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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

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NEW PURCHASES ENRICH THE COLLECTIONS

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THE FALL ISSUE of *Halcyon* traditionally includes an overview of gift-in-kind donations received the previous year but I wanted to take an opportunity in this summer issue to focus on recent material purchased for the collection. We have been fortunate this year in being able to draw on funds from a variety of sources to buy significant items, as the opportunity arose. In addition to our usual rare book funds, we received support from both the central library

collection development budget, and the Friends of Fisher fund to enable us to purchase outstanding items. We are also fortunate to have a number of endowments for particular subject areas, such as the Collard Canadiana fund, the Michael Walsh Philosophy fund, and special funds set up in memory of James Robert de Jager Jackson and Richard Landon. Important acquisitions in the History of Medicine continue to be supported by grants from Associated Medical Services, and this

year we also secured a grant from the Donner Foundation. These special funds make it possible for us to seize the opportunity to purchase important items, as they come on the market. Graham Bradshaw, Pearce Carefoote, Ksenya Kiebusinski and Barry Walfish are contributing articles to this issue on purchases in their areas of specialization but I will give an overview of several other highlights of the year.

Michael Walsh is known to all readers of *Halcyon* as one of our most important donors

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OPENING PAGE: Satirical broadside targeting Lord Bute. **BELOW, LEFT TO RIGHT:** The petition sent to Queen Anne by the Hudson's Bay Company, 1710; cover of *Summa theologiae*, ca 1474.

and his philosophy books, gifted to us over many years, are housed in the Fisher Library in a named collection. In 2011 Michael set up a new fund for the benefit of acquisitions in philosophy, which has made it possible for us to acquire a number of early works to add to the Walsh collection. The first of these was a rare first edition of Francisco Suarez's massive and highly influential work *Tractatus de legibus* published in 1612, which outlines the principles of natural and international law. Thomas Aquinas has always been a strong focus at the Fisher Library, and the Walsh fund has allowed us to add two more incunable editions—the 1498 folio edition of *Opuscula*, Thomas Aquinas's collected minor works, and the 1474 edition of the third part of *Summa theologiae* in a contemporary binding.

Professor Heather Jackson set up a fund in memory of her husband, James Robert de Jager Jackson, which provided the means for us to purchase literary items in his area of interest, namely the literature of the romantic period. We were able to purchase a number of works for the collections, including items listed in Jackson's *Romantic Poetry by Women*, such as the first edition of the poems of Mary Leadbeater, which is one of the major books of Romantic poetry by an Irishwoman. Another important addition is a scarce collection of verse pieces by a female domestic servant, Frances Greensted, published for the author in 1796, which was sold by subscription in the hope of raising money to support an aged and infirm parent.

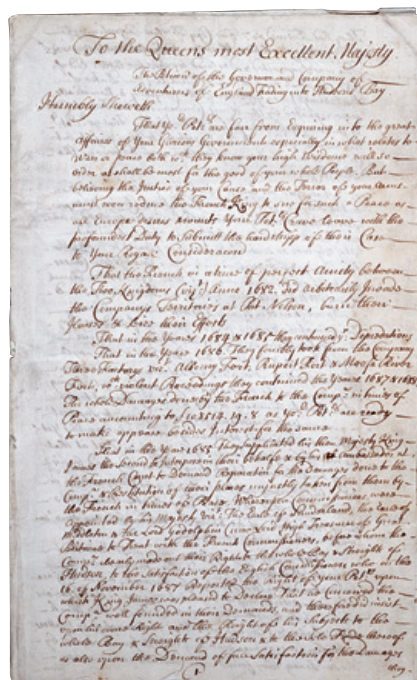
Those of you who have seen our press release on the edition of Vesalius on deposit at Fisher, which contains his own annotations, will know that Vesalius is an active area of interest for us right now, as we are preparing a major exhibition to mark the 500th anniversary of his birth in 2014. This year, with support from the AMS grant and other sources, we were able to purchase the first edition of one of the rarest publications by Vesalius, known as the venesection letter of 1539, in which he broke with tradition and advocated a new procedure for letting blood based on his own knowledge of the anatomy of the venous system, as well as an edition of Vesalius's first work, a translation of the ninth book of the Persian physician al-Razi's *Almansorem* contained in the 1544 edition of al-Razi's complete works.

One of the major areas of focus for acquisitions at Fisher is Canadiana, both historical and literary. This year's purchases document significant historical events, from a 1608 Parisian imprint that pertains to the fur

trade, to a rare wanted poster issued during the October crisis in 1970. Julien Peleus was a Parisian lawyer and historiographer to Henry IV. His collection of jurisprudence was first published in 1602, and the Fisher Library already had a copy of the 1606 edition, one of the many volumes donated by Ralph Stanton. The 1608 edition is notable in that it includes an account of a 1607 court case concerning fur trading rights in New France brought by Pierre Du Gua, sieur de Mons against his partner's nephew, Daniel Boyer, who was caught trading illegally. De Mons was an explorer and fur trader who was also the founder of the first permanent settlement in Canada. Under the privilege granted him by Henry IV to trade in furs, he had a trading monopoly that he successfully protected in this court case. De Mons's travels in New France spanned the years 1604–1617, often in the company of Samuel de Champlain. The 1608 edition is extremely scarce, with only two other copies located. Another item pertaining to the early fur trade which we were fortunate to acquire is a manuscript petition dated from the Hudson's Bay Company to Queen Anne dated 1710 in which the company outlines the French aggressions against their forts, and notes that if the French are allowed to continue their actions, the territory will be lost to Great Britain. Several years later the petition was successful and the region was

restored to the Hudson's Bay Company as part of the Treaty of Utrecht.

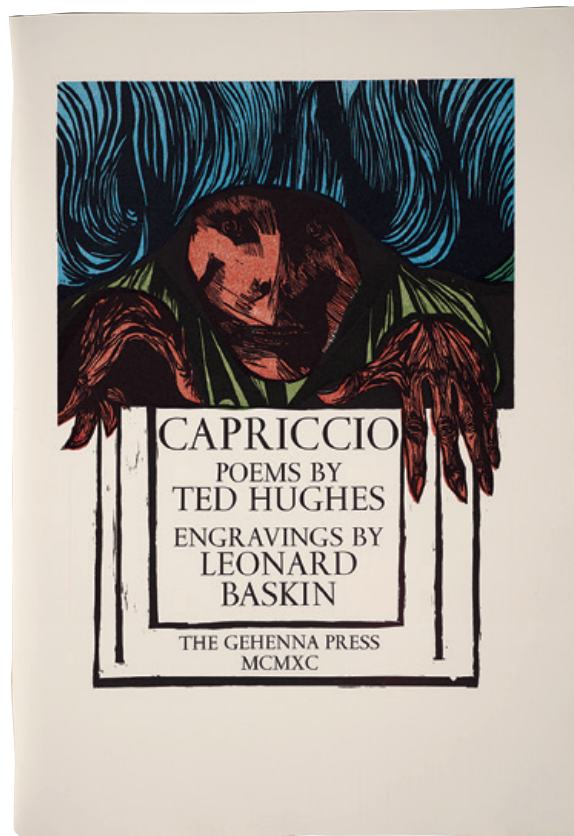
On the brink of the centenary of the First World War it is interesting to look to the mid-eighteenth century at another major war that had a huge global impact, the Seven Years' War. The conflict mainly affected Europe and North America, but also parts of the Caribbean, Africa, India and the Philippines. The principal antagonists were Great Britain allied with Hanover on one side, and France and Spain on the other. One of the new purchases is a French text published in Amsterdam and Leipzig in 1755 which outlines the report of the Commissioners appointed by both sides of the dispute to determine the boundaries of the French and English claims in eastern North America. Portugal was allied with Great Britain and there were ten pamphlets reporting events of the war published in Lisbon in the 1750s. We were able to add to our already strong Portuguese holdings by purchasing three more of these extremely rare pamphlets. The first describes a battle fought off the coast of Cape Breton in June 1755, the second prints the text of a letter dated September 1755 from a Frenchman in Paris to a friend in Lisbon giving details of the fleet being prepared to sail to North America, and the third is the first published account of the capture of Fort Bull in central New York by the French commander Chaussegros de Léry



in March 1756. Two related items purchased this year further strengthen holdings in this area. A sermon preached by James Townley in London before the Lord Mayor, the aldermen and the livery companies to celebrate 'the defeat of the French army in Canada, and the taking of Quebec' is an example of the many sermons delivered on this occasion. The Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War in 1763, is satirized in a coloured broadside in which the main target is British Prime Minister Lord Bute. Personally unpopular as a Scot, Lord Bute was harshly criticized for supporting peace negotiations that resulted in portions of lands already conquered being returned to Spain and France.

P.J. Carefoote in his article on the Luther pamphlet in this issue makes the case for the importance of pamphlets as a genre, and I believe that broadsides fall into this same category. Three extremely rare Canadian broadsides spanning three different centuries purchased this year are worthy of note. The earliest is a 1752 printed list of the goods offered for sale by the Jewish firