see every page, word, and ink blot, consider every description and spelling without contributing to its fragile deterioration. The compact disc is both useful in its historical sense and kept intact for future generations to both use and appreciate.

Nancy Larson
San Jose State University


NINES was founded by Jerome McGann in 2003 and is currently under the direction of Andrew Stauffer. The project is headed by an extensive Executive Council
**BOOK REVIEWS**


Mark Amerika’s *remixthebook* is a curious work. As much free-verse poetry as critical exploration of remixing, Amerika’s book is likely to have a mixed reception from book historians and scholars of print culture. Those hoping for a historical analysis of remixing and derivative, recombinatory works along the lines of Gérard Genette’s *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* will be disappointed, as the book by no means provides a comprehensive image of such work. Those interested in models of authorship, however, will find much of interest: Amerika’s book is intimately concerned with a formulation of the artist-medium, the creator who is constantly in the midst of collecting, arranging, remixing, and expressing ideas and thoughts and works.

Amerika’s remixology combines the Deleuzian process of becoming with Barthes’ notion of the text as a tissue of quotations, resulting in an artistic identity contingent on the filtering, synthesising, and recycling of source material culled from wherever the artist-medium might find it. As Amerika demonstrates, this is a continual process, not one to be undertaken in isolation, which is why it is so fully intertwined with the art that surrounds the artist-medium, making remixing not a choice, but a necessity, a lifestyle.

Throughout *remixthebook*, Amerika draws on the language of remix culture, frequently using terms like “sample,” “remix,” “post-production,” and other such terminology straight from the recording studio. Unfortunately, Amerika rarely defines these terms, and as such readers not familiar with remix culture may find the book alienating. In addition, readers unfamiliar with musical remix culture will not be introduced to it in this book: absent are important names like Negativland, Paul D Miller (aka DJ Spooky – a peculiar absence, given that Miller contributes a blurb to the back of Amerika’s book), and Gregg Gillis (who produces mashups under the name Girl Talk).

Instead, Amerika draws his examples primarily from authors, citing names such as Kathy Acker, Alan Ginsberg, William Burroughs, and other “Pre-Internet remixologists” (61). It is unfortunate that such focus excludes more recent voices; however, this emphasis on authors who worked before mashups and remixes became household terms is helpful in that it reminds us the extent to which a recombinatory approach to art is nothing new, but in fact foundational to much that artists do.

It is important to note that the codexical incarnation of *remixthebook* is only half of Amerika’s project, and there is much to be found in the accompanying website, <remixthebook.com>. Here we find a number of helpful resources, including a course in remixology that covers a number of subjects omitted in the book (including the role of music and hacker/cyberculture in remix culture), and includes commentary by a number of notable contemporary artists known for the production of remixed work, such as DJ Food, the aforementioned DJ Spooky, Tom Phillips (author of *A Humument*, and others.

*Remixthebook*, more than anything, reads as a manifesto for remixology. While scholars of book history and print culture may find that this book lacks the historical overview that they might desire, creative writers and scholars working in the field of authorship study will find much to interest them. *Remixthebook* can be read quite productively alongside studies of authorship such as those undertaken by Barthes or Foucault, and provides a good foundation for a much-needed scholarly conversation on remix culture.

Matt Schneider
University of Toronto


In an era of self-improvement and an increasingly visible sense of American prosperity, the newly upwardly mobile, and those wishing to be so, viewed reading not only as an interesting intellectual exercise but often as an assured way of establishing themselves in the upper echelons of society. While literary magazines like *The Atlantic* catered more to male readers, *The Ladies’ Home Journal* brought literary interests into the homes of middle-class readers. Blair’s *Reading Up: Middle-Class Readers and the Culture of Success in the Early Twentieth-Century United States* tells the story of how influential editors such as Hamilton Wright Mabie, writing for the *Ladies’ Home Journal*, gave middle-class readers suggestions of books for mental and moral improvement in the form of must-read lists and book club suggestions. These editors thus, according to Blair, shaped the culture of reading for their audience.

Blair’s work gives extraordinary detail about the editors and parses their literary reviews in order to get to heart of their improvement scheme. Authors like Edith Wharton, Henry James and William Dean Howells are discussed both for their contribution to the literary landscape, but also, with the example of Wharton, their disdain for the common reader and in essence the mission of the *Ladies’ Home Journal* editors. Through these examples the reader comes to understand the criteria for recommendation and how the works may work toward the improvement of the reader.

There is however a distinct lack of the voice of the middle-class readers themselves. While evidence of readership is difficult to obtain, the work could do with the addition of some buying and lending statistics. There is a sense of being told what this middle-class readership thought about literature only though the words of the editors and authors who were focused on molding their tastes.

Blair’s work is perfect for scholars looking for details about the particular editors she writes about, the attitudes of literary editors in the early twentieth century, or those interested in the history of the *Ladies’ Home Journal*.

