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HALCYON DAYS

Loryl MacDonald

Director, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

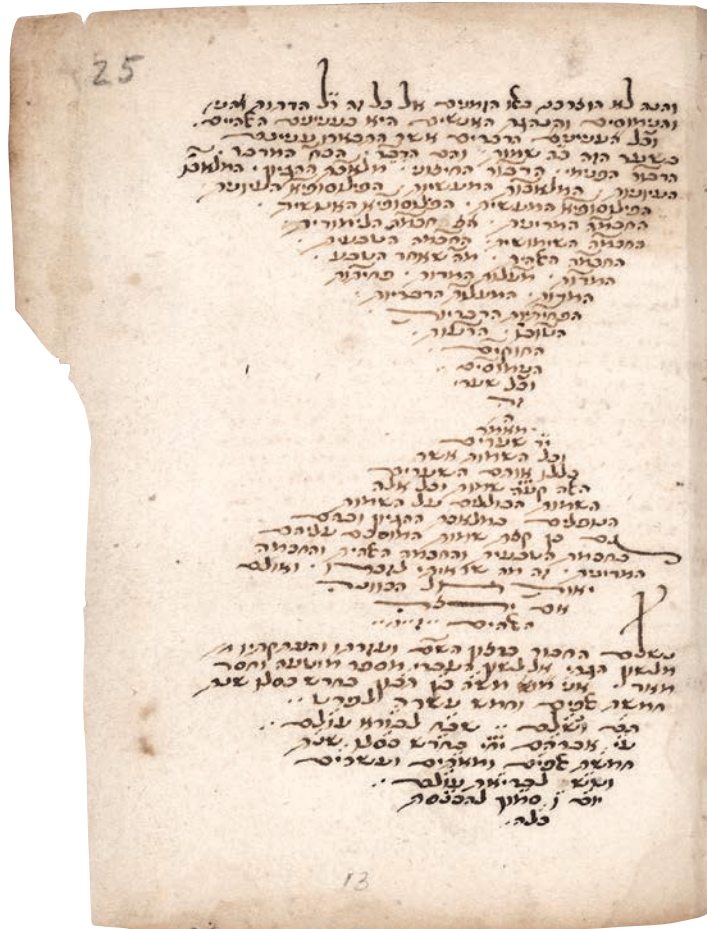
ON SATURDAY, MAY 28, the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library welcomed over 2,600 visitors for the City of Toronto's Doors Open event. The last in-person public event was the Friends of the Fisher George Kiddell Memorial Lecture held on 5 March 2020. And so, we were delighted that after two long years we could open our doors to the public for the day. The Fisher has participated in Doors Open since 2000 and the event now attracts the most visitors to the library in a single day. This year, the queue to get in was one hour long and wound down the Fisher's eastern stairs along St. George Street all the way to Sussex Avenue. It was wonderful to see visitors' looks of amazement upon finally entering the calm, cool, dark space and seeing the majestic expanse of rare books around them. Fisher staff enjoyed fielding guests' questions about the size of the collection, the oldest book, the newest book, or our favourite item.

One visitor wanted to know why the Friends of the Thomas Fisher Rare Book

Library's newsletter is called *The Halcyon*. Not knowing the answer, I sheepishly asked Marie Korey who directed me to the first issue of *The Halcyon*, published June 1988. In that inaugural issue, Richard Landon, the Director of the Fisher Library, explained that the title comes from a story of love and commitment in Greek mythology about Alcyone or Halcyone and Ceyx, a wife and husband who were transformed into kingfishers or 'halcyon birds'. According to legend, the Halcyon kingfisher had the power to calm the rough ocean waves to protect its eggs during nesting season. The phrase 'Halcyon days' has come to signify a time of joy, peace, and tranquility. Richard wrote: 'Thus our small conceit — we consider the Fisher Library the "king" of libraries, and those of us who are fortunate enough to be able to spend some time within its walls believe them to be "Halcyon days".' Nearly thirty-five years later, Fisher staff, scholars, and visitors to this most remarkable physical space could not agree more with Richard's inspired choice of a title.

In keeping with tradition, the June issue of *The Halcyon* is an overview of purchases from the previous fiscal year. Chana Algarvio, Leora Bromberg, Alexandra Carter, David Fernández, Nadav Sharon, Andrew Stewart, and Danielle Van Wagner contribute fascinating articles on recent acquisitions of national and international significance in their areas of interest. I wish to acknowledge the many donors who made these purchases possible. In addition to the Rare Book and Special Collections' regular acquisitions fund, donations, endowments, and other special funds have been vital in making important acquisitions. I also thank members of the antiquarian book trade who are important partners in building our collections. Finally, thanks go to my Fisher colleagues for making extraordinary additions this year. I am especially grateful to Alexandra Carter, David Fernández, and Leora Bromberg for managing the Fisher's acquisition processes.

May you enjoy this issue of *The Halcyon* and have many Halcyon days in years to come.



MANUSCRIPTS, PRINTINGS, AND IN-BETWEEN: NOTABLE RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF JUDAICA AND JUDAICA-RELATED MATERIALS

Nadav Sharon

Judaica Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

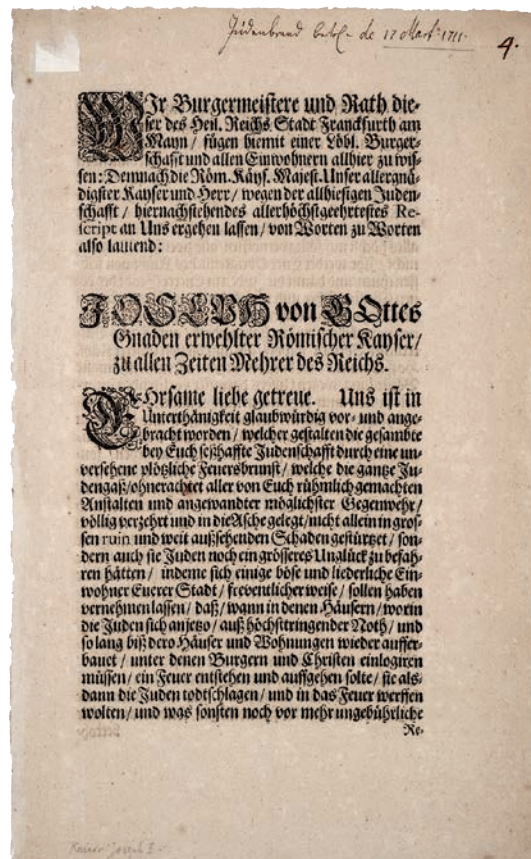
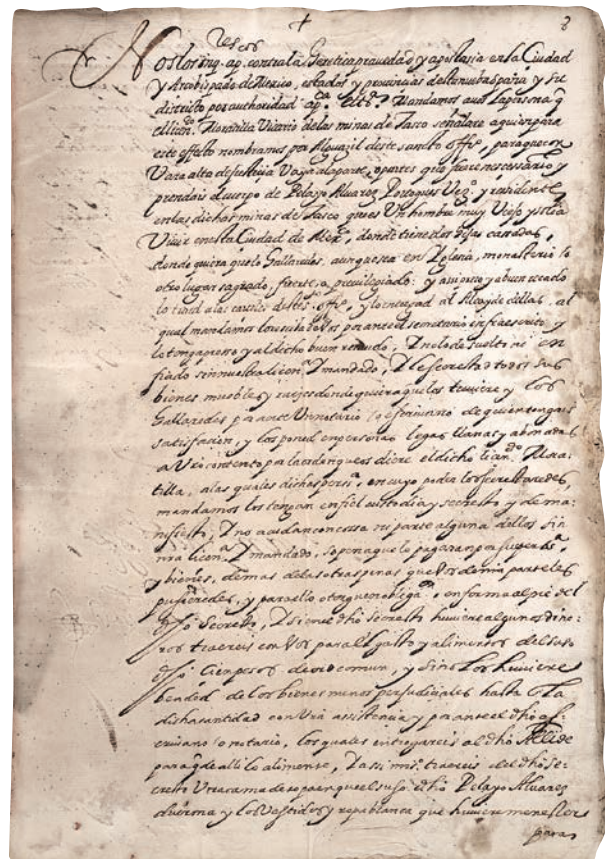
THE HEART OF the Fisher Library's Judaica holdings are the Friedberg and Price collections. These include most of the Fisher's Hebrew manuscripts and incunables, as well as rare and important early printings, many of which have been previously described on the pages of *The Halcyon*. Yet the Fisher has been continuously adding remarkable rare Judaica materials to its collections, and the past year has been a prime example. During the past year, the library has been fortunate to acquire a number of unique materials in Judaica or related to Judaica, including notable manuscripts and printed books, as well as a hybrid publication, which will be highlighted here.

