

**GUEST COMMENT**

The Critical Importance of Slovenian Book History:
A Journey to the Heart of a Nation

Miha Kovač
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

As Jonathan Rose and Ezra Greenspan state in their Introduction to the first volume of *Book History* (1998), the Information Revolution has driven us to explore the social transformation brought on by writing and print technologies similar to the way in which industrial societies of the nineteenth century “invented the discipline of economic history to explain the origins and consequences of the Industrial Revolution” (5). The history of book publishing has thus become one of the keys for understanding modern information societies. Understanding the ways in which people exchanged information, ideas, aesthetic experiences, beliefs and prejudices in book format throughout the modern age, has not only become one of the many academic disciplines dealing with cultural history, but has become one of the important tools for understanding contemporary societies.

In the Slovenian case, this tool could be even more useful than in other cultures. Slovenes did not constitute their nation state until 1991, when the escalation of Serbian nationalism literally forced them to escape from Yugoslavia. Before that, they spent six hundred relatively calm years in the Austrian Empire under Habsburg rule, and, after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the twentieth century, eighty rather frenetic years moving from one state to another without ever leaving their territories. Slovenes born at the beginning of the twentieth century and lucky enough to have a long life had a unique opportunity to live in six different states without ever leaving their hometowns. Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy tried to destroy Slovenes as an ethnic community, and, in the Austrian Empire and the first Yugoslavia, Slovenes had to fight for their national rights. All these revolutions make book history research very difficult: those archives of the pre-war Slovene publishing houses that survived the Italian and German occupation, were destroyed when the communists took power after 1945.

Only in Tito’s authoritarian Yugoslavia and, of course, in independent Slovenia, was it considered normal to use Slovenian as the principal and official language of communication. Furthermore, independent Slovenia is not only the first nation-state in which Slovenes represent the vast majority, but it is also the first fully democratic state in which they have lived.

The majority of the archives of publishing houses which survived the First World War and subsequent economic turmoil, and which shaped life in the kingdom of Yugoslavia between the wars, were destroyed during the Italian and German occupations. The archives of publishing firms that survived the Second World War were destroyed when communists took power after 1945. Research on pre-war book history has thus had to rely mostly on sources such as letters and magazine articles. On a positive note, the Slovene national library successfully stored this type of cultural heritage, in spite of the difficulties posed by political turmoil. The situation improved after 1945 and after 1989 because Yugoslavia was much more market-oriented than other socialist states. The majority of Slovenian publishing houses survived the fall of socialism. To a certain extent they had started to conduct their businesses on market terms as early as the sixties, and thus adapted - much more successfully than other east-European publishing houses - to a “pure” market economy after 1989. The main feature of Yugoslavia’s “socialist market economy” was much greater autonomy for the companies than was the case in other socialist countries. Of course, there was still no private ownership, and, at the end of the day, these companies were still controlled by the communist party. Throughout their existence, most of the publishing companies systematically archived at least some of their business activities and editorial correspondences, and made them available to researchers.

The first studies which may be considered “book history” appeared after 1989. These were mostly written under the rubric of Slavic or Library Studies. Martin Znidersic wrote a survey of Slovenian book publishing from its beginnings to the present day and contributed many articles about Slovene publishing houses to the Slovene national encyclopedia. In the Seventies, he started empirical research on reading habits among Slovenes and, together with a team of researchers, he published his survey results every five years. Dusan Moravec wrote an interesting and illuminating study on Slovenian publishing between the two world wars and I have researched the history of the Slovene national encyclopedia and analyzed the role of the book in the Slovene national identity.
It is very difficult to explain how Slovenes managed to preserve their national identity at all in such a turbulent and mostly hostile environment. One could say that in terms of national identity Slovenes were rather like split personalities. On the one hand, they were unable to make their own nation state— but on the other, they were strong enough to resist assimilation pressures for about four hundred years. There is a belief that one of the most important reasons for the preservation of their identity is found in their attitudes towards their national literature. This was not only widely read, but also filled the empty space where other national institutions were supposed to be. In other words, people in Slovenia believed that throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries literature and language played a role as a surrogate nation-state.

Some Slovene scholars claim that this belief is a myth; they have even proved that there were other institutions which played crucial roles in the making of the Slovenian nation. Furthermore, some of them think that this myth was invented by some men of letters with the intention of claiming an informal power which does not usually accrue to writers. Even if we completely reject this attitude towards literature as a myth, there still remains the fact that people believed in it — and if people believe in something, their belief shapes their behavior and their values. In other words, a belief that literature played a crucial role in nationalhood had important repercussions. It not only shaped people's ethnic identity and their attitude towards literature, but also towards books and everything connected with the book business. When we speak about Slovenian books and Slovenian publishing, we thus also speak about a social mechanism that enabled Slovenes to imagine their community as an ethnic and cultural entity. When one deals with book history, one deals with one of the cornerstones of national identity.