Jordan S. Sly
Maryland, USA


This book presents a vivid and detailed account of manuscript and printed book production, readership, patronage, and collecting in the duchy of Brittany during the period between 1364 and 1532. In this huge, interdisciplinary project, the author – combining expert codicological analysis with the insights and methods drawn from contemporary social and cultural history – succeeds in bringing the world of authors, producers, and readers in late medieval Brittany to life.

https://scholarworks.umass.edu/sharp_news/vol21/iss3/1
The book is divided into six sharply focused essays, followed by two detailed appendices. Chapters one and three lay down the material and economic foundations of manuscript and printed book production in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Brittany respectively. The author presents detailed accounts of material production, drawn from the manuscripts and books themselves as well as other archival sources, which outline prices, labour, and centres of production. The level of detail is astounding, and will be indispensable for other scholars working in this field for years to come. There is much here for the general reader too, and the detail never overwhelms the broader picture being presented. Ensclosed between these chapters is an excellent chapter on illuminated manuscripts, which outlines the many styles and practices that were prominent in the region. A generous helping of illustrations (especially in this chapter, but also throughout the book) supports the analysis.

The next two chapters deal with patronage, ownership, and book collecting. Chapter four traces the patterns of ducal patronage and ownership of manuscripts and books in the period. Chapter five deals more broadly with the phenomenon of book collecting during this period. Both chapters are based on painstaking analysis of hundreds of manuscripts and books. But again, the author’s zeal for detail does not overshadow concerns with the “social constraints, religious attitudes, and cultural mores” (136) of the period. In other words, though the books themselves are the object of study, they are always considered in the context of living and breathing people who handled them.

A final chapter addresses readers’ tastes and pattern of book collecting. While the author’s findings confirm the general pattern of the French and English nobility’s taste for religious and moral works, they go a long way to show, in detail, how vernacular literature, classical literature and history competed for readers’ attention.

Appendix A contains entries on over 150 book artisans working in Brittany between 1340 and 1535. Appendix B gives a list of early books and manuscript in Breton private libraries in the same period. Both are indispensable resources for scholars who study anything to do with books in this place and period.

This is a fascinating book that covers much more than its fairly generic title might suggest. In fact, by delivering much of what historians of the book have theorized about this discipline over the last 30 years, this fine work of scholarship will stand out as a model for other scholars in the field to emulate.

Mark Crane
Nipissing University, Ontario


This substantial and authoritative monograph appeared in the same year as a volume on Anne edited by the same author: The Cultural and Political Legacy of Anne de Bretagne: Negotiating Convention in Books and Documents (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2010). Whilst the latter drew together a number of diverse yet complementary studies on the textual cultures associated with Anne of Brittany, this book addresses in a more sustained way the nature of the relationship between queenship and its representation in book culture. The volume begins with a lucid account of the state of the question. The first chapter analyses the composition and purpose of festival books, which, Brown underlines, appeared on the cultural horizon in times of political turmoil to project certain images of the monarchy. She concludes that these representations do not offer us any individualised responses from royal women and that the memorialisation of their participation in public events in this genre is necessarily refracted through contemporary expectations of seemingly female comportment. Chapter two examines the images of Anne as patron in books produced for her in her court, notably the Voyage de Gênes by Jean Marot. Although male artists and authors were ostensibly subjects of her cultural and financial power, the representations they produced of her reflect a greater degree of ambivalence towards her authority than one might suppose. It is represented as restricted and partial yet simultaneously proposed as an example for other women to emulate. The role of exemplariness in creating Anne’s image is developed in chapter three, which focuses on Verard’s edition of a translation of Boccaccio’s De mulieribus claris, the Vies des femmes célèbres by Antoine Dufour and the Vraye disant avvocate des dames by Jean Marot. In this array of virtuous women, Anne was supposed to see the reflections of her own virtue, yet this process was also infused with tension as the need to flatter one’s patron sometimes came into conflict with an imperative to instruct. Chapter four examines representations of Anne in mourning, a state that was considered particularly seemly for women, given their strong association with the emotions and the political and cultural importance of their attachment to their relatives, particularly their husbands. The final chapter echoes the first chapter in examining the ways in which grief for Anne was performed after her death. This is possibly the most rewarding chapter as it is here that so many aspects of the representation of the queen find a resolution. From the beautifully poignant poem by La Vigne where Anne’s favourite places, now personified, mourn their loss, to Bouchet’s conventional epigram that was likely composed for inclusion in works which did not have commemoration as their primary purpose, these representations show diversity in both their approach and their dissemination.

Overall, the volume has been thoroughly researched, engagingly written and beautifully illustrated. Brown’s knowledge of the texts and their contexts is coherent and exhaustive. The broad scope of the book’s focus enables the reader to make links between images of queenship, book culture and much more widespread models of behaviour for women in a period when the specificities of court and dynastic politics can make these threads difficult to draw together.