The earliest of these 'new' materials is a late medieval manuscript of the first work of the Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (known as Maimonides; 1138–1204). Widely considered the most influential Jewish thinker, Maimonides wrote the philosophical work *Sefer Ha-Higgayon* (Treatise on Logic), a study of technical terms employed in logic and philosophy, when he was only sixteen years old. Originally written by Maimonides in Arabic, it was translated into Hebrew by two different translators in the thirteenth century: the physician Aḥituv of Palermo and the physician Rabbi Moses Ibn Tibbon, who translated several of Maimonides' writings as well as the works of Arab writers. Ibn Tibbon's

translation of *Sefer Ha-Higgayon* became more widely known and is the one contained in the Fisher Library's manuscript. According to its colophon, the manuscript, written on paper, was completed during the Hebrew month of Kislev, 5226 (December 1465) by a scribe named Avraham, probably from Italy, given the manuscript's semi-cursive Italian script. This manuscript was previously owned by David Solomon Sassoon (1880–1942), a philanthropist and avid collector. The Fisher Library's Friedberg collection already includes several Sassoon manuscripts, making this a most fitting addition to the collection.

While the Maimonides manuscript aligns so well with previous Fisher Judaica holdings,

OPENING PAGE: Last page and colophon of the 1465 manuscript of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation of Maimonides' *Sefer ha-Higgayon*. **BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** The arrest order for Pelayo Alvarez. | Frankfurt am Main proclamation from 17 March 1711, re: 14 January fire and destruction of the Judengasse, the Jewish Ghetto.



the other new acquisitions are more diverse. One is of a manuscript from Mexico City from 1595–1601: a dossier of the trial of one Pelayo Alvarez by the Mexican Inquisition. The case centers on the sixty-four-year-old Alvarez, a Portuguese merchant who was accused of being a Judaizer: keeping Jewish customs such as fasting and keeping the Sabbath. Although he at first denied these accusations, Alvarez confessed after subsequent interrogation to having observed the law of Moses for more than a decade, though he had returned to Christianity four years prior to being arrested. Alvarez remained in the prison of the Inquisition in Mexico City from 18 March 1597 until his death due to illness in his cell on 5 June 1597. The trial dossier includes, among other documents, transcriptions of witness testimonies, trial proceedings, and two sheets of notes written by the defendant himself, and contains numerous signatures throughout, including those of the inquisitors, witnesses,

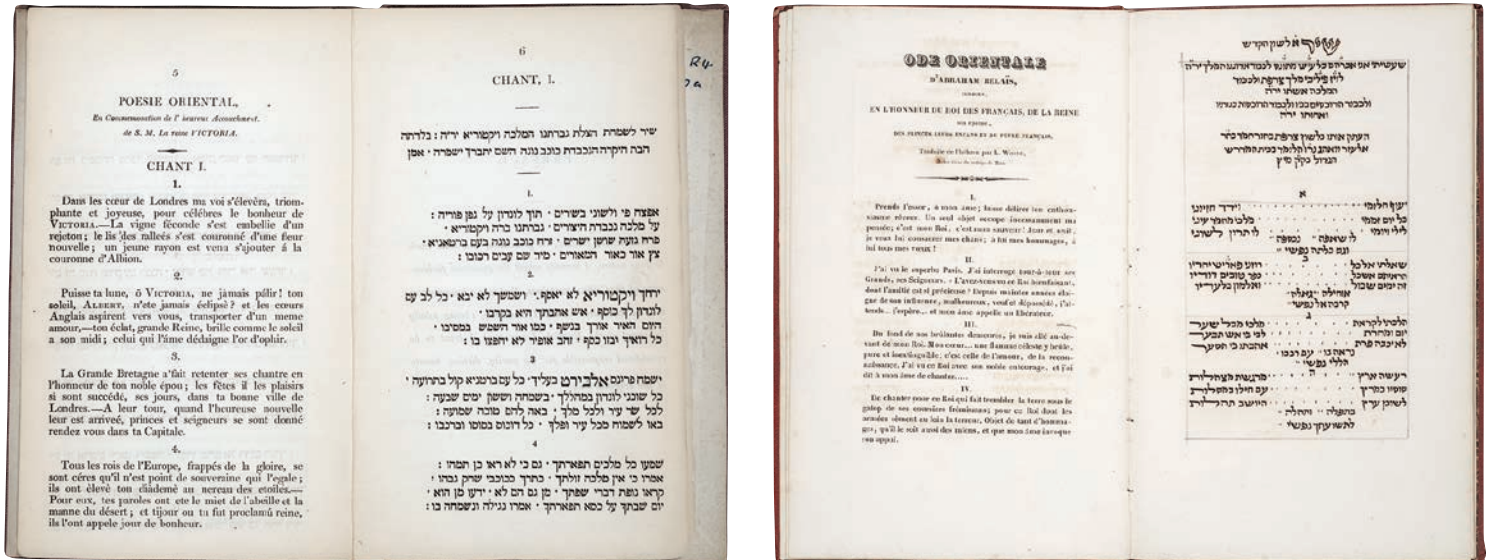
and Alvarez. Such dossiers of inquisition trials from 'the New World' are extremely scarce, making this manuscript of vital importance to any research on the Inquisition and on crypto-Jews there.

Another acquisition has its origin in early eighteenth-century Frankfurt, Germany. On 14 January 1711, a fire broke out in the Jewish Ghetto of Frankfurt am Main, burning all its structures to the ground. Jews had been forced to move into the Ghetto, which was made up of one narrow lane and thus called *Judengasse*—the 'Jews' Lane'—in 1462. As the population grew, along with the prohibition on Jews to live elsewhere in the city, the only places to build were either up or in the narrow open spaces between the buildings, leading to this narrow lane becoming one of the most densely populated places in Europe. Thus, when a fire accidentally broke out in the home of the community's senior rabbi, Naphtali Cohen, it easily and quickly spread to the rest of the

Ghetto's buildings. The Fisher Library's recent acquisition is of a very rare proclamation issued by the Mayor of Frankfurt and his Council on 17 March 1711, which contains the entire text of an Imperial Edict (dated 18 February 1711) by the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph I, in which he calls for the general safety of the Jews, for assistance in the rebuilding of the Jewish quarter, and specifies that ill-treatment of Jews will be severely punished.

The final two books to be discussed were both written by Rabbi Abraham Belais (1773–1853). Born in Tunis, Belais had an eccentric personality and a curious career with many vicissitudes. Beginning near the higher echelons of society, he was a rabbi in Tunis and treasurer to the Bey, the chieftain of Tunis. In 1808 he experienced his first reversal, was forced to leave his home city, and settled in Jerusalem where he lived an impoverished life for several years. In 1817 he left as a messenger to Europe to collect alms, and then became

BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Abraham Belais, *Reyah ye-hatsalah or Enlargement and Deliverance* (1841?). First poem in honour of the birth of Queen Victoria's first daughter. | Abraham Belais, *Odes et prière hébraïques, traduites en français, en l'honneur de S. M. Louis-Philippe, roi des Français* (1835). Beginning of the first poem in honour of King Louis-Philippe and his family. Note the Hebrew manuscript alongside the printed French translation.



acquainted with King Victor Emanuel I of Sardinia and gained the support of several influential Europeans, including ministers and bishops. After some additional wanderings, he eventually settled in Nice, France, where he became rabbi of that community. In 1840, after several years in France, Belais moved to London where he was attached to the *beth midrash* (Torah study hall) of the Spanish and Portuguese congregation until his death.

Belais composed various books, including commentaries on Ecclesiasticus and on various rabbinical works, mostly in Hebrew. Yet Belais was also a poet, and published poems and sermons in honour of various European monarchs, emperors, and other notables. The Fisher Library has recently acquired two such works. Belais published, probably in 1841, a series of poems in honour of the birth of the first daughter of Queen Victoria. Titled *Reyah ye-hatsalah or Enlargement and Deliverance*, containing *Poems on the Happy and Joyful Occasion of the Safe Delivery of Our Pious and Esteemed Queen Victoria of a Princess...*, this small book also contains a hymn of thanksgiving that Belais composed for the deliverance of the Jews of Damascus from

the blood libel against them in 1840, as well as poems in honour of Sir Moses Montefiore and his wife Judith. Montefiore, then leader of British Jewry, was instrumental in the release of Jewish prisoners in Damascus. Some of the latter poems also mention Queen Victoria. All the poems are in Hebrew with translation on the facing page. Perhaps surprisingly, the poems for the Queen are translated into French, while the others are translated into English.

In keeping with the theme of Hebrew text and its corresponding European translation, the second work by Belais which the Fisher recently acquired is perhaps one of the most surprising in that respect, and an exceptional rarity. It is a series of odes in honour of Louis-Philippe I, the last king of the French (1830–1848), and presented to the king himself. Entitled *Odes et prière hébraïques, traduites en français, en l'honneur de S. M. Louis-Philippe, roi des Français, ainsi que de toute sa famille*, it was published in Paris in 1835. Following the dedication to the King in French are six compositions: five poems in honour of the King followed by a prayer for the King's well-being. Each composition is written in Hebrew with the facing pages holding the French translation

by Lazare Wogue (1817–1897). (Wogue also composed a Hebrew poem in honour of Belais preceding the dedication.) What is most intriguing about this book is that while the French translation is printed, the Hebrew is written in beautiful manuscript, presumably the handwriting of Belais himself. This kind of hybrid book—with distinct manuscript alongside printing—is most extraordinary. Moreover, only three copies of this book are known, one of which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. The Fisher copy was the presentation copy for the king himself and, as attested by a stamp on the title page, was indeed in the royal library. According to a catalogue of the books of that royal library, it was sold in December 1852.¹

These exceptional new additions to the Fisher's collections not only enrich those collections, but more importantly enrich our understanding and provide research opportunities into the multifaceted experiences of the Jewish Diaspora, as well as into the complex relationships of Jews with the ruling powers under whom they lived and with the majority non-Jewish populations alongside which they lived.