Slovene book and publishing history becomes even more important if we use it as a measure of the strength and importance of an educated middle class and market values in society. Before the nineteenth century the majority of Slovenes were peasants. Those few who reached higher and graduated from university became priests, or made their professional careers in a German-speaking environment. This lack of an educated, non-clerical Slovenian middle class had a significant effect on the development of Slovenian publishing. Because there was no middle class who would read novels, essays and reference books in Slovenian, there was no market basis for non-clerical publishing. The first commercial publishers of such materials appeared as late as the early twentieth century, when Slovenian lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs and journalists (in short, an educated middle class) finally established themselves as an important part of Slovenian society. Recent studies (see note 3) have shown that this newly born social class neither respected commercial publishers nor considered book publishing a commercial activity. Due to the fact that books were one of the cornerstones of national identity, a publisher was supposed to be a man with a cause. More precisely, if a writer was supposed to be one of the creators and guardians of the national identity, a publisher's cause was to serve the writer well. Making money out of such a noble cause did not fit the picture. Publishers were not considered entrepreneurs who contributed to the welfare of society by investing capital and knowledge in book production, and thus deserving rewards for the risks taken. The opposite was the case, publishers were considered sinners because they made money out of books!

Research into Slovenian publishing history thus directs us to at least one important point: from the very beginning of modern publishing, "the social transformation brought on by writing and print technologies" was deeply connected with anti-capitalist and anti-market feelings. Bearing in mind that books were considered cornerstones of national identity, publishing should become an integral part of any serious attempt to study Slovenian social and political history, especially Slovenia's long-lasting love affair with anti-capitalist and anti-market ideologies such as socialism (after 1945) and catholic corporatism (before 1945 and after 1991). It is perhaps needless to stress that all the peculiarities of Slovenian publishing history may be clearly seen only through comparisons with the publishing histories of other European nations, not only with the British, who were masters of market-based book publishing, but also with...
The increased resources made possible from problems similar to those facing Slovenia. From this point of view, the growth of book history projects in Europe, America and Canada, makes such a task easier, and also challenges us to launch a similar project in Slovenia.

Notes
2 The latest study was published this year: Martin Znidersic, Gregor Kocjan and Darka Podmenik Knjiga. Breza V., Oddelek za bibliotekarstvo. Ljubljana: Filozofska fakulteta, 2000. Znidersic also wrote an interesting article on the role of the state in Slovene book publishing, which was appended to this study.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Shakespeare Association of America Convention

Location: Miami, Florida, USA
Date: 12-14 April 2001
Deadline: 15 December 2000


SHARP News readers are invited to submit proposals for short presentations from a book history perspective, to fit within the topics and themes included in the following Seminar description:

The increased resources made possible through the revised STC and the on-line ESTC have enabled historical bibliography to take its rightful place alongside analytical bibliography in the study of Shakespeare's texts. Ongoing bibliographical and textual studies of individual printers, publishers, and booksellers often tend by their very nature to be carried out in isolation. This seminar seeks to bring together that ongoing (and isolated) research in its prepublished state so that scholars might share with one another before publication their theories and their methodologies, alongside their findings and conjectures about particular printers, publishers, and stationers.

Expressions of interest are requested by November 1st - with a proposal deadline of December 15th. Full papers are due by February 15th. Please submit proposals or enquiries to:

Thomas L. Berger
Department of English
St. Lawrence University
Canton, New York 13617 USA
Telephone: 315.229.5134
Fax: 315.229.5628
E-mail: tomerberger@stlawu.edu

The Production of Culture: The Scottish Press in a National and International Context 1800-1880

Location: The University of Stirling, Scotland
Date: 28-29 July 2001
Deadline: 1 December 2000

Organised by The Centre for Publishing Studies (University of Stirling) in association with The Centre for the History of the Book (University of Edinburgh) and The Centre for Editorial and Inter textual Studies (University of Cardiff).

Conference speakers will include: Bill Bell, Ian Duncan, Peter Garside, Susan Manning and Jane Millgate.

In order to complement work being undertaken on volume 3 of A History of the Book in Scotland, specific, though not exclusive, emphasis will be on the period 1800-1880.

Whether in the production of literature, the establishment of magazines and reviews, through fine printing, or the development of mass media, Scotland's contribution to the nineteenth century press, both within the nation, and beyond its boundaries, was remarkable. The aim of this conference is to explore a range of key issues relating to the production, circulation, and reception of Scottish texts.

Papers are invited on the following topics:

- Text and image
- Literary and oralty
- Gaelic books and their readers
- Scottish books in Britain and Ireland
- Canon formation
- Scottish newspapers, periodicals, and reviews
- Imperial publishing
- The export of Scottish literature
- Emigration and reading
- Literature in the marketplace
- Authorship and literary property
- The reception and use of texts
- The popular and the polite
- Archival resources
- Historiography
- Methodology

Proposals of 200-300 words should be sent to the conference convenor:

Professor Douglas Mack
Centre for Publishing Studies
University of Stirling
Stirling FK9 4LA Scotland
E-mail: d.s.mack@stir.ac.uk

CALLS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Reading Women: From Literary Figures to Cultural Icons

Deadline: 21 September 2000
Janet Badia and Jennifer Phegley, editors

Contributions are sought for Reading Women: From Literary Figures to Cultural Icons, a collection of essays that explores the ways women readers have been represented in a variety of media and historical periods, such as medieval paintings, nineteenth- century novels, and twentieth- century films. This collection responds to the recent and widespread circulation and commercialization of visual images of the "woman reader" on note cards, calendars, coffee mugs, and book bags and expands current theories of reader- response criticism and reading practices to
include the rhetorical and visual construction of readers. Our collection asks: What significance have images of women readers had within their own historical periods? How do these images reflect cultural attitudes towards women's literacies, reading practices, and roles in society? How might their historical context influence our understanding of the circulation of such images today? Does their presence, for example, reflect a nostalgia for an idealized past of middle-class leisure and clearly defined gender roles? Does the stabilized image of the “woman reader” allow women today to imagine a continuity between themselves and the women in the images? Does the figure of the woman reader serve as an icon of feminism and intellectual independence? And, just as importantly, how are the answers to all of these questions complicated by issues of race and class?