Pollie Bromilow
University of Liverpool


As a highly illuminated Vulgate bible, the Clement Bible (so-named after anti-pope Clement VII [1378–1394] whose coat of arms appears in it) was an object of desire in the late Middle Ages. In its first century it passed among court officials, popes, an abbot, and kings as a gift, a “right of spoil,” and a solicitation for help. Tracing the Clement Bible’s first century, Cathleen A. Fleck’s well-researched and revealing “biography” (1) shows that its extraordinary journey began in...
the milieu of the royal court of Naples and moved next to the ancient Benedictine abbey of Monte Cassino from where it travelled to the papal palace of the Avignon popes and then to Spain. In each place the Clement Bible offered its owners the prestige of a beautiful, valuable and rare pandect (or one-volume Bible). Perhaps more importantly, its more than 250 images contributed artistic commentary on contemporary political, religious, and theological issues. Interpreting the Clement Bible within the context of the theory of gifts, of the social life of objects, and as a cultural and political commodity, this study positions book history as central to an understanding of patronage and power in the fourteenth century.

The artistic and political culture of fourteenth-century Naples shaped this deluxe manuscript. Through analysis of style, format, and iconography, Fleck establishes the Clement Bible’s close ties to an unusual group of large Neapolitan Bibles and to church frescoes in the city. The Clement Bible also reflects the close ties between Naples and papal Avignon; the king of Naples, the Angevin Robert the Wise (1309–1343), for example, was papal vicar in Italy. This context supports one of the book’s key arguments, based on close analysis of the miniatures in the Books of Daniel and Revelation, that the Clement Bible encouraged the papacy’s return to Rome, rejecting Avignon as a fourteenth-century Babylon.

The Clement Bible also commented on issues that caused tension in the Naples-Avignon relationship, in particular the heated debate over the Beatific Vision, or when after death a blessed soul would see God. With images supporting the belief that a soul might see God immediately at death, the Clement Bible’s position contradicted Pope John XXII, who stirred a hornet’s nest by declaring a soul’s vision of God occurred at the Last Judgment.

Despite its critique of certain papal positions, inventories show the Clement Bible nonetheless moved into the papal library in Avignon through the “right of spoil,” whereby the popes claimed the “moveable goods” of high level church officials who had died (87). Fleck argues that as a complete Vulgate bible, with its Italian style illustration and “unique iconography” (190), the Clement Bible occupied a special place in the two-thousand-volume papal library. The Avignon popes used such Italian art and artifacts to assert their ongoing ties to Rome. When in 1378 the Great Schism saw popes established in both Rome and Avignon, the Avignon popes held on to the Clement Bible as an “embodiment” of legitimacy (249) and a valuable political commodity. Pope Clement VIII gave it to the book-loving Alfonso V, King of Aragon and later also of Naples, likely as part of his efforts to secure support for the lost cause of the Avignon papacy. Thus the Clement Bible always served several purposes for its owners, creating layered meanings and a complex history that are well served by Fleck’s many-pronged investigation.


In the introductory essay to her compendious Christina Rossetti: A Descriptive Bibliography, Maura Ives explains the bibliographical format and taxonomy of her book. Her overview provides a clear map of the book’s five sections and her organizing principles for each: 1) Books and Separate Works; 2) Appearances in Books; 3) Appearances in Periodicals; 4) Hymnals and Poems Set to Music; and 5) Translations, Printed Ephemera, and Rossettiana. The book also includes three separate indexes for search purposes: one of Rossetti’s poems, one of Rossetti’s prose, and a General Index. Beautifully designed by Oak Knoll Press, Christina Rossetti: A Descriptive Bibliography includes 15 pages of full-color images of Rossetti publications, allowing readers to cross-reference Ives’s meticulous transcription of a cover or title page with a two-dimensional reproduction of the object.

Although her work was under-studied through much of the twentieth century, Christina G. Rossetti (1830–1894) is now recognized as one of the Victorian age’s most significant poets, as well as a formidable writer of devotional prose; her principal publishers were Macmillan and the SPCK in London and Roberts Brothers in Boston. Ives’s Descriptive Bibliography provides scholars with the first detailed transatlantic publishing and printing history of Rossetti’s publications, identifying new works, contexts, and audiences, and showing how the author’s typical publishing strategy extended beyond textual proof reading and revisions to include suggestions for improving the physical book itself.

Both the periodical and the anthology entries enrich Christina Rossetti: A Descriptive Bibliography with nuggets of American material culture that scholars will surely pursue. These include the imitation-calf bindings Roberts Brothers used to market the works of Christina Rossetti and Jean Ingelow; the various elocution works featuring “A Royal Princess”; the illumination manual that uses each verse of “Consider” as a separate training template for beginners; and the Christmas card design based on “A Christmas Carol” (“In the bleak midwinter”) that won a competition sponsored by the Louis Prang Company of Boston, and which was later used as the basis for a decorative mantelpiece by the Boston Terra Cotta firm.