Endnote

1 *Catalogue de livres provenant des bibliothèques du feu roi Louis-Philippe... Bibliothèques du Palais-Royal et de Neuilly* (Paris: L. Potier, 1852), vol. 2, p. 113: lot 1150.

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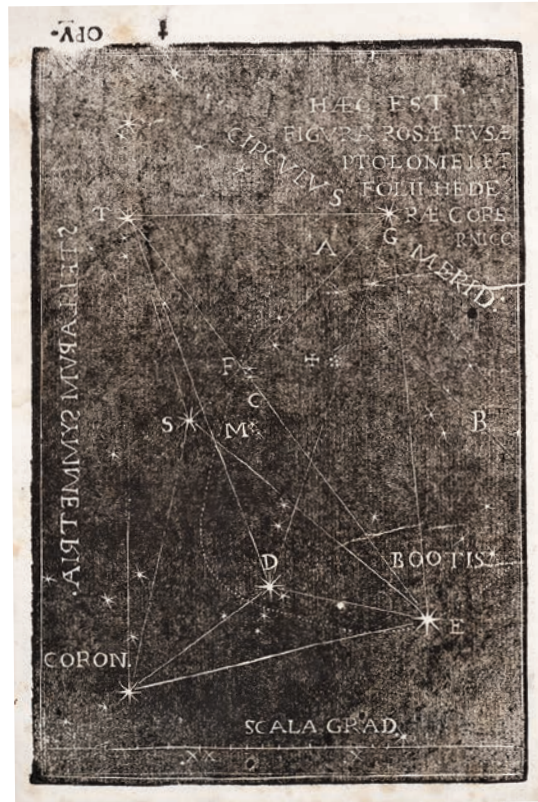
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*Names of deceased donors appear in italics.
We thank all members who wish to remain anonymous.*



ON THE WONDERFUL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SKY: A RECENT ACQUISITION IN EARLY ASTRONOMY

Alexandra K. Carter

Science & Medicine Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

THE FISHER LIBRARY is pleased to have recently acquired a rare first edition of an often-overlooked work by sixteenth-century astronomer Giovanni Battista Odierna (also Hodierna; 1599–1660). *De systemate orbis cometici de que admirandis coeli characteribus...*, published in Palermo in 1654, records Odierna's observations on stars, comets, and nebulae. While the mathematician and astronomer Ptolemy noted several 'nebulous objects' in the night sky as early as the second century, Odierna's work can be seen as the first substantial or systematic study of nebulae. Broader study of the phenomenon was likely stilted by the limited strength of early telescopes, which were unable to pick up faint objects in the sky. Odierna's work on nebulae received little attention and had no influence on his contemporaries, perhaps because of his secluded location in Palermo, some distance from the major intellectual centers of Italy. In spite of this, Odierna's work can still be seen

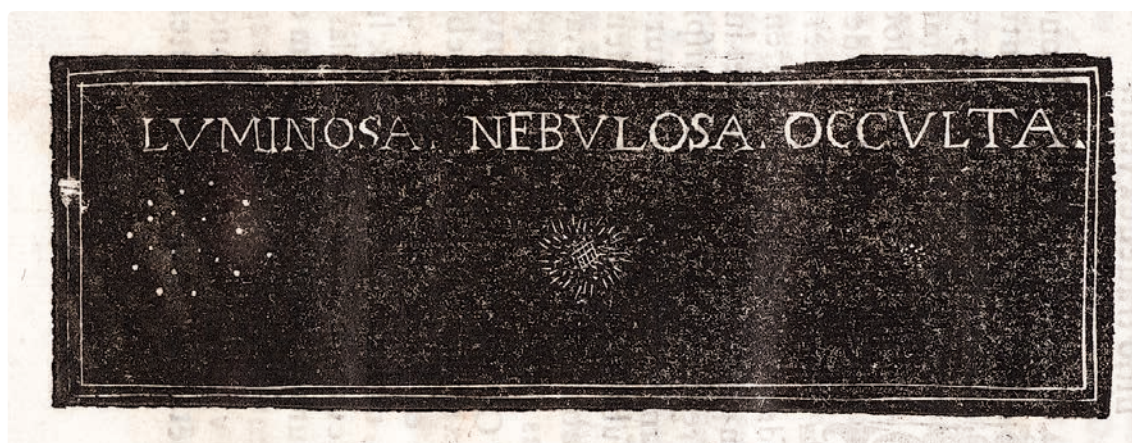
as an important attempt to understand the nature of diffuse astronomical objects.

In the second section of the book, *De admirandis coeli characteribus*, Odierna, working with the assumption that all nebulae are clusters of stars, divides nebulae into three different categories: *luminosa*, *nebulosa*, and *occulta*. These categories correspond to the resolution (or degree of visible detail) of the cluster of stars, with *luminosae* having individual stars visible to the naked eye and *nebulosae* having stars only being visible through a telescope. *Occultae* are more vaguely defined as partially obscured clusters. Indeed, the term *nebula* itself, from the Latin for 'cloud' or 'fog', reinforces the fact that early astronomers struggled to view these complex astronomical objects. Odierna attempts to illustrate this variation in resolution in one small woodcut.

Unlike the majority of relief woodcuts from the hand-press period, in which the blank space of a design is carved out of the wood and only

the raised lines are inked and printed, Odierna's woodcuts do the reverse: the lines themselves are carved out of the wood so that the design appears in white and the blank space in black ink, or white-on-black woodcuts.

Only sixty pages long, *De systemate orbis cometici* is complicated by countless printing errors in the text and inconsistencies in its lists and tables. The thirty-nine woodcuts are the most striking feature of the book. Thanks to a heavy use of black ink in their design, they almost dominate Odierna's text. The celestial diagrams and stars, though visually striking, are difficult to decipher. Modern day historians of astronomy have compared printed copies to Odierna's manuscript star maps (held in the Archivio Capitolare di Vigevano in Italy) and have found many inconsistencies between the versions. The heavy use of ink combined with the high pressure that would have been required to fully impress such solid woodblocks onto paper resulted in inconsistent prints—some



are too black with details likely erased, while others are too faint. In many of the images, it is difficult to determine what is an astronomical object and what is a visual artefact of the printing process. Other difficulties are more pronounced, including a backwards-engraved phrase, '*stellarium symmetria*', on the final full-page woodcut. (The entire woodcut itself is printed upside down, as well).

In the absence of evidence for why Odierna used this style of woodcut, we are left to speculate. It may simply have been easier, faster, and more affordable to carve only the small dots, stars, and text into the woodblock. But

the use of white-on-black may also have been a deliberate aesthetic choice. Small clusters of white dots against a black background mimic the appearance of the night sky more closely. In doing so, they also reinforced the difficulty of distinguishing the details of faint or nebulous objects in the sky when viewed with the naked eye or telescope — one must almost squint to decipher Odierna's printed stars. But perhaps, as an early follower and admirer of Galileo (1564–1642), Odierna also meant to mimic the white-on-black woodcuts found in the 1610 Frankfurt edition of Galileo's work on the surface of the moon *Sidereus nuncius*,

which included four white-on-black woodcuts. (Interestingly, Galileo made a change from the Venice edition published earlier the same year in which the same four woodcuts were carved in the more conventional black-on-white style.) Odierna's woodcuts, though difficult to decipher, can be seen as a product of an early astronomer's struggles to illustrate newly discovered qualities of the cosmos accurately and for the first time.

Fittingly, this new acquisition will make its new home on the shelves of the Fisher Library as part of the Stillman Drake Galileo Collection.

OPENING PAGE: The final, full-page woodcut from Odierna's *De systemate orbis cometici de que admirandis* (1654). **ABOVE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** Woodcut depicting Odierna's three classifications of nebulae: *luminosa*, *nebulosa*, and *occulta*, from *De systemate orbis cometici de que admirandis* (1654). | The Fisher Library's Stillman Drake collection includes several examples of printed star atlases with the more common black-on-white woodcuts, such as Alessandro Piccolomini's *De le stelle fisse*, or *On the Fixed Stars*, printed in Venice in 1579. | Woodcut depicting the Pleiades star cluster, now otherwise known as The Seven Sisters, from Odierna's *De systemate orbis cometici de que admirandis* (1654).



‘AS FORMED BY NATURE ITSELF’: RECENT ACQUISITIONS OF NATURAL ILLUSTRATION

Leora Bromberg

Acquisitions Specialist, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

HAND-COLOURED ORIGINAL lithographs of native species in Agnes Chamberlin (1833–1913) and Catharine Parr Traill’s (1802–1899) *Canadian Wild Flowers* (1868); mounted dried plant specimens in Alexander Thomson’s *Hortus Conservatio* (1823); even a rosebud stain on pages 395–396 of the Fisher Library’s copy of Shakespeare’s *First Folio* (1623). These are just a few of countless visual representations of natural objects to be discovered among the Fisher Library’s holdings.