Working towards possible answers to these questions, essays might consider the implications of representing women as uncritical readers, as naive readers, as obsessed readers, as dangerous readers, as deviant readers, as escapist readers, as ideal readers, as independent readers, and as empowered readers, to name only a few of the possibilities. While attending to representations of what and how women read, this collection will also seek to uncover the complexity of such representations and to explain the significance of the figure of the woman reader. Insofar as Reading Women crosses historical, cultural, and national boundaries, it will be of interest to scholars, teachers, and students working in fields such as literary studies, literacy studies, women's studies, cultural studies, and history.

Please send one copy of twenty to thirty page essays in MLA style to each of the addresses below, indicating whether or not the essay has been previously published or is under consideration for publication elsewhere. Please send queries or abstracts by email:

Janet Badia
Department of English
The Ohio State University
421 Denney Hall
164 West 17th Avenue
Columbus, Ohio 43210 USA
E-mail: badia.3@osu.edu

Jennifer Phegley
Department of English & Women's Studies
University of Missouri-Kansas City
106 Cockefer Hall
5100 Rockhill Road
Kansas City, Missouri 64110 USA
E-mail: phegleyj@umkc.edu

CONFERENCES

History of the Book: the Next Generation

Location: Mead Hall and the Learning Center, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey, USA
Date: Saturday, 16 September 2000

Drew University Caspersen School of Graduate Studies presents a Graduate Student Conference, sponsored by the graduate programs in Modern History and Literature and Book History at Drew University.

Special Guest Speakers:

- Elizabeth Eisenstein, Professor Emerita, University of Michigan
- Paul Levinson, Professor of Media Studies, Fordham University

This one-day conference will showcase the work of new scholars in book history. The importance of information exchange in our society has motivated book historians to explore the methods and channels through which that exchange takes place. In this conference, a new generation of scholars addresses the intellectual, cultural, economic, and political issues at play in the authorship, production, and distribution of ideas in print. Scholars will examine such topics as copyright, suppression of controversial material, authorial power, reader response, the impact of digital media and the internet on publishing and readership, religious texts, the book arts and the impact of paratextual material, the literary marketplace, and fine artists' handmade books. They will draw on material from the Early Modern era to the present. Participating scholars will come from a variety of disciplines, including Library Science, English Literature, Intellectual and Cultural History, Religious History, Philosophy, the Fine Arts, and Communications.

All conference events are accessible. Individuals needing special assistance should contact the Housing, Conferences, and Hospitality office at 973.408.3103 at least five working days prior to the conference to ensure proper arrangements are made.

For program information and registration forms, contact Jonathan Rose [jrose@drew.edu] or visit our website:
http://www.depts.drew.edu/gsadmin/area/bkhis/conference.html

Group rates have been arranged with the Headquarters Plaza Hotel, Morristown: 800.225.1941 (from within NJ) or 800.225.1942 (from outside NJ). Be sure to say that you are part of the History of the Book conference group. For more information, visit their website:
http://www.HQPlazaHotel.com

This conference is made possible through a generous grant from the Gladys Kriible Delmas Foundation.

Under the Hammer: Book Auctions Since the Seventeenth Century

Annual conference on book-trade history

Location: Birkbeck College and Waterstone's Piccadilly, London, UK
Date: 25-26 November 2000

Conference organisers: Michael Harris, Giles Mandelbrote and Robin Myers

The auction has provided a focus for the book trade for over four centuries. To mark the twentieth year of publication based on the Birkbeck College conferences, this primary mechanism for the distribution of antiquarian books and related materials will be investigated by some of the leading international specialists in book-trade history. During the conference a visit will be made to one of the principal London auction houses.

Speakers and topics are:

- T.A. Birrell, “Books and buyers in seventeenth-century English auction sales”
• Arthur Freeman, “The jazz-age library of Jerome Kern”
• Michael Harris/Giles Mandelbrothe, “The organisation of book auctions in late seventeenth-century London”
• Arnold Hunt, “The sale of Richard Heber’s library 1834-1837”
• Otto Lankhorst, “Dutch book auctions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries”
• Paul Needham, “Reconstructing William Morris’s library of early printing”
• Nigel Ramsay, “The eighteenth-century collector and the salerooms”
• Marc Vaulbert de Chantilly, “The Property of a Distinguished Poisoner: Thomas Griffiths Wainewright and the Griffiths family library”

A full program and further information is available from:
Michael Harris
Faculty of Continuing Education
Birkbeck College
26 Russell Square
London WC1B 5DD UK

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS


Deadline: 1 December 2000

The Bibliographical Society invites applications from scholars engaged in bibliographical research (on, for example, book history, textual transmission, publishing, printing, book-ownership and book-collecting) for an award to be made in the early calendar year 2001. The Society hopes to make awards both for immediate research needs, such as for microfilms or travelling expenses, and for longer-term support, for example to assist with prolonged visits to libraries and archives. It is envisaged that one major award, up to a maximum of £2,000, and a number of smaller awards will be offered. One or more of these awards will be particularly associated with the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association which has contributed generously to the Fund.