In what may be described as an acoustic turn in Victorian poetry studies, scholars are increasingly examining the verses of the period in aural contexts, from early recordings to elocutionary practices to musical settings for voice and/or instrument. Thus, the penultimate section of Ives’s Descriptive Bibliography, listing appearances of Rossetti’s work in hymnals (coded “DH”) and other musical settings (coded “DM”) is likely to provide a valuable base for future analysis, and the inclusion of keys and time signatures as well as locations is a great boon. Regrettably, however, the Index to the latter section (“DM”) will not prove of much use to scholars searching for a particular work because the numbering is off-register. While the cross-references to other sections of the Bibliography seem impeccable, the entire section for “DM” is unreliable. Another shortcoming of Ives’s Descriptive Bibliography is its treatment of Rossetti’s third collection of poetry. The Introduction asserts, “After The Prince’s Progress [1866], Rossetti would not produce another new book of poems until 1881, with A Pageant and Other Poems…” (3). In fact, however, as the Bibliography itself demonstrates, Rossetti published Sing-Song: A Nursery Rhyme Book in 1872. Ives’s first mention of this work does not appear until page 16, when she refers to it, not as an original and significant publication by Rossetti, but in relation to the frequent setting of its songs to music. If a reader wished to look up verses from Sing-Song in the Index, however, the attributions provided would not lead back to correct entries in the “DM” section listing musical settings. Furthermore, in the entry for the 1893 second edition of
Sing-Song (enlarged and revised), Ives correctly identifies the five new poems and notes the new opening stanza and title for “The peach tree on the southern wall,” but falls to record Rossetti’s other emendations, including the addition of two new verses for “I caught a little ladybird,” and a new quatrains for both “I have a little husband” and “I have a Poll Parrot.”

Christina Rossetti: A Descriptive Bibliography is an enormous undertaking and scholars in the history of authorship, reading, and publishing. Victorian poetry, and Christina Rossetti, will be grateful for its substantial resources. As the first descriptive bibliography of this important writer, and the first, as well, to take advantage of online resources and computer-powered searches to locate copies and printings, the Descriptive Bibliography will support and direct scholars’ work for years to come. In the age of electronic scholarship, however, one wonders whether, given its always-open-to-correction form, descriptive bibliography continues to belong in a print vehicle, or if the field of digital humanities opens up more flexible conditions for the production of this kind of scholarly work.

Lorraine Janzen Kooistra
Ryerson University, Toronto


“...Oh, Dickens! The Atlantic was thy Rubicon; on its broad waste thou didst shipwreck much fame and honor. Wonderful indeed that thou shouldst, in a day, turn two millions of admirers, friends, into despisers! Whilst the arms of millions were stretched to receive thee [...] thou betrayest them, and sold them to a publisher!” (68).

So Philip St George Cooke laments in Biblical terms what McParland—with masterful understatement—describes as “a troubled period in the reception of Charles Dickens in America” (68)—following the publication of American Notes (1842) and his advocacy of international copyright. Andrew Jackson Downing, a landscape designer, wrote of Dickens’s “unlucky visit to America in which he was treated like a spoiled child,” and left in “the humour that often follows too lavish a bestowal of sugar plums on spoiled children.”

Philip Hone, one-time mayor of New York, felt that America had been injured by a friend, and Dickens’s ‘unmitigated trash’ was a betrayal of hospitality: “‘Et tu, Brute!’” (68).

As American nationalism melded into civil war, it might seem as if Dickens’s reputation would never recover from his casting as a self-seeking foreigner. However, McParland’s study—which shifts the focus away from professional literary critics and towards contemporary readers of all classes and political persuasions—presents a more nuanced picture. Criticisms of American Notes, he points out, often say more about readers’ concerns than they say much about Dickens—and while the savagely satirical Martin Chuzzlewit (1842) sold less well than other Dickens titles initially, this could be as much a result of an economic downturn as American disillusionment.

Using Dickens as a case study and Jonathan Rose’s work on working-class reading culture as a model, McParland looks at the way ordinary readers came to terms with the literature of a former coloniser. Merging Benedict Anderson’s “imagined communities” with Ronald Zboray’s “fictive people,” he conceives the idea of a “fictive community” with Dickens as its spiritual heart. These were readers who shared texts, but not politics; to whom Dickens’s fiction gave models for how they might tell their own life stories and acted as “a home-like point of stability in a rapidly changing society” (1). They read his stories together, round the fire at home, or by the campfire on either side of the north-south divide during the American Civil War. They shared a pool of characters, clichés and sayings, from Oliver Twist’s “Please, Sir, I want some more,” to Mr Micawber’s “Something will turn up.”

McParland’s study covers the years 1837 to 1912, the centenary of Dickens’s birth being also the point at which, he asserts, “literary modernism may have subsequently complicated the question of reception” (2). There are varied assumptions about how much readers know about Dickens. At some points there are what some might find overly detailed plot summaries — yet the Bibliography lists the works in alphabetical order only, with no dates. Given the complex history of pirated editions in the US this might seem understandable—but a checklist of works by date would have been useful in, for example, the excellent discussion of the way the 1850s novels of social criticism were read across the north/south divide.

Sally Dugan
University of London


In this volume, scholars from a variety of disciplines examine reading as a communal activity that alters and is in turn altered by its cultural milieu. Betty A. Schellenberg analyzes a female reading group’s practices through the eighteenth-century correspondence among members of the Bluestocking salon. Jenny Hartley explores how nineteenth-century reading communities responded to the serialized production of Dickens’s Little Dorrit through experimentation with a real-time reading group. Robert Snape considers the influence of the NHRU, at the beginning of the twentieth century, in shaping the national identities of reading groups in the British colonies. Daniel Born analyzes Mortimer Adler and Robert Maynard Hutchins’s text-based pedagogy in undergraduate education, which led to the Great Books Foundation’s reading salons in the 1950s.