While natural specimens have over time found themselves represented on paper through a wide variety of artistic techniques, from hand-drawn and painted originals to printed reproductions, often there is no better artist than nature itself. Two recent acquisitions by the Fisher keenly demonstrate

the notion of nature acting as illustrative artist.

The first is *Natural Illustrations of the British Grasses* (1846), prepared and edited by Frederick Hanham (1806–1877) and published in Bath by Binns and Goodwin. In this case, ‘natural illustrations’ in the title refers to over sixty real specimens of British grasses pressed, dried, and mounted within the volume. These grass specimens are accompanied by descriptions and poetry celebrating the beauty of the natural world, as God’s creation. The second acquisition is *Die Nahrungs-Gefäße in den blättern der bäume nach ihrer unterschiedlichen Austheilung und Zusammenfügung so wie solche die nature selbst bildet*, a collaborative effort between engraver, printer, and bookseller Johann Michael Seligmann (1720–1762) and Nuremberg physician Christoph Jacob Trew

(1695–1769). This rare volume, which was published in Nuremberg by Johann Joseph Fleischmann in 1748, depicts the fragile network of nerves and veins printed directly from the leaves of various plants. As the end of the German title suggests, these prints represent the leaves ‘so wie solche die nature selbst bildet’—‘just as they are formed by nature itself’.

Published during a period that witnessed many notable innovations in book illustration, both of these books elevate natural illustration—book illustration techniques which make direct use of natural specimens and/or their surfaces—and natural printing—a technique within the broader practice of natural illustration using natural specimens to create prints—the ideal techniques for documenting and visualizing natural history in print.

OPENING PAGE: Ornate title page of Seligmann and Trew's *Die Nahrungs-Gefäße in den blättern der bäume* (1748). **BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** "BROMUS SECALINUS—Smooth Rye Brome Grass" mounted specimen in Hanham's *Natural Illustration of the British Grasses* (1846). | "DIGRAPHIS ARUNDINACEA—Reed Canary Grass" mounted specimen in Hanham's *Natural Illustration of the British Grasses* (1846). | "Table IV: Ruscus oder Mausdorn" nature-printed plate in Seligmann and Trew's *Die Nahrungs-Gefäße in den blättern der bäume* (1748). | "Table III: Limon di Calabria dolce" nature-printed plate in Seligmann and Trew's *Die Nahrungs-Gefäße in den blättern der bäume* (1748).



This is stated quite plainly at the very beginning of Hanham's preface to *British Grasses*, when he writes:

Natural Illustrations in Botany or Dried Specimens of Plants, when preserved with care as to their natural appearance and character, must always be more interesting and valuable to a Botanist, or a lover of nature, than engravings; being the real or original object, which drawings are intended only to portray [*sic*]. It was principally with this conviction that the present undertaking was attempted.

Hanham goes on to write that this form of illustration should be considered 'at least more *natural*, if not more useful than any engravings'. Here, the mounted grass specimens are understood to stand in place of illustrations, as a sort-of ultimate art form.

Seligmann and Trew's *Die Nahrungs-Gefäße in den blättern der bäume* was born of a similar notion, that the detail of botanical and natural objects cannot accurately be captured through drawing or engraving. This large folio book contains twelve full-page plates onto which various plant leaves have been impressed in red ink. The book was to contain additional plates, but the limited print run was cut short due to Seligmann's death, and because of the various technical challenges of printing from leaves.¹ In most cases, both the upper and lower sides of each leaf are impressed onto the page,

the lower side being identified with a small asterisk. The impression of each leaf on the page can actually be felt, and the technique results in very detailed reproductions of their structures and vessels.

To produce these detailed nature prints, Seligmann and Trew began by reducing the leaves to 'plant-skeletons'. This process began with soaking the leaves in water to decay. The leaves would then be rinsed or pressed to help separate the softer tissues from their sturdier internal network of vessels and filaments.² What remained was a skeleton-like structure that served as a delicate, but effective, printing surface.

Seligmann and Trew's book also represents the earliest known example of what's called 'nature printing' among the Fisher Library's collections. While the prints featured in this volume were impressed directly from real leaves, developments in printing technologies allowed for more efficient and mass reproduction of natural objects by the mid-nineteenth century. This was achieved through electrotyping impressions of plant specimens to cast durable and reusable copper printing plates.³ A fine example of these more sophisticated nature printing methods can be found elsewhere in the Fisher's collections, such as in works printed by Henry Bradbury (1831–1860), including *Nature-Printed British Ferns* (1859–1860) and *The Nature-Printed British Sea-weeds*

(1859–1860). Although casting metal plates of natural objects allows for a longer print-run, each plate is still one-of-a-kind, capturing the fine details of a single natural object.

This is perhaps what makes works of natural illustration and nature printing so compelling—since no two natural samples are exactly alike, both mounted specimen and nature printing illustration techniques tend to have a 'snowflake effect' on their host texts, rendering each copy a unique variant. Aside from their beauty and fine detail, these works of natural illustration also offer valuable windows into innovations in specimen preservation, printing technologies, and book illustration techniques. These two recently acquired volumes honour nature as the ultimate artist. In doing so, they invite us to look beyond the text and the materiality of the book, to reconnect with and notice the beauty of the natural world.

Endnotes

- ¹ Johann Beckmann, *History of Inventions, Discoveries and Origins* (2 vols. London: H. G. Bohn, 1846), 2:200.
- ² Beckmann, p. 195.
- ³ Maria Zytaruk, "Preserved in Print: Victorian Books with Mounted Natural History Specimens," *Victorian Studies* 60 (2) (Winter 2018), pp. 185–200: p. 186.



The Original Canadian Jubilee Singers

ON THE ROAD WITH THE PATTERSON'S JUBILEE SINGERS

Danielle Van Wagner

Special Collections Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

'DEAR BRO' BEGINS the fourteen letters written by Nathaniel Oscar (N. O.) Patterson (1885–1918) to his brother, William Robert (W. R.) Patterson (1859–1931). A professional musician, N. O.'s letters, dated between 1907 and 1916, come postmarked and on hotel letterhead from Maryland, Ohio, New York, and Virginia, and sometimes he simply scrawls that he is 'en route'. The Fisher Library recently acquired these and other letters sent to W. R. Patterson, a Black vocalist and barber living in Hamilton, Ontario. These documents provide a valuable insight into the lives and experiences of one Black-Canadian family living in the early twentieth century.

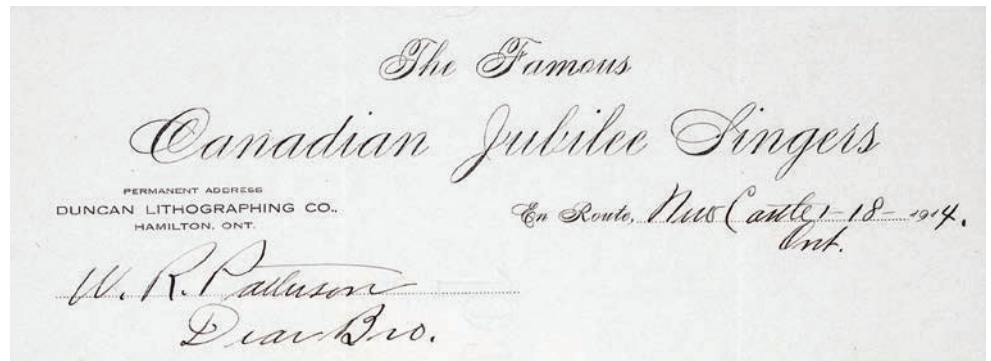
The Patterson brothers came from a big family. Both of their parents, Philip Bolling Patterson (1830–1922) and Alcinda Francis Parker (1830–1892), escaped to Canada from Virginia in the 1850s. The couple married in Chatham in 1860, a place where, as described by Benjamin Drew in his 1856 narratives, *A North-Side View of Slavery*, 'more fully than anywhere else, the traveller realizes the extent of the American exodus'.¹ The family settled on a farm in nearby Harwich township and had twelve children, who were educated in nearby segregated schools. Bookending the family as the oldest and youngest, there was a twenty-five-year gap between W. R. and N. O. Their mother died in 1892, when N. O. was

just seven years old, and it seems likely that W. R. took on a parental role with his youngest brother considering their closeness later in life.

Even with this small archive and what exists in public historical records, many of the details of the Patterson family are lost to history. What is clear, however, is that the Pattersons were a musical family, with at least three siblings working as professional vocalists at some point in their lives: W. R., N. O., and the second-oldest brother, Thomas (Thom) (1864–1939). While their father remained on the family farm until his death in 1922, many of his children moved to Hamilton. Adrienne Shad emphasizes in her book, *From Tollgate to Parkway: African Canadians in Hamilton* (2010),

that many individuals left Chatham and its surrounding areas in the early twentieth century, and that Hamilton was a 'place where Black males could find employment in a variety of skilled and semi-skilled jobs and as independent businessmen'.² Hamilton also had a reputation for producing successful Black musicians, quite an accomplishment considering that by 1911, the Black community accounted for just over 300 residents out of a total population of almost 82,000.³ This tradition dated back to the founding of the Famous Canadian Jubilee Singers in 1879, who successfully toured Canada, the United States, and Great Britain with a roster primarily composed of individuals from Hamilton. Spurred and inspired by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, which originated at the first Black American college in Tennessee, choral ensembles reclaimed and popularized spiritual music from caricatured minstrel shows where white musicians would perform in blackface.