The Society offers a Fredson Bowers Award of $1,500, funded by the Bibliographical Society of America, and also, in conjunction with the Oxford Bibliographical Society, a Falconer Madan Award of up to £500 for research undertaken in Oxford libraries or, under certain circumstances, conducted elsewhere upon topics connected with Oxford.

Two referees, familiar with the applicant's work, should be asked to write directly to the address below. Successful applicants will be notified following the meeting of the Society in February 2001.

In addition, the Society offers a limited number of minor grants, of £50 to £200, for specific purposes such as the costs of travel or microfilming. Applications for these grants may be submitted at any time and should be supported by a letter from one referee and a statement that the funds applied for are available from no other source.

Applicants for all awards may be of any nationality and need not be members of the Society.

Further information about the Society and its interests may be found in its centennial publication, Peter Davison, ed., The Book Encompassed, (Cambridge University Press, 1992) or from recent issues of its journal, The Library. See also our website:
http://bibsoc.org.uk/

Application forms for both major and minor grants are available from:
Dr. Maureen Bell
Dept. of English Studies
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT UK
Telephone: 0121 414 5679
E-mail: m.bell@bham.ac.uk

CONFERENCE REPORTS

SHARP2000 Celebrates Gutenberg’s Birthday

Submitted by Linda Connors

SHARP held its eighth annual conference in Mainz, Germany from 3 July through 7 July, the first time the conference venue has been outside Great Britain or North America. The year 2000 is the 600th birthday of Johannes Gutenberg, Mainz’s most famous citizen; so it was particularly appropriate that book historians meet in Mainz. The work of our gracious and courteous hosts, Stephen Füssel and Eike Dürrfeld of the Gutenberg Institute for the History of the Book, University of Mainz, produced a highly successful conference with a full complement of plenary sessions, paper presentations, and recreational activities.

The opening plenary session featured addresses by Lotte Hellinga on “Printing History as Cultural History” and by Paul Raabe on “Die Bedeutung der Buchkultur für Europa”. Additional plenary sessions featured lectures by Robert Darnton on “Books under the British Raj: The Contradictions of Liberal Imperialism” and Nigel F. Palmer on “The Medieval Library of the Cistercian Abbey of Eberbach.” Professor Palmer’s lecture was delivered at the Eberbach Abbey as part of a day-long excursion to Eltville and the Abbey, including a cruise on the Rhine and a wine-tasting.

As is customary at SHARP conferences, a broad range of papers and research was presented — from panels on early printing in Europe to new media today — with stops along the way to consider libraries and their communities, access to print in various societies, the book as a physical object, and the teaching of book history, among many other topics. One of the conference themes, the impact of the new technologies, was brought out in papers on electronic publishing and its impact on publishers and libraries and on various digitization projects, particularly those associated with Gutenberg’s 42-line Bible and other incunabula. In all, there were 136 papers and 46 panel sessions — a wonderful intellectual feast and great stimulus to thought and discussion.

In addition to the trip to Eltville and Kloster Eberbach, conference participants could attend guided tours of the Gutenberg Museum’s special exhibition “Gutenberg: Aventur und Kunst” or of the Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main. One special activity on July 4th was an organ and trumpet recital at St. Peter’s Church, the
highlight of which was an improvisation on the theme of the Star-Spangled Banner in honor of the American national holiday. The concert was followed by a reception at the Kurfürstliches Schloss Mainz.

At the annual meeting, Scott E. Casper received the SHARP Book History Prize for Contracting American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America (University of North Carolina Press, 1999), recipients of the Delmas travel grants were recognized, and reports were received from Barbara Brannon, Membership Secretary, and Robert L. Patten, Treasurer. These reports appear elsewhere in this issue and the forthcoming issue — Ed.] Robert A. Gross, American Studies Program, College of William and Mary, announced that next year's conference will be held in Williamsburg, Virginia, from 19 to 22 July 2001. In addition to programs on book history, the conference will feature special sessions on books and libraries in the new millennium.

SHARP Membership Report
1 July 1999 - 30 June 2000

Submitted by Barbara A. Brannon, Membership Secretary

SHARP is a fast-growing organization, as three-year membership trends indicate. Year-End figures for 1998, 1999 and 2000 were 940, 1025 and 1159 respectively. From 1998 to 1999, the organization reported a growth rate of 12%; the cumulative two-year increase from 1998 to 2000 is 23%. Some growing pains are inevitable; SHARP's leadership has taken steps in 2000 to improve communication and enhance services to members.

Over the course of the 1999-2000 year, fuller information was requested on the membership renewal form. The form itself has been redesigned to make renewals simpler and speedier. We now have a database of 1,359 names (current and expired memberships, and friends of book history worldwide) that has been augmented with telephone and fax contact information. The database is searchable by area of scholarly interest as a resource for the organization's book review editors, amongst others.

During 1999-2000, SHARP attained truly worldwide representation, with members from 32 countries on six continents. As membership secretary, I am in a position to observe some trends not readily revealed by our statistics. The publicity generated by our journal Book History has drawn interest from far-flung quarters and has resulted in new memberships, aided retention, and encouraged some conversions of student/unwaged memberships to the full rate in order to include the journal. Donations to SHARP's endowed fund have come in steadily, as well, in 1999-2000. Due to the growing membership base, we shall be moving to a once-a-year membership renewal cycle (July to June).

In coming issues of SHARP News, you will find a list of new members who have joined since the last directory, so that you may add their information to your records and welcome them to SHARP. We look forward to a fruitful year in 2000-2001 and hope for a continuation of the robust growth that points to the vitality of our endeavors.