DeNel Rehberg Sedo analyzes the group dynamics of the TYABC online community to show that expertise on the subject confers a privileged status on certain members. Anna Kiernan questions the prevailing characterization of women's book groups and television book groups as a manifestation of low culture because of their preference for works of fiction. Linsey Howie analyzes the therapeutic functions of text-based and informal discussions among participants in women’s reading groups, thus arguing that such groups potentially enable the discovery of self-identity. Anna S. Ivy examines the way current reading guides, aimed at general readers, unsettle the well-established bifurcation between uncritical and critical approaches to literature. Finally, Danielle Fuller, Rehberg Sedo, and Claire Squires address the cultural and economic factors that influence the complex relationship between book publishers and book clubs.

Reading Communities offers a tantalizing array of cultural settings to analyze shifting definitions of reading groups and their relationship to books across time, space, and place. Schellenberg, for example, considers the edited and unedited letters among members of Bluestocking to assert that female readers challenged and redefined their position in relation to their cultural context. By drawing upon these archival materials, Schellenberg’s research adds to our understanding of readers’ self-identity in the

... / 12
Romantic period. Hartley’s account of her reading group’s reception of *Little Dorrit* provides deeper insight into “double-reading,” “back-reading,” and the “art of memory,” which remain largely unexplored practices. Snape’s essay not only provides a useful research model for analyzing how national identities are shaped through the framework of reading communities (despite the absence of an NHRU archive), but also serves as the groundwork for Howie’s insightful analysis of communal dynamics on self-identity in contemporary women’s reading groups in Australia. Born’s provocative assessment of Adler and Hutchins’s influence on American pedagogy provides the necessary background for Ivy’s fascinating discussion of how reading guides shape readers’ responses. Rehberg Sedo and Kiernan complicate the connections among reading groups, texts, and publishers, by analyzing how cultural assumptions are replicated in Internet- and talk show-based reading groups. Fuller, Rehberg Sedo, and Squires’s thorough research regarding the relationship between publishing practices and the selection of books among reading groups in Canada, the US, and the UK persuasively shows that book clubs have a far more active role to play in shaping book preferences.

Perhaps the volume’s focus on distinct historical periods, locations, and reading communities makes it an overly ambitious project in drawing conclusions about book groups’ responses to the book as object. Even so, *Reading Communities* cogently informs current conversations that link communal reading practices to publishing, authorship, and technology.

Cecilia Bonnor
Houston, TX


Gerard Genette’s groundbreaking *Smiles* (paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation) stimulated increased focus on the liminal elements, including “an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations,” that “surround” the central literary work (1). *Renaissance Paratexts* collects twelve essays by leading scholars of the early modern book who explore an impressive range of paratextual elements—many omitted from Genette’s study. But the volume is much more than, in the understated words of co-editors Helen Smith and Louise Wilson, “a response to, and an extension of, Genette’s wide-ranging taxonomy” (2). In fact, these essays systematically—and convincingly—challenge every significant element of Genette’s definition of paratext, including its necessarily authorial nature, its informational functionality, and its “service” to and distinctiveness from the central text.

Several of the volume’s essays address neglected paratextual elements, often complicating received notions of printing house practices. Helen Smith reads publisher imprints not as factual statements of name, place, and date, but as fictional constructs telling stories about books, booksellers, and the semiotics of the city. Matthew Day, challenging standard readings of the running titles and other book headings, shows that authors and printers both could have a hand in using such text to advertise, persuade, direct, and even engage readers polemically. William Sherman explores “terminal paratext,” reading anxieties about textual closure in a range of visual and verbal concluding devices. Sonia Massai looks to promises of corrected and emended material on the title pages of re-printed editions of early modern plays for early evidence of collaborative printing house textual editing. And in an engaging “Afterword,” Peter Stallybrass focuses on discrepancies between graphic initial capitals and their context before troubling received notions of author-ascription in several early modern manuscripts.

Other essays complicate Genette’s sense that paratext is merely functional and “at the service of a better reception for the text” (2). Juliet Fleming re-imagines the framing borders of texts, not as mere ornamentation but as structures dictating the shape of sonnets, and Danielle Clarke considers the role that textual divisions play in gendering voice and constructing orality in the complaint genre. Neil Rhodes’s and Louise Wilson’s essays demonstrate a more than functional role for the prefatory matter of translations. Rhodes finds evidence in Florio’s 1603 translation of Montaigne’s *Essais* of multiple anxieties about translation, English, and Florio’s own social status, while Wilson exposes the ironic and disruptive work of Anthony Munday’s English translations of Spanish romances. Wendy Wall provocatively argues that the increasingly systematic paratext in seventeenth century editions of Gervase Markham’s *The English Housewife* instatiates in readers in-dexical habits of mind concerning household practices.