The ensembles and concerts of spiritual music grew immensely popular among both Black and white audiences, traveling throughout Britain, Canada, and the United States in churches, community halls, and revivals. The Pattersons witnessed this first-hand. An undated letter from W.R.'s first wife, Fannie Harris (1864–1909), encourages her husband to join her in Virginia: 'I see a fortune here if you want it', and implores him to come in June for 'the Grand Encampment... [where] you can expect excursion rates then to Washington D.C.' W.R. eventually opted for a steadier career as a barber in Hamilton, but he and Fannie, who died at age forty-five, remained involved in music in Hamilton. Two surviving letters from Thom illuminate both his own activities in an ensemble and those of W.R. and Fannie. His first letter, dated 5 January 1908 and addressed 'Dear Sis + Bro', states that it is 'Too bad you have no singers to form your club, your choir must be fine with the Orchestra in it', before asking: 'can you get enough men singers in Hamilton to make up a quartet, do you think?' Regarding his own endeavours, Thom refers to several fellow musicians with whom he is traveling, including 'Mr. Overstreet' and 'Mr. Francis'. Both names also appear on an undated programme for the Old Southland Sextette. N. O. Patterson — Thom and W.R.'s younger brother — is listed as the baritone soloist, indicating that N. O. may have replaced



BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Programme broadside for the Old Southland Sextette, [1907–1908]. | Letter from N. O. Patterson to W. R. Patterson on Patterson's Jubilee and Quartet Concert Company letterhead, 18 May 1914. | Programme broadside for the Patterson's Jubilee Singers, [1914–1916]

his brother in the group, or vice-versa. Based out of Chicago, the Sextette featured S. R. Overstreet as the basso and de-facto leader and provides a likely link between N. O. and his later membership with the Famous Canadian Jubilee Singers, as Overstreet, also originally from Hamilton, performed with the group beginning in 1902.

There are no letters extant in the collection between 1908 and 1912. When N. O. writes again in 1912, he is by then married to a fellow vocalist, Lillian Belle Isabell (1882–?), and they are both singing with the Canadian Jubilee Singers, as confirmed by references to several long-standing members, as well as his use of their distinctive letterhead.

By March 1914, N. O., at only twenty-nine, had struck out on his own, and the letterhead now reads, 'Patterson's Jubilee Quartet and Concert Company'. The paper boasts that they are 'the most versatile and unique co. of its kind' and includes their permanent address: W. R.'s modest home on John Street North

in Hamilton. An undated programme for the group, now simply called The Patterson Jubilee Singers, lists N. O. as the basso, his wife Lillian as the soprano, along with two fellow singers from Ontario: Chonita Hyers (1893–1953) of Amherstburg and Hiram Berry (1894–1983) of Hamilton.

N. O. does not speak about race or prejudice in these letters, though both N. O. and W. R., would have certainly experienced racism and discrimination in both Canada and through their travels in the United States. On 18 May 1914, N. O. writes that he held several concerts between Hamilton and Virginia, with their most recent concert bringing in eight hundred people. Having temporarily settled in Norfolk, Virginia—his wife's hometown, and the same state where both of his parents had been enslaved—he does not write about many things he must have seen or heard in the American South, which was firmly segregated by Jim Crow laws, writing only: 'the weather is nice, and the people treat you fine.' It is certain

that N. O.'s status as a musician would have allowed him to enter white spaces he would not have been able to enter otherwise, but his treatment was likely uneven. N. O. occasionally uses hotel-branded paper for his letters but, twenty-five years before the publication of the first *Green Book* (which told Black tourists safe places to stay on their travels), it is uncertain if he stayed in these establishments or if he only performed there. An old hat at touring by 1914, N. O. would have learned from veterans like S. R. Overstreet and his brothers where he could sleep, eat, and visit.

N. O.'s letters continue until 1916. He writes frequently about the war, stating to his brother, who was by then in his mid-fifties: 'You must not go to war and get killed, I would go myself if I thought the bullets would keep away from me.' Sadly, N. O. would be unable to steer clear from another deadly historical event when he contracted the Spanish Flu and died while on a visit home to Hamilton on 19 October 1918, just days before his thirty-third birthday.

The Old Southland Sextette

Personnel

MME. MAY RUFF JOHNSON Soprano Soloist	J. C. THOMPSON Tenor Soloist
MME. RUTH HOLMES Mezzo Soprano Soloist	N. O. PATTERSON Baritone Soloist
CHAS. H. FRANCIS Tenor Soloist and Conductor	MISS FLORA WHITE Pianist and Alto

S. R. OVERSTREET, Basso.

Programme

PART I

Opening Chorus Company
Baritone Solo N. O. Patterson
Jubilee "Going to Haiti" Sextette
Duet Mme. Holmes and Miss White
Song and Chorus J. C. Thompson and Company
Mixed Quartette Mme. Holmes and Miss White
J. C. Thompson and N. O. Patterson
Contralto Solo Miss White
Plantation Melody "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground", Company
Soprano Solo Mme. Holmes
Jubilee "I'm a Rolling" Sextette

INTERMISSION

PART II

Tenor Solo Chas. H. Francis
Plantation Melody "When the Big Bell Rings that Day", Sextette
Male Quartette Messrs. Francis, Thompson, Patterson and Overstreet
Bass Solo S. R. Overstreet
Duet Mme. Holmes and C. H. Francis
Soprano Solo Mme. Johnson
Medley introducing 14 different airs Sextette

PROGRAM SUBJECT TO CHANGE

MANAGEMENT : Tom J. Morgan
MANAGING DIRECTOR : S. R. Overstreet,
Care of The Lyceumite,
Steinway Hall,
Chicago, Ill.

Patterson's Jubilee Quartet and Concert Company
THE MOST VERSATILE AND UNIQUE CO. OF ITS KIND IN ROUTE

PERMANENT ADDRESS:
431 JOHN STREET NORTH HAMILTON, ONT., CANADA

Norfolk, Va. May 18th 1914

Mr. W. R. Patterson
Dear Bro.

I guess you will be surprised to hear of us being in Norfolk, Va. we left Hamilton last Monday gave several Concerts on our way, have do not know how long we will stay, here, am getting along fine, the weather here is nice, and the people treat you fine, 800 people at church last night quite a difference to John St. Church, send a letter to # 5-16 13 Ave. Norfolk, Va. to the house rented, yet regards to all will write soon with time am in a hurry at present. remain, your Bro. N. O. Patterson

PATTERSON'S JUBILEE SINGERS

MME. LILLIAN PATTERSON Soprano
MISS GRACE THOMPSON Alto and Reader
MISS CHONITA HYERS Pianist and Soprano
MR. HIRAM BERRY Tenor
MR. N. O. PATTERSON Basso

Programme

PART I

Opening Chorus COMPANY
Children, Hail Hail Hail! Led by Miss THOMPSON
High Time Led by Mr. BERRY
Pier on the Sea a Fishing Led by Miss HYERS
Solo and Chorus Selected Miss THOMPSON
Rise! Shine! Led by Mr. PATTERSON
Humorous Quartette Selected
Saying Love Sweet Charles Led by Miss PATTERSON
Hail John Hall Led by Mr. BERRY
Old Black Joe Mr. PATTERSON

INTERMISSION

PART II

Opening Chorus COMPANY
Soprano Solo Miss PATTERSON
Readings Miss THOMPSON
O. P. R. A Humorous Quartette
Bass Solo Mr. PATTERSON
Trio Selected
Sentimental Song Mr. BERRY
Quartettes Selected
Closing Chorus COMPANY
Programme subject to change

If its entertainment you want, that's our business, write us.
N. O. PATTERSON, Manager.
PERMANENT ADDRESS
124 NORTHLAND AVE., BUFFALO, N. Y.

Very Special—It is earnestly requested that those who wish to leave before the conclusion of the recital, will do so in the intervals between the various appearances, and that the adjusting of hats and wraps be deferred until the programme is quite finished.

Endnotes

- Benjamin Drew, *A North-Side View of Slavery. The Refugee: or the Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related Themselves* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1856), p. 234.
- Adrienne Shadd, *The Journey from Tollgate to Parkway: African Canadians in Hamilton* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2010), p. 168.
- Ibid., 287.



PAPEL VOLANTE, PLIEGOS, AND LITERATURA DE CORDEL: POPULAR AND MARGINAL LITERATURE OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND LATIN AMERICA

Chana Algarvio

TALint Student, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

DURING THE SIXTEENTH century, a form of illustrated ephemeral literature arose in the Iberian Peninsula: known in Portugal as *papel volante* (pl. *papéis volantes*) and in Spain as *pliegos* (or *pliegos sueltos*), but today more commonly known as *literatura de cordel*. Like early British chapbooks, the short-printed street literature that appeared around the same time, the *literatura de cordel* has traditionally been viewed as popular narratives that feature monsters, exoticism, chivalry, women, religion, and humorous anecdotes. Recent scholarship, however, is discovering that not all stories were popular in origin, but rather written to meet the appeal of the general public instead of established norms, meaning that *literatura de cordel* should not be viewed strictly as popular literature, but also as marginal literature.¹ It was produced at the margins of traditional

publishing practices in terms of authorship and content, and addressed readers with diverse and conflicting interests. With the aim of making reading more accessible, *literatura de cordel* needed to constantly adapt to local contexts and markets to attract a large audience, serving as an experimental space for merging genres and discussing controversial topics without the fear of censorship.²

The stories were often written as poems (most commonly romance and satire), but were also written as songs (*cantigas* in Portuguese, *canciones* in Spanish), or more specifically, ballads. The narratives were usually printed as quartos (nominally two or four leaves, but can range in length) and were displayed for sale at a cheap price in the city streets by hanging them via string—*cordel*. The genres of *papel volante* and *pliegos* often contain woodcut illustrations at the header. These illustrations normally

reflect the contents of the text, providing dramatic visuals to attract readers—and illiterate non-readers—and allow the story to be recalled by memory. The popularity of the *literatura de cordel* grew to the extent that it began to appear in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies in Latin America during the nineteenth century, particularly in Brazil where it remains a popular literary form today to express social and political issues in the country.

This past year the Fisher acquired a remarkable collection of sixty-six *pliegos*, written in Spanish and Catalan, and printed in Barcelona by the Jolis and Pla families between the mid-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries. The most common themes that appear in this collection are romance (between a maid and gentleman, a Christian and Muslim, or a love triangle), the birth of Jesus Christ, and crimes of passion. The main topic tended toward

O EXTERMÍNIO DOS INDIOS NO BRASIL



Autor: Hamurábi Batista Xilogravura do autor
1º edição. 2016 — Juazeiro do Norte, CE

CORDEL
EXPRESSO



CURIOSA XACARA

NEUEA, EN QUE REFIERE LA VIDA, Y LASTIMOSA muerte de Doña Inés de Castro, llamada la Garza de Portugal. Y las Magestuosas Exequias con que la honró, despues de su muerte, el Rey Don Pedro de Portugal, con otras particularidades que verá el curioso Letor.

A La Reyna de los Cielos que con excelencias tantas se coronó de Laureles, para llevarse la Palma.

Aquella, que Ave Divina se remontó bella Garza á lo mas alto del Cielo, donde está colocada.

Le suplico, que me preste una pluma de sus alas, para que escriba mi ingenio la crueldad mas inhumana.

Y la lastima, que aun lloran de bronce, y marmol Estatuas en esse Reyno luciente de la Corte Lucitana.

Nació un Principe famoso, à quien dió nombre la fama

de cruel, que para serlo le dieron bastante causa.

Por gusto del Rey su Padre, con una Infanta de España casó el Principe Don Pedro con grandeza soberana.

Y á Portugal con su Reyna passó por Dama, una Dama, cuya hermosura, por grande se igualó con su desgracia.

Que era Doña Inés de Castro yá lo dixé, y esto basta, murió luego en Portugal la Princesa Castellana.

Sintió la Corte su muerte, tanto como le tocava, y el Principe se portó con grandeza para honrarla.

Mas

acts of wrongdoing, for example murder, retribution, social transgression, and sin, and its spiritual consequences—judgment by God. There are also narratives based on historical people or events that became a part of popular literature in the Iberian Peninsula. One such story is the tragedy of Inês de Castro (ca. 1320–1355). Born of Galician and Portuguese nobility, and descendant of the Castilian royal family, Inês de Castro was the true love of Dom Pedro I of Portugal (r. 1357–1367)—heir apparent at the time who was married to a Castilian noblewoman, Constanza Manuel (ca. 1316–1345), Inês' mistress. Fearing the

affair between Inês and Pedro I would further Castilian influence in Portugal, Dom Alfonso IV of Portugal (r. 1325–1357), Pedro I's father, banished Inês from the Portuguese court after Constanza's death and forbade their relationship. Later, after hearing that Inês and Pedro I married in secret and were living together, Alfonso IV arranged for her death and she was decapitated in a monastery. Filled with vengeance, Pedro I captured two of the killers whom he publicly executed by ripping their hearts out—claiming they did not have one after what they did to his own heart. Inês was only recognized as Pedro I's wife

posthumously, and during her burial Pedro I declared Inês the legitimate Queen of Portugal. Over the centuries, this tragic love story and considerable royal conflict between king and heir apparent inspired several *pliegos*, as well as poems, plays, and paintings from Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, and England—including the famed Portuguese epic poem *Os Lusíadas* by Luís de Camões (ca. 1524–1580),³ which is the first known printed source to mention the story.

In recent years, the Fisher Library has continued to expand its collection of *literatura de cordel*, acquiring works from Portugal, Brazil,

OPENING PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT: *Noticia Geral a Todos os Curiosos Amantes da Função, e Divertimento de Touros* (Lisboa: Na Officina de Domingos Rodrigues, 17--). | Andrés de Porras Trenllado, *Romance gracioso, para reir y pasar el tiempo: en que se da cuenta de una sangrienta batalla que en los campos de Arabiana tuvo el valiente y esforzado leon rey de los animales, con el famoso y alentado grillo rey de las sabandijas* (Barcelona: Imprenta de los Herederos de la V. Pla, [1801–1853]). **ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT:** Hamurábi Batista, *O extermínio dos indios no Brasil* (Juazeiro do Norte: Cordel Expresso, 2016). | *Curiosa xacara nueva, en que se refiere la vida, y lastimosa muerte de doña Ines de Castro, llamada la garza de Portugal: y las magestuosas exequias con que la honró, despues de su muerte, el rey don Pedro de Portugal, con otras particularidades que verá el curioso letor* (Barcelona: Por Juan Jolis, [1676–1759]).



LEFT TO RIGHT: Butterfly woodblock carved and signed by J. Borges in 2018.
| Antonio Vanegas Arroyo, *El Colibrí: Colección de Canciones Modernas para el Presente Año* (Mexico: Imprenta, calle de Santa Teresa, núm. 1, 1899).



and Mexico. In the Portuguese tradition, *papéis volantes*—which in that tradition could be as long as sixteen leaves—tend to cover a wider variety of topics than its Spanish counterpart. It embraced texts on medicine, practical advice, and agriculture, and took on other literary genres, including polemics, journalism, sermons, eulogies, and epistles. One of the most common themes found in the collection is bullfighting, due to its mass popularity in eighteenth-century Portugal. Interestingly, some of these were printed in Madrid, becoming an example of the ever-present close cultural ties with Spain. The collection from Brazil is the largest collection of *literatura de cordel* in the Fisher—over two thousand items—consisting of publications from the last hundred years, and covering a variety of socio-political issues, including feminism, racism (Blacks and Indigenous peoples), homosexuality, human rights, *golpes* (coups), *cangaço* (a movement in the hinterlands of Região Nordeste between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries characterized

as social banditry, which manifested as a form of protest against social injustice), and dictatorship.

Characteristic of the Brazilian *literatura de cordel* is the coloured ink or coloured paper covers that continue the Iberian tradition of using woodcut illustrations, of which the Fisher acquired a small collection of ten woodblocks carved by José Francisco Borges (1935–), a famous Brazilian woodcut artist, folk poet, and *cordelista*. Mexico likewise adopted the genre of *literatura de cordel* from the *peninsulares* and localized it by using it as a medium to reflect their own society and culture. One of the most important publishing houses of popular/marginal literature, and thus an *imprenta popolare* (popular press), was that of Antonio Vanegas Arroyo (1852–1917), which opened in Mexico City in 1880. Similar to the Brazilian *literatura*, Arroyo printed the covers in various inks or on coloured paper, and all with woodcut illustrations made by famous Mexican engravers, including Manuel Manilla (1830–1895) and José Guadalupe

Posada (1852–1913). The collection of Arroyo's publications found at the Fisher is primarily of works written in verse or prose, the former primarily *canciones* (songbooks) and *ramillete de felicitaciones* (bunch of congratulations), and the latter principally short stories, religious colloquy, and newsworthy events.

Overall, *papéis volantes*, *pliegos*, and *literatura de cordel* provide invaluable insights into the types of entertainment enjoyed by the masses, whether literate or illiterate, and discuss controversial topics that were purposely marginalized by established publishing houses due to censorship, but nevertheless needed to be addressed in society due to their importance.

Endnotes

- ¹ Pedro Marques, "The Papel Volante: A Marginalized Genre in Eighteenth-Century Portuguese Culture?," *Portuguese Studies* 33, no. 1 (2017), pp. 25–26.
- ² Marques, "The Papel Volante," 37–38.
- ³ The story of Inês and Pedro I's subsequent retribution appears in canto 3, stanzas 118–136.



Mendonça

Pequeña Maestra, qué grande es tu voluntad — (The rural School Teacher).