SHARP 2000 Preconference Session on Global Bibliography

Submitted by Jonathan Rose

On 3 July, 2000 a preconference plenary session addressed the need for a global on-line book history bibliography.

Drs. Ad Leerintveld and Marijke van Delft, editors of the Annual Bibliography of the History of the Printed Book and Libraries, presented a plan to make the information compiled in their 28-volume print bibliography available in an electronic searchable database. They offered a demonstration of the project, called Book History Online (BHO), which contains more than 22,000 records. BHO is not yet available to the public, but as it is expanded it will be made accessible through the website of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands.

The sense of the meeting was that SHARP should actively support the development of BHO. Jonathan Rose ([jrose@drew.edu]) will be acting as liaison between SHARP and BHO.

Any SHARP member who would like to contribute to this project should contact:

Dr. Ad Leerintveld
Koninklijke Bibliotheek
PO Box 90407
2509 LK The Hague
The Netherlands
Telephone: +31 70 3140 320
Fax: +31 70 3140 655
E-mail: ad.leerintveld@kab.nl


Submitted by Peter F. McNally, McGill University

It is indicative of the increasing sophistication and complexity of book history that an international colloquium on the theme of publishing is both necessary and possible: necessary, because of the need to synthesize research into generalizations transcending the national and international boundaries of western culture; possible, because so much book history is currently being undertaken worldwide.

If one accepts that book history has four main sub-divisions - creation, production, distribution, and consumption - then one appreciates the colloquium's concentration upon distribution, despite the other sub-divisions regularly insinuating themselves. Sixty speakers addressed a somewhat larger audience in English and French. The tone was francophone, with 60% of the presentations being in French and 40% in English. The abstracts, which were distributed in advance, proved generally helpful but were sometimes quite different from the talks. Publication of the papers has been promised in 2001. Most speakers stayed within the twenty minute allotments. Discussion and questions were limited to the end of sessions. All the talks were delivered in general session.

The conference was organized around five major themes with sub-themes:
The spread of three European publishing models throughout the world

2. International modifications of European models
   - British model
   - German model and mixed models
   - French model

3. The development of independent publishing systems
   - The transition to independent publishing systems
   - Independent systems?

4. The book and the circulation of ideas
   - Religious literature
   - Popular literature
   - Scientific and educational publishing
   - Feminist publishing
   - Translations

5. Internationalism of the book trade

The conference organizers were two distinguished francophone academics, one from Canada and the other from France: Jacques Michon (Groupe de recherche sur l'édition littéraire au Québec, Université de Sherbrooke) and Jean-Yves Mollié (Centre d'histoire culturelle des sociétés contemporaines, Université de Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines).

There was never any doubt about their histoire du livre intentions for the colloquium: that it "...will enrich our understanding ... and serve as an initial attempt at producing a work of comparative cultural history".

A number of underlying assumptions were enunciated in the introduction to the abstracts. "Beginning with its European roots...British, French and German publishing practices...spread...by means of both direct and indirect colonization". The conference was, therefore, intended to focus initially upon the "...social and economic implication of the colonial situation...as well as the administrative, political and cultural aspects...between metropole and hinterland". Focus was then intended to shift to the "process of decolonization...the needs of smaller communities...[and the] social and geopolitical factors which influenced regional book culture". Attention was also to be paid to "...conflicts with the home countries over areas for jurisdiction...as well as to the ways in which former colonizers competed with each other in the newly independent countries". Finally, the conference was to consider the impact of worldwide book distribution and translation upon the "circulation of ideas", and the impact of world-wide professionalism, technological innovation, and mass culture upon traditional publishing models.

Grave doubts soon emerged among speakers and audience alike about the neatly laid-out a priori assumptions, particularly the European publishing models: British, French, and German. A number of observers questioned whether there were actually three separate models, or rather one model with numerous variations. This became a hotly debated topic, with lines drawn sharply on both sides. The debate was driven by several considerations: the failure of the program to acknowledge the United States as a major publishing model, the realization that the status of a country or culture as a publishing metropolis or periphery/hinterland can change over time, and the acceptance of there being a limited range of underlying economic structures for publishing projects.

A number of themes emerged from the conference. Some of these are:

- The periphery/hinterland appears to be more interesting, diverse and worthy of study than the metropolitan centers. The range of local variations seems nearly endless, and needs study before meaningful generalizations can be made.
- In periphery/hinterland countries, local publishing will usually account for 30% to 40% of book production, with the rest being accounted for by metropolitan centers.
- A country or community can be, at the same time, both a metropolitan center and a periphery/hinterland - Canada and Harlequin Books being a case in point.
- Status as a metropolitan center or periphery/hinterland can change over time - Portugal and Brazil being cases in point.
- Some parts of the world, particularly parts of Africa and Asia, continue to have significant oral, scribal, and manuscript traditions.
- Some parts of the world employ methods other than printing, such as lithography, for textual duplication.
- The oriental book tradition is one of non-technological determinism.
- Publishing systems, world-wide, can be characterized as eclectic, pragmatic, and anarchic.
- There is a distinct difference between controlled publishing systems as opposed to those run as commercial/free-enterprise systems, which characterize the western metropolitan model.
- The three dominant publishing types are: printers as publishers, booksellers as publishers, and publishers as publishers.
- The three dominant commercial systems for publishing are: barter, sale, and consignment (sale or return).
- A metropolitan publishing center is strengthened by having its language community extend beyond national borders.
- A community may measure its literacy in terms of a metropolitan language, not its own vernacular language.
- Metropolitan publishing plays an important role in developing cultural communities, world-wide.
- The significance of translations, within the publishing process, is of great importance and needs further analysis.
- Quantification does not tell the entire story about book production. For instance, religious book production has an importance far beyond its numbers.
- Many national publishing industries exist as niche markets.
- There is an interrelationship among publishing, literacy, technology, and marketing.
- There is a parallelism between the development of publishing and libraries, particularly public libraries.

In an effective and wide-ranging conclusion, Jean-Yves Mollié covered many major points. Although moderating his stand somewhat, he remained the standard-bearer for the three distinctive European publishing...
models. Germany was distinctive for being the birthplace of printing and for the development of book fairs and catalogues. Britain was distinctive because of the impact of its commercial and linguistic empire upon publishing. France was distinctive in its literature and culture and therefore in its publishing. As an example of how each system worked and manifested its unique qualities he discussed almanacs, which were published everywhere.

Mollier characterized publishers as being historically less concerned with ideology than with accomplishing great projects - cultural, spiritual, or national. He identified variable characteristics of publishing such as links with printing and government. Clarification was provided on the differing roles of associations as publishers, and associations of publishers. Publishing piracy was reconsidered as a positive development permitting poor countries to participate in book production.

Mollier addressed the role of the United States as a publishing metropolis, by arguing that its heyday was 1945-1970. Since then, he argued, the publishing scene has been dominated by international conglomerates, which are characterized by the profit motive - through the cheap production of best sellers - rather than by ideology or dedication to great projects. He contrasted the faceless, anonymous conglomerates of the present, with the nineteenth century publishing houses, and their powerful associations, which were led by outstanding entrepreneurs with great projects.

In a moving final comment, Mollier questioned the existence of a global village given the unequal access throughout the world to literacy and reading materials. He pleaded for initiatives to overcome these inequalities.

**Book Reviews**


Even as nineteenth-century, middle-class Americans came to imagine their lives as stories worth writing down, so did their most marginal countrymen. But the differences were staggering, and they centered on that word “worth”. If your life was a success, you didn’t need to make a living selling its story - so your autobiography might be an unpublished document written for descendants. Or a commercial publisher might mint your life story as a primer for the next generation of self-makers. Ann Fabian’s storytellers had no such luxury. A tale of experience was their only asset, and making it pay could mean publishing and hawking it oneself. Personal narrative was at once a commercial act, “a refuge for the weak and ruined, [and] a means for those deprived of power, authority, and education to come before the great public” (xi).

The genius of *The Unvarnished Truth* lies in treating ostensibly disparate categories of stories - beggars’ tales, criminal confessions, slave narratives, prisoner-of-war reminiscences - within a compelling narrative. Fabian emphasizes the common issues these tales and their tellers faced. What counts as a “true” story, and how can the narrator verify that truth? What does it mean to be an author when “artlessness” is the prerequisite for readers’ belief? And how could such marginal figures get into print at all?

A chronological approach grounds each set of stories in its particular moral or political context. Like pre-modern storytellers, beggars of the 1810s and 1820s told their stories aloud to potential purchasers. Their printed narratives appeared within a changing Atlantic world economy, in which local communities increasingly assumed responsibility for a rising number of wandering poor. By the 1840s, philanthropists worried that fake beggars would victimize them. Although criminals’ confessions faced less suspicion, some convicts managed to manipulate their own stories, and jailers and ministers had their own motives for getting those tales into print. Because slaves were assumed to lie, an empirically truthful narrative helped the fugitive prove his fitness for a contract-based, free-labor society, even as it furthered the abolitionist cause. In the context of minstrel shows, too, “fugitive lecturers and blackface performers staged competing versions of slavery” (108). Civil War prisoners adapted portrayals of enslavement and “blackening” from fugitives’ narratives, but they borrowed from minstrel shows and folk tales to depict the African Americans who assisted them in escaping. As a result, their narratives “helped reconstruct racism for postwar white Americans” (119): blackened prisoners became free white narrators who claimed that they, not slaves, had suffered worst.

Historians of the book will find *The Unvarnished Truth* well worth reading. Close analyses of the narratives deftly capture moments of exchange, especially listeners’ reactions to beggars’ tales. Fabian emphasizes throughout that these texts were commodities that had to be printed and sold. Best of all, she complicates our understanding of authorship. The narrators’ marginality required them to be (or seem) “artless”, and their stories required the imprimatur of somebody more respectable like white abolitionists or the Sanitary Commission. With the rise of *True Story* magazine in the 1920s, the audience replaced these mediators: “To be ‘true’, a story had only to seem so to its readers” (171). In telling the pre-history of our culture of self-revelation, Fabian brilliantly reconstructs “the social history of a cultural form” (4) that usually goes unnoticed beneath our grand narratives of the public sphere or the rise of modern publishing.

Scott E. Casper
University of Nevada, Reno


Who wouldn’t want a mentor? If nothing else, it ensures easy publication in a festschrift somewhere down the road. Most of the essays in *American Literary Mentors* offer thoughtful critiques of the actual practice of mentorship. The best analyses are those that attend to the manner in which vexed figurations of mentoring appear in literary work rather than in their examinations of the biographical circumstances surrounding literary apprenticeship.
Examples of close readings of texts which feature mentor/mentee relationships are Melissa McFarland Pennell's insightful analysis of Howells's novel, *The Minister's Apprentice* in "Literary Mentoring in Howells's Criticism and Fiction", the good analysis of Cather's literary work in both Deborah Carlin's essay, "Dimensions of Mentoring in the Fiction of Willa Cather" and Julie Olin-Ammentorp's compelling "Female Models and Male Mentors in Wharton's Early Fiction". These essays demonstrate that mentoring was frequently portrayed as weighted down with unfair expectations.

For example, Rev. David Sewell from *The Minister's Apprentice* regrets ever having encouraged the aspiring but lackluster poet, Lemuel Barker. Pennell convincingly argues that Howells portrayed Sewell's failure as rooted in not taking the emotional risks necessary to show compassion to another person, not in mentoring someone with no talent. Mentorship could be a vehicle of self-realization as much as it could function as an act of kindness.

Carlin's study of Cather expresses some surprise that Cather, who had received such meaningful mentoring from Sarah Orne Jewett, did not herself become an active mentor. And thus it is perhaps appropriate that Jean Franz Blackwell ends the collection with her consideration of Eudora Welty's rejection of traditional mentoring models. Indeed, Blackwell argues that Welty's "silent mentors" were Willa Cather and Jane Austen, "looming there, subliminally, in her imaginative landscape", rather than the numerous friends and colleagues with whom Welty actually interacted. This argument is enriched by sensitive readings of Welty's literary works; Blackwell usefully compares the isolated heroines of Cather's works with the restive characters of Welty's writing. Nonetheless, in taking such a line of inquiry Blackwell does stray from interrogating the nuances of mentorship as practiced in the real world.

For scholars of publishing and literary history these articles provide access to little known correspondence (often between older editors and their younger protégés such as in Robert J. Scholnick's "Reese, Stedman, and Poetry in Late Nineteenth Century America"). In addition, they illustrate just how entwined the literary world was. Or, as in the case of Margaret Wooster Freeman's article, "Essays of Affection" Mentorship and Friendship in Moore and Bishop", a well-known correspondence is analyzed with an eye to differentiating friendship from mentorship.

While George Parsons Lathrop may have declared in the pages of the *Atlantic Monthly* that private cliques did not control the publishing world and that even prominent writers regularly got rejected, it is good to be reminded how easy it was to fall into the slush pile without the helpful intervention of a Stedman, a Howells, or a Marianne Moore.

**Susanna Ashton**
Clemson University

---


In tackling Charles Kegan Paul and the companies associated with his name, Leslie Howsam has taken on a major Victorian publishing operation, and she resolves the problem of writing the history of a publishing house lacking archival remains whilst contriving to preserve a suitably sceptical distance from the centenarian house history, F. A. Mumby's *The House of Routledge, 1834-1934, with a History of Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Other Associated Firms* (1934). Her human cartography looks fairly accurate, with two chapters devoted to Henry S. King, "Businessman of Letters", and Charles Kegan Paul, "pastor to publisher", and apart from the unfortunate tendency to interpose biographical and chronological information in indistinctly tabular form, these chapters are admirable recoveries.

Three chapters cover the Kegan Paul partnerships: the "reputation for serious and beautiful books, 1877-1888", the "financial crisis and...revolution in management" during the Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner years (1889-1911) and the Kegan Paul "legacy: the making, consolidation and survival of a reputation for serious books". This plan of telling the "two interconnected stories" of the personalities and the books they produced is driven by Howsam's conviction that the central nexus is the publisher's purpose: "to bring together the demands of readers with the preoccupations of authors" (1).

Here, it might have been worthwhile to have reprinted Kegan Paul's seminal 'The Production and Life of Books' (Fortnightly Review, 1883), and while the space devoted to various series (e.g., the Parchment Library) and genres (Pulpit Commentary, History and Biography; Science and Art) is useful quantitative book history, further individual case studies would have filled out the picture. The relation between W. B. Yeats and Charles Kegan Paul has been extensively studied from surviving records by John Kelly in his "Books and Numberless Dreams: Yeats's Relations with his Early Publishers" in A. Norman Jeffares, ed., *Yeats, Sligo and Ireland* (1980), 232-53, an essay not referred to in this book but which is a model of how such case studies might be developed. Certain outlying personalities and operations of the firm remain comparatively mysterious (e.g., A. P. Sinnett and George Redway), although the current investigation of nineteenth-century occult publishing being undertaken by R. A. Gilbert will no doubt enlarge our knowledge.

Leslie Howsam places historians of the book very much in her debt with this imaginative and compelling reconstruction, but it might be inferred that she failed to secure the confidence of the designers of her book, who have taken a strange view of this text and produced a very oddly ordered book as a result. Her acknowledgements and lists of contents and tables are followed by a fourteen-page section of plates printed dingy onto book pages. Her Introduction (a summary of the volume), and five excellent chapters follow, but footnotes are regrettable not on the page. A useful Chronology and Who's Who precede a basic index, but the Bibliography promised in the blurb is absent.

**Warwick Gould**
University of London

Megan L. Benton presents here a compelling argument that the extraordinary vogue for fine printing in post-World War I America emerged as the material and commercial result of a crisis of values. Fearing that cheap, mass-produced books would inevitably lead to the cheapening of standards of taste, fine printers and publishers in the 1920s attempted a rearguard action predicated on the idea that books produced with more concern for quality than cost could help producers and consumers maintain - and enforce - a hierarchy of traditional, genteel cultural values. Benton argues, therefore, that the activities of fine printers were fundamentally paradoxical: founded upon an anti-commercial ethos, the success of the printer’s artistic and cultural enterprise (which was by definition outside the nexus of monetary valuation) could only be measured by the terms imposed by the marketplace.

Benton begins with Porter Garnett’s hierophantic inauguration of the Laboratory Press at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and winds up with a revealing look at the implications of the “audacious pricing of Crosby Gaige/Fountain Press books” (229), in which high prices, even for mediocre books, became the apparent market guarantee of non-commercial cultural accomplishment. Benton takes the reader through a thorough discussion of physical evidence, business and production records and practices, and biographical analyses of leading figures. Throughout her analysis, she provides ample and fascinating detail, yet also manages to keep the larger thematic issues well in view, never becoming lost in a thicket of minutiae.

The sole area where Benton might leave her reader yearning for more information is in her very brief discussion of bibliophilic clubs (such as the Grolier Club, the Rowfant Club, the Club of Odd Volumes, etc.) as targets of marketing efforts by fine presses. Some additional historical background on these clubs, and their relation to American ideas about books and book collecting would add to her discussion. I hasten to add that its absence is by no means fatal.

Benton also provides a revealing look at other conflicts that underpinned the fine press movement. Such conflicts include the ways in which artistic, expensive features of fine books allowed collectors to divorce ownership from reading, and transformed books into iconic collectibles and investments. The author also scrutinizes the ways in which “[i]deas about price . . . dictated production costs” (178). Finally, she offers a wonderful discussion of how the means by which the financial success of an elitist project guaranteed its eventual co-optation by commercialism. Benton forcefully argues that the very cultural force that the fine press movement intended to counter came back to haunt them. “Even as they repudiated the consumption-fueled, identity-anxious spirit of the 1920s, fine books embodied it” (242).

Benton concludes her wonderful book with thoughts about the meaning of books as physical objects and as the vehicles for meaning, leaving the reader with food for thought about the future of the book, as well as greater insight into the history of the book.

**Alison M. Scott**
Harvard College Library

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**General**


**Australia**


**Austria**

Norbert Bachleitner, Franz Eybl, and Ernst Fischer, eds., *Geschichte des Buchhandels in...*
### Austria


### China


### France


### Germany


### Nigeria


### Russia


### Switzerland


### United Kingdom


---

Begin your membership in SHARP, and you will receive the annual *Book History, SHARP News*, and the *SHARP Membership and Periodicals Directory*, which is published each summer. Students and unwaged can opt for a rate that does not include a subscription to *Book History*. We accept Visa, MasterCard or cheques in American or British currency, made out to SHARP. Send this form to Barbara A. Brannon, SHARP Membership Secretary, P.O. Box 5816, Columbia, SC 29250, USA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution:</td>
<td>Cardholder's Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research interests:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am donating ________ to the SHARP Endowment Fund. Check here if you wish your gift to remain anonymous: [ ]

Check if you prefer not to be included in the SHARP directory and SHARP mailing lists: [ ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students and Unwaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US/Canada: $45.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain: £30.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere: $50.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


United States


SHARP BOOK HISTORY PRIZE

The SHARP Book History Prize Committee announced this year's winner of the award at SHARP's annual general meeting in Mainz. The winner is Scott E. Casper for his Constructing American Lives: Biography and Culture in Nineteenth-Century America (University of North Carolina Press, 1999). Leslie Howsam, who chaired this year's Committee, offered these comments:

Dr. Casper's book is a cultural history of the genre that positions biography as both a historical and literary endeavor. It is centrally concerned with the nineteenth-century belief in the power of biography, both to shape individual lives and character, and also to help define the national character of the US. The biographical subjects and authors discussed are both famous and obscure.

The author uses a rigorous methodology — a combination of new historicism and history of the book, which introduces the response of actual readers into the discourse of genre. The work has an innovative structure — five chapters of narrative and analysis, which are interspersed with "interludes" designed to capture particular moments in the biographical experience of Americans. Subjects of these interludes include production, critical reception, the experience of the reader, and the experience of the biographical subject. Dr. Casper's volume is very well written and fulfills its aim to restore complexity to the past, while presenting that complexity in an accessible, readable, and engaging style.

Many congratulations to Dr. Casper. A full review of his volume will appear in a forthcoming issue of SHARP News. 

SHARPend

We have received various comments, both formal (printed in this issue) and informal, about this year's SHARP conference. It is apparent that the organizers achieved great success, and one of them, Eike Dürrfeld, has kindly offered to supply the text of some reports about the conference from the German press. We shall include a summary of these in a future issue, in order to provide a further flavor of yet another successful conference in SHARP's history.

Our editorial goal is to make SHARP News as all-inclusive as possible regarding geographic range of the topics and themes covered within its pages. In this issue, we are especially pleased to welcome our first Guest Comment from Eastern Europe. Miha Kovač, whose English is so very much better than the editor's Slovenian, was endlessly gracious during our e-mail exchanges concerning his text. His goodwill exemplifies, in my experience, one of SHARP members' strongest characteristics. Please continue to get in touch with your ideas and comments concerning the newsletter. In spite of the proliferation of electronic means of communication, we are very happy to receive (and to respond correspondence in "old-fashioned mode") sent to the Canadian editorial address.

SHARP News of Note

SHARP Book History Prize

Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing
University of South Carolina
P.O. Box 5816
Columbia, SC 29250 USA

Address Services Requested

FIRST CLASS MAIL