The volume’s two most speculative essays posit genuinely new conceptions of paratext. Jason Scott-Warren reads Spenser’s 1590 *Faerie Queene* as “in danger of becoming all paratext” (160), in that the poem and its invitingly blank margins solicit from readers “paratextual” an-notations directed to future readers. Hester Lees-Jeffries re-envisions paratext as escaping beyond the borders of the material book altogether, into kinship networks (Sidney and Wroth), the place of reading (the gardens at Wilton House), and the books and images inhabiting these spaces.

While these essays suggest promising lines of inquiry by expanding conventional notions of paratexts, the collection at points suffers from an overly broad deployment of the term, which sometimes seems to include any and all literary contexts and textual negotiations with readers. Still, *Renaissance Paratexts* is essential reading not only for book historians, but for any literary scholar interested in the complex dialogue, in Sherman’s words, between books and “the world outside their boundaries” (83).

Nathaniel B Smith
Central Michigan University


As the title signals, this book focuses on forms of book-jackets (or “dust-jackets”) and other detachable book coverings, offering a history of their development and use by publishers from the late eighteenth century to the present. The text consists of three essays, all revised versions of articles previously published by G. Thomas Tanselle: “Book-Jackets, Blurbs, and Bibliographers” (1971); “Dust-Jackets, Dealers, and Documentation” (2006); and (the re-titled) “Coda: New and the Nineties” (2010). The essays examine not only when, why, and how publishers have used book-jackets but how groups—including book dealers, collectors, librarians, graphic designers, and scholars—have viewed them. Read sequentially, the essays illuminate the history of the field, demonstrating the growing understanding of book-jackets as essential parts of books as published. The essays are supplemented by numerous well-chosen illustrations (many in color) of detachable wrappers, sheaths, and book-jackets.
Separately, each essay is a model of lucidity and precision in relation to book-jackets as historical evidence. Many of the examples are as delightful as they are useful (see the jacket for Gelett Burgess’s *Are You a Brimful?*, for instance, which instituted the word “blurbl” with the heading, “YES, this is a ‘BLURB’! All the Other Publishers commit them. Why Shouldn’t We?” [16 and plate 8]).

More importantly, together the essays form a compelling argument for a more thoughtful treatment of book-jackets by book dealers, librarians, and scholars. Tanselle rejects sophisticated jacket restoration that destroys historical evidence, and he persuasively insists that libraries should further their efforts to preserve book-jackets and to catalog them online. In addition, he provides clear models for analysis and description of book-jackets, models useful for scholars of literature, art, and book history.

Following the essays, Tanselle includes a list of 1,888 “Pre-1901 Examples of British and American Publishers’ Printed Book-Jackets, Boxes, and Other Detachable Coverings” (103–239), and several indexes to the list and the text. The list of early book-jackets, based on a record of examples that Tanselle began compiling in 1969, is another excellent feature of this study. It is organized chronologically, with entries labeled by type (cloth jackets and boxes, for instance). As Tanselle explains, it “provides a guide to the body of evidence on which my generalizations about the history of nineteenth-century jackets are based — and on which observations by others will have to be based as well, until more examples are reported” (s). Tanselle offers more than just a guide, though, for he invites readers with additional examples to report them to the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia, which will eventually make the information available on its website (105). As a result, Tanselle has laid the foundation for an easily accessible, evolving resource for further scholarship.

In *Book-Jackets: Their History, Forms, and Use*, Tanselle therefore offers readers a valuable introduction to this field and the opportunity to contribute to a growing body of information about book-jackets. This work will be essential for anyone interested in the conservation and collection of books and in the study of the changing functions and meanings — literary, artistic, and bibliographical — of book-jackets.


“As of this writing, the United States has more public libraries than McDonald’s restaurants,” Wiegand writes, launching a study of a ubiquitous and yet overlooked American institution, the small-town public library (1). The deep local embeddedness of public libraries in their communities makes them difficult to generalize about in cultural and historical terms, and Wiegand addresses this challenge by examining, in detail, the development of four public libraries in the midwest from 1876 to 1956. Ultimately, this book makes a compelling case for reexamining common assumptions about the purpose of public libraries — as institutions and founding members of local communities in terms of religious, class, and race, and their relative homogeneity. The Moore Library eventually had an all-female board, and most of these women were married to prominent men, such as a physician or the president of the village council. In every case, the librarians hired were women, though their appointments were sometimes politically contentious and few were professionally trained librarians.

Each of these four local histories has its own chapter, and the concluding analysis situates local developments in national terms, exploring the impact of major issues of the day on library collections. In each case, Wiegand details the demographic composition of these communities in terms of religion, class, and race, their relative homogeneity. The Moore Library eventually had an all-female board, and most of these women were married to prominent men, such as a physician or the president of the village council. In every case, the librarians hired were women, though their appointments were sometimes politically contentious and few were professionally trained librarians.

Each of these places benefited from Andrew Carnegie’s program of providing grants for buildings, though the negotiations could be protracted. For instance, trustees of the Sage Library of Osage, Iowa tried to increase Carnegie’s grant of $10,000 contingent upon $1000 of annual local support by focusing on the ratio, promising an annual $1500–1800 for a $15,000–18,000 grant. Carnegie never replied, and eventually the people of Osage accepted the $10,000 (60). Although the story of Carnegie’s legacy has been told elsewhere, these local negotiations over building budgets add a fresh view of this history.

Rhinelander was the only library to hire a trained librarian, and the chapter on the Rhinelander Public Library offers in-depth analysis of how book recommendations from professional sources only moderately influenced the collection. The Wisconsin Free Library Commission and the American Library Association carried great professional authority, but local librarians and governing boards weighed “the literary establishment’s recommendations” alongside “patron demand” and “community standards” in their book selection (172). As Wiegand so aptly writes, “the cultural politics of a library are written in its collections” (183).

Wiegand’s conclusions about the importance of libraries as purveyors of fiction, novels, and stories stand in stark contrast to the usual claims that public libraries are information institutions, vital to an informed electorate. Analysis of collections demonstrate that, on major social issues from women’s suffrage to labor movements, these public libraries did little to inform their respective publics. Instead, they operated as local agencies of social harmony with two main functions: providing both public space and literary space. This history sets forth a new direction in historical research on the public library, one that explores the power that “stories have to inform, foster ideas, construct community, develop a sense of discovery, inspire, and offer encouragement” to local communities and the readers they comprise (182).

Kate McDowell

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and maintained by a Research and Development Team housed at the Alderman Library, University of Virginia. NINES is not a digital collection per se, but rather a scholarly organization that has made (at least) three major contributions to Digital Humanities scholarship of the long nineteenth century in British and American culture. First, rather than maintaining a single digital collection, NINES hosts a clearinghouse for multiple collections and allows users to search all of them together through their Collex interface. Second, NINES is a pioneer in the field of peer review for digital projects. Collections with the NINES imprimatur go through a peer review process that evaluates projects for “both the intellectual content and the technical structure.” The purpose of peer review is two-fold; it assures that the collections available through Collex are reliable, and it establishes the credibility of Digital Humanities as a scholarly field generally by initiating peer-review criteria. Third, Collex is more than a clearinghouse for digital humanities projects; it is also a virtual place where users can organize research through collecting, annotating and tagging documents, and even producing what NINES calls scholarly “exhibits.” If this sounds very exciting and complex, it is.

For a scholar just getting her feet wet in digital humanities work, NINES can be a little overwhelming. Searching the Collex interface is a bit like searching an intellectually vetted version of Google. In addition to the peer-reviewed projects, Collex also searches a number of university library catalogues, Library of Congress digital resources, New York Public Library digital resources, digitized scholarly journal articles, and numerous other databases. For example, when I searched for “Mexican War” the first several items listed were from Berkeley’s Bancroft library and available only via a visit to their special collections. In fact, some of the links took me to the UC Berkeley library catalogue where “no matches were found” for the item listed in Collex’s database. Fortunately, a menu to the right of Collex’s search results allows users to limit findings to specific resources, such as British Women Romantic Poets, the Charles Chesnutt Archive, Collective Biographies of Women, the Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition, et cetera. The menu shows the frequency of hits for a search term within each digital project and allows users to browse the results in individual collections. This not only makes the search results more manageable, but also helps scholars become familiar with digital literary projects most relevant to their research.

What is perhaps most exciting about the Collex interface is the ability to “collect” and “discuss” any item in its federated database and produce “exhibits” that combine scholarly analysis with images and linked items from the collections within NINES. By creating an account with NINES (which is free and easy), users can “collect” any item in the federated database so that it can be accessed under a “My9s” tab. The user can then add private annotations to each item in the process of research. More importantly, a user can “discuss” digital items that exist in the NINES database, including historical documents and images and contemporary scholarly articles. Discussions can be posted within three forums: Digital Humanities, Nineteenth Century Studies, and NINES. The forums also contain general scholarly inquiries, news about new projects, and advice for using NINES. One of the more advanced features of the site allows scholars to create “exhibits” that can be anything from a scholarly essay to an annotated bibliography. Exhibits are created through a tool under the “My9s” tab, and they can be made private or public and can be submitted for peer review to one of the NINES journals.

Any work that a user choses to make public in NINES is covered by a copyright license through “Creative Commons,” by which a user can set the level of protection to allow or disallow modification and redistribution. In addition to aiding research, all of these features can be utilized for teaching through the “Classroom” tab.

NINES takes Digital Humanities work to the next level by creating a community of people and resources, moving what has often been private, individual research to a social platform that fosters the exchange of ideas. The organization is working to realize the full potential of digitizing a cultural literary heritage. The more scholars who utilize NINES, the stronger its networks of intellectual exchange will become.

Erin Murrah-Mandril
University of New Mexico


The University of Virginia’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin & American Culture offers an expansive collection of resources on the novel, its contemporaneous circulation and reception, and its influence on literary and material culture from Reconstruction through the early twentieth century. With Stephen Raitlton, University of Virginia, as the Archive’s executive editor, the collaborative, cross-institutional team of editors include Susan Belasco (University of Nebraska – Lincoln), Linek Johnson (Colgate University), Deborah McDowell (University of Virginia), Jim O’Loughlin (University of Northern Iowa), Michael Winship (University of Texas), and Richard Yarborough (University of California, Los Angeles). It was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts, and by institutional support from UVAs Electronic Text Center (Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities). Much of the content for this project was provided by the Alderman Library Special Collection and the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Connecticut, though individual collectors and institutions such as Brown’s John Hay Library, Harvard’s Theatre Collection, the Ohio State’s Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee’s Theatre Collection, and the New York Public Library’s Billy Rose Theatre Collection are also credited with contributions.

The Archive offers three different modes of viewing and interaction: search mode, browse mode, and interpret mode. Search mode allows the browser to use keyword searches and a series of optional filters (such as region and date of publication) to isolate materials of interest. The browse mode offers the most complete browsing experience of the site, and guides the reader through its various offerings using a map of links organized roughly on a timeline of pre- and post-UTC texts. The interpret mode links users to a series of articles primarily derived from the 2007 Uncle Tom’s Cabin in the Web of Culture conference hosted by the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center. Each article incorporates linked visual references to illustrations of the novel and relevant print ephemera which expand and present citations upon clicking. The articles are intended for a scholarly audience but would not alienate an undergraduate reader. Each includes a linked bibliography that di-
rects users to further scholarly resources. Uncle Tom’s Cabin & American Culture acknowledges that since its 1851 serial publication and subsequent book edition in 1852, the novel has been “an American cultural phenomenon.” To understand the novel’s significance and impact, readers must be aware of the nexus of texts that inspired the work and perpetuated its story and characters within regional and national cultural narratives. To this end, the Archive documents the many accompanying texts with commentary not only on their relationships to Beecher’s novel, but also to the larger antislavery movement and Christian and sentimental works. In addition, the most impressive feature of Uncle Tom’s Cabin & American Culture is the capturing of multimedia portrayals of the novel and its characters. The site offers a wealth of illustrations of key scenes, images of characters on china and home décor, short clips of perspectives on the novel in early films, a vast archive of scripts, playbills, and reviews related to the novel’s portrayal on stage, and audio clips of songs inspired by or referenced in the novel. Each page incorporates relevant images, from sheet music covers of popular songs to engraved images of audiences watching Uncle Tom’s Cabin magic lantern shows. The user, too, can view a Quicktime reenactment of the magic lantern show. In order to experience the wealth of information the Archive offers, users must have several browser plugins, including Quicktime 7, RealAudio or a *.wav audio file player such as Windows Media Player (some files are also available in mp3 format), Flash 7 and, for select 3D renderings, Cortona Web3D Viewer. Each of these plugins is easy to download and install from the Archive’s Plugin page.

While those familiar with early and nineteenth-century American culture will find some of the Archive’s portrayals of Uncle Tom’s Cabin in popular culture familiar or at least anticipated, the breadth of the resources will offer even well-informed scholars of Stowe and race in America a refreshingly expansive archive for use in research and the classroom.

Sarah Dennis
Washington University

**SHARP Prizes**

**George A. and Jean S. DeLong Book History Prize**

This year’s winner of the SHARP DeLong Book History Prize is Barbara Hochman (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel) for her work “Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Reading Revolution: Race, Literacy, Childhood, and Viction, 1851–1922, published by the University of Massachusetts Press; publication details at [http://www.umass.edu/umpress/title/uncle-toms-cabin-and-reading-revolution].

As the press release notes, “Hochman’s work details how during the 1850s, men, women, and children avidly devoured Stowe’s novel. White adults wept and could not put the book down, neglecting work and other obligations to complete it. African Americans both celebrated and denounced the book. By the 1890s, Uncle Tom’s Cabin became both more viciously racialized and less compelling. In the growing silence surrounding slavery at the turn of the century, Stowe’s book became an increasingly important source of ideas, facts, and images that the children of ex-slaves and other free-black readers could use to make sense of their position in U.S. culture.”

The award announcement at the SHARP AGM was met with very warm applause and a standing ovation. Barbara reciprocated by thanking successive SHARP conferences for the opportunity to present early versions of her work. In turn, Claire Squires, SHARP’s Director of Publications/Awards would like to thank the very hard – though very rewarding – work of the three jurors this year, Amadio Arboleda, Francis Galloway, and Daniel Traister, and also her intern who helped with the administration of the prize, Helen Lewis-McPhee.

**Book History Graduate Student Essay Prize**

The winner of the 2012 Book History Graduate Student Essay Prize is Elizabeth le Roux, for her survey article “Book History in the African World: The State of the Discipline.” Ms. le Roux lectures in publishing studies at the University of Pretoria. She previously worked in scholarly publishing, most recently as director of the University of South Africa Press. As Ms. le Roux herself points out, this article could not have been written ten years ago: only recently has a critical mass of African book scholarship been produced. In fact this is the first comprehensive historiographical survey of African book history ever published. It includes an extensive bibliography, covering scholarship in English, French, Portuguese, German, and Afrikaans. This article will offer a foundation for further study, the starting point for anyone exploring the African book.

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