‘IMÁGENES PARA EL PUEBLO’: SELECTIONS FROM THE *TALLER DE GRÁFICA POPULAR* COLLECTION

David Fernández

Rare Book Librarian, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

ON A RECENT visit to Mexico City, I was impressed by the abundance of images posted on any available surface on the streets of this vibrant city. Posters, flyers, and stickers pasted on the walls, poles, and other public spaces in the city offer pedestrians a vision of the latest social and political struggles in Mexico, some of which are examples of paste-up street art on issues such as the opposition to the construction of the *Tren Maya* (a very long intercity railway) in the Yucatán Peninsula, statistics on society’s inaction in the face of increasing rates of violence against women all over the country, and signs of support for President

López Obrador amid a recall referendum on his mandate.

The presence of political art and propaganda in the streets of Mexico City is not a new phenomenon. Mexico, in fact, has historically had a popular print culture with a strong graphic tradition. Most citizens have at some point experienced history through images created by printmaker and illustrator José Guadalupe Posada (1852–1913) and printer and editor Antonio Vanegas Arroyo (1852–1917)—the two creative minds responsible for the most prolific popular press in Mexico in the first half of the twentieth century. The tradition of street art in Mexico was also influenced by

the historical visual narratives of the nation and its peoples depicted in the grand murals produced from the early 1920s by the leaders of the Mexican Muralism, namely José Clemente Orozco (1883–1949), Diego Rivera (1886–1957), and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896–1974).

In 1937, the *Taller de Gráfica Popular* (Workshop for Popular Graphic Arts) was formed as an artistic collective with the purpose of raising political awareness by producing graphic art in the form of posters, flyers, prints, newspapers, books, pamphlets, and even banners and signs for political rallies and demonstrations, and distributing them on the streets of Mexico, particularly Mexico City.

OPENING PAGE: Leopoldo Méndez (1902–1969), illustrator. *10 grabados*. Mexico City: 'La Estampa Mexicana', ca. 1950. Print, linocut/offset, 'The rural schoolteacher' (35 x 47 cm). **THIS PAGE, TOP** Alberto Beltrán (1923–2002), illustrator. "Campaña contra analfabetismo"/"Campaign against illiteracy". Mexico City: Taller de Gráfica Popular, ca. 1950. Poster, linocut illustration (60 x 50 cm). **THIS PAGE, BOTTOM:** Alberto Beltrán (1923–2002), director. *Ahí va el golpe*. Mexico City: Taller de Gráfica Popular, 1 April 1956. Newspaper, includes illustrations by various TGP members on the tradition of 'calaveras' or skulls as political caricatures (28 x 21 cm).

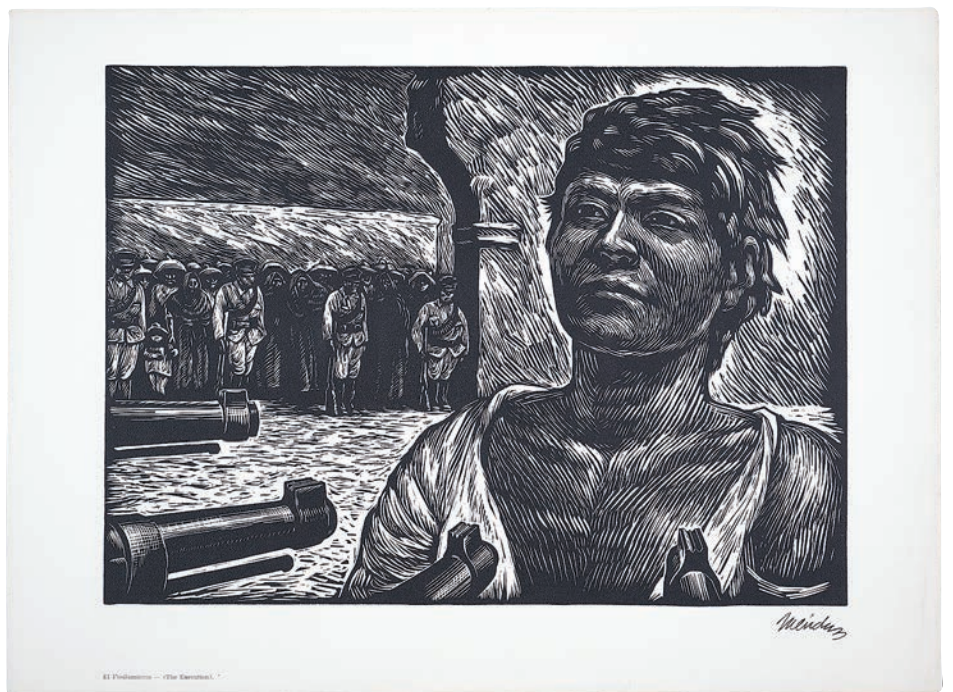
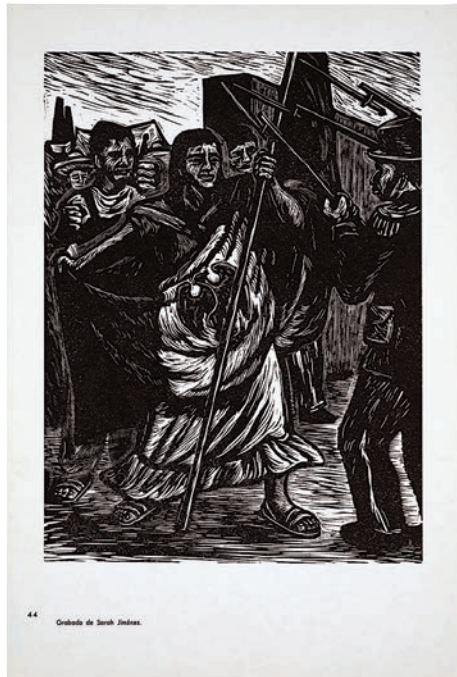
The *Taller de Gráfica Popular*, or TGP, united a generation of Mexican and international artists engaged in communist, socialist, and left-wing movements, and against imperial powers and the rise of fascism globally. The membership of the TGP included renowned graphic artists such as Leopoldo Méndez (1902–1969), Pablo O'Higgins (1904–1983), and Luis Arenal (1908–1985), among dozens of other artists who cycled in and out of the collective in the next few decades. Today, the TGP is the oldest militant artistic collective in operation in Latin America and its production serves as a prime example of graphic and print culture that supports the values of social and racial justice, human rights movements, and progressive organizations aiming to give a voice and a vision to the common struggles of the people in the region.

The design, printing, and distribution of graphic material issued by the TGP was the product of intense collaboration and conflict among its members, a practice which had visible effects in the aesthetic qualities of the artistic output of the collective. The catalogue of illustrated works by members of the TGP consists primarily of prints made from linoleum blocks in one or two colours, followed by specimens of woodcut, wood engraving, lithograph, and offset prints.

The Fisher Library has recently acquired a significant collection of material produced by various members of the TGP from the 1930s until the 1980s, including posters, flyers, newspapers, prints, books, and pamphlets. This new collection will support research and learning in multiple disciplines—and not only in the history of the graphic and print cultures, but also investigations into the role of graphic and book arts in the history of revolutions and political movements in Latin America in the twentieth century, including movements concerned with Indigenous rights, popular education, union and labour organizations, feminist groups, agrarian and land reforms, and the nationalization of natural resources. The highlighted collection of TGP works provides a glimpse into this remarkable collection of 'images for the people', many of which were removed directly from walls or collected by individuals from all walks of life passing through the streets of Mexico City.



BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Sarah Jiménez (1927–2017), illustrator. *Lucrecia Ortiz, in 450 años de lucha: Homenaje al pueblo mexicano*. Mexico City: Taller de Gráfica Popular, 1960. Print number 44 in this TGP portfolio, linocut illustration on important historical figure of the Mexica Revolution (40 x 27 cm). | Jesús Escobedo (1918–1978), illustrator. *En México es la Revolución la que reforma y transforma*. Mexico City: Plataforma de profesionales mexicanos, 1968. Pamphlet, cover illustration by a TGP member (21 x 14 cm). | Ángel Bracho (1911–2005), illustrator. *¡Victoria! Destrucción total del fascismo/Victory! Total destruction of fascism*. Mexico City: Taller de Gráfica Popular, 1945. Poster, lithograph in two colours, printed in celebration of the Allied victory in WWII.



ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Adolfo Mexiac (1927–2019), illustrator. *CTM 1886–1966: Por la emancipación de México/CTM 1886–1966: For the emancipation of Mexico*. Mexico City: Taller de Gráfica Popular, 1966. Poster, linocut in two colours, printed in celebration of the foundation of the Confederation of Mexican Workers in 1966. | Leopoldo Méndez (1902–1969), illustrator. *10 grabados*. Mexico City: 'La Estampa Mexicana', ca. 1950. Print, linocut/offset, 'The execution' (35 x 47 cm).



NEDIM SÖNMEZ AND THE ART OF MARBLED PAPER

Andrew Stewart

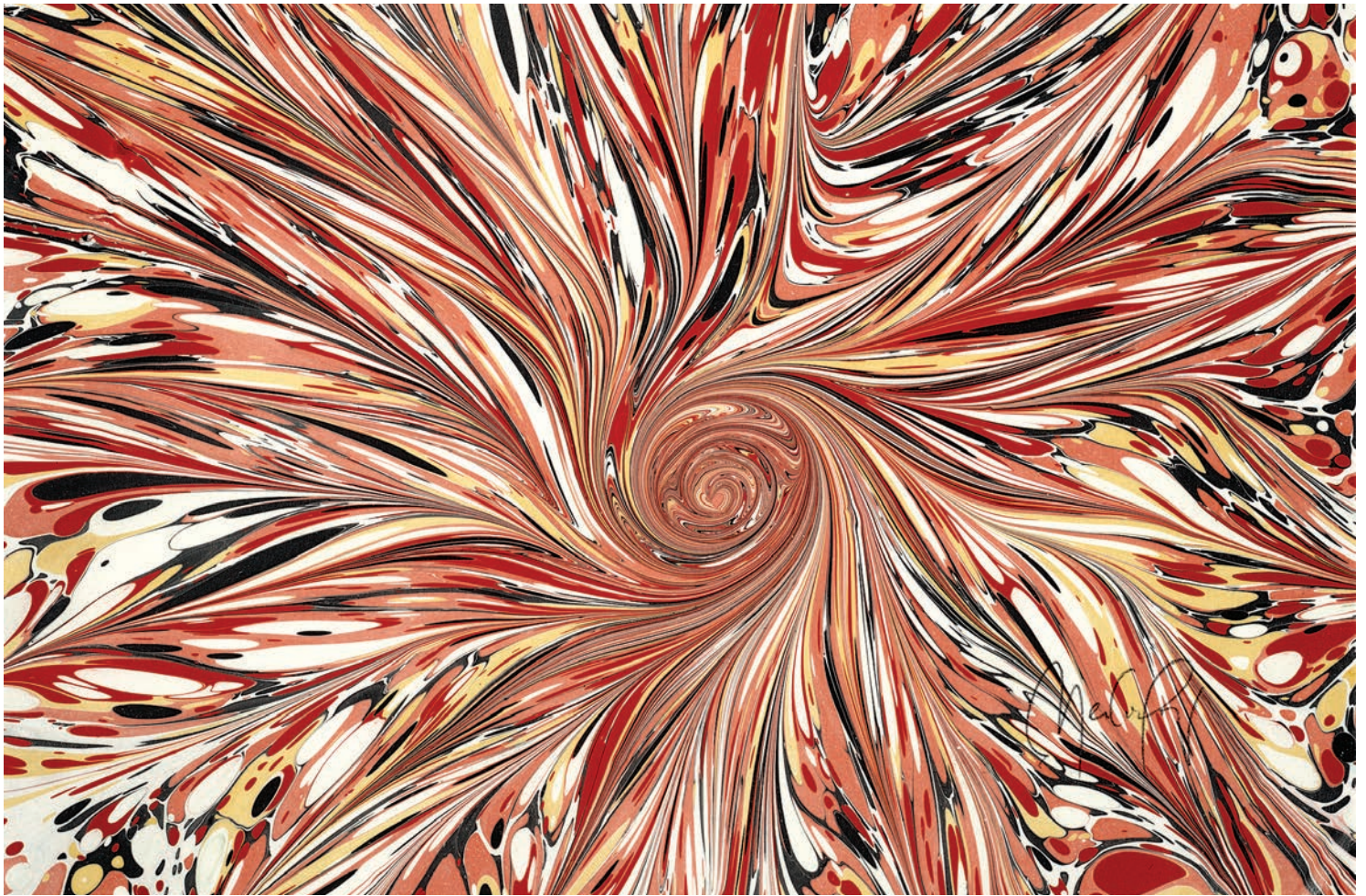
Reading Room Coordinator, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

THIS PAST YEAR the Fisher Library acquired a collection of eighteen artist books dealing with marbled endpapers, the majority from the artist Nedim Sönmez (1957–). Sönmez is a Turkish-German artist and historian who focuses on marbled paper—in particular, the Turkish Ebru form of marbling—and the relationship and history of marbled paper production between the Ottoman- and German-speaking worlds. Ebru paper, which originated in Turkey, was first transported to Europe via travelers to Istanbul in the 1570s, with the techniques used to produce it reaching Europe at the end of the sixteenth century. Early examples of Ebru papers are

often found in contemporary European *album amicorum*, or books of friends. The Turkish origin of this art form was largely forgotten in the seventeenth century, and rather than being known as *Türkisches Papier* it became known as *Marmorpapier* (German for marbled paper) and was regarded as a European art. Sönmez's work elucidates these links between the Ottoman and German-speaking worlds in his sample books that explain the history of marbled paper while providing examples of the various papers under discussion. He also creates artist books that take Ebru marbling from a beautiful but mostly unseen decoration in the endpapers of books and places it front-and-centre as a

versatile medium capable of conveying a depth of artistic expression.

As Sönmez points out, Ebru marbling is one of the few early modern decorated paper techniques that survive to the present day. The artist mixes water and pigment with a natural gum, called *kitre*, which produces a dye. The dye is then added to a cellulose solution and an awl is used to manipulate the colours into the desired design. After this process is complete, the artist then places a sheet of paper carefully on top to transfer the design and sets it aside to dry. The result of this process has graced the endpapers of books from the earliest days of book and binding production.



This collection of works by Sönmez falls into two categories: books that explore the origins and timeline of the transmission of marbled paper from the Middle East to Europe and books in which he explores the paper's artistic possibilities. In his work *Turkish Ebru Patterns* (2002), he and Nuran Sönmez recreated extant specimens of marbled paper dating from its earliest known origins in late sixteenth century Istanbul to the twentieth centuries. They used original methods and materials, substituting only what was either dangerous, as in the case of auripigment (arsenic yellow), or prohibitively expensive, such as lapis lazuli for blue pigments. For example, the authors recreated Ebru paper from the album of George Ringler, who visited Istanbul in 1581. Using both original materials and techniques, they discovered during experimentation that, rather

than using the customary wooden stick, the original artists had used their bare hands to achieve this pattern.

While Sönmez's artist books explore the history and trajectory of marbled paper, they are more concerned with pushing the format further, using new methods to reinvigorate and reimagine traditional forms and patterns. In an example from *Spirals in Marbling* (2008), he explores the artistic possibilities of the snail pattern of marbling, a technique where pigment is swirled with a stick or comb to produce spiral forms.

Finally, Sönmez adopts a more painterly approach to marbling in works such as his *Under the Surface* (2009), where he seeks to capture living creatures in their natural underwater environment, using marbling to mimic their unique forms of movement.

These works are a sampling of the many beautiful examples of marbled paper contained within these newly acquired books. They provide fascinating and valuable insight into the ways marbled paper was transmitted from the Middle East to Europe, and the ways in which this art form has evolved. They also show the myriad ways in which the traditional forms of Ebru marbling can be adapted and altered for modern artistic expression. These books join the works of other artists of marbled papers such as Robert Wu and Karle Frigge, which are already held at the Fisher Library, and will provide scholars interested in the book arts, book history, and the transmission of ideas, with samples of marbled paper as lovely as they are informative.



TO LEARN MORE about how to support the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library through gifts of materials, donations or a provision through your will please contact the library advancement office to confirm the nature of your gift. We will be in touch with you regarding recognition, should you wish to join our list of distinguished Heritage Society donors or remain anonymous.

For more information please contact Anna Maria Romano at 416-978-3600 or visit <http://donate.library.utoronto.ca>.

Thank you!

EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS 2022

EXHIBITIONS 2022

Exhibition Location and Hours

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
120 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario

Hours will be announced online at a later date.

Please visit our website for updated information.

6 September to 20 December 2022

Certain Worthy Manuscripts: Medieval Books in the Fisher Library



This exhibition aims to bring the medieval world to life by drawing on the many treasures from the period to be found in the Fisher Library. It will celebrate the medieval book, and the medieval written word more generally, in all its variety in terms of both subject matter and physical form. Included will be books on topics from religion to science and history to the law and in formats from the codex to the charter to the tally stick.

EVENTS 2022

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

120 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario

Some events may take place online.



Saturday 10 September 2022 • 10 AM–5 PM

Fisher Small and Fine Press Fair

The Fisher Library will again be hosting some of Canada's finest book makers and book artists when it opens its door for the 2022 Fisher Small and Fine Press Fair. A biennial event since 2013, this year's event will feel extra special as we welcome visitors through our doors once again.

Friends of Fisher Lectures

The fall Friends of Fisher lectures are still being finalized. Please visit the News & Events sections of our website and our social media channels for information on the scheduling.

EDITORS' NOTE

This issue was edited by Nadav Sharon, John Shoesmith, Loryl MacDonald, and Maureen Morin, and designed by Maureen Morin. Comments and/or suggestions should be sent to:

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The Halcyon: The Newsletter of the Friends of The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library is published twice a year in June and December. *The Halcyon* includes short articles on recent noteworthy gifts to and acquisitions of the Library, recent or current exhibitions in the Library, activities of the Friends, and other short articles about the Library's collections.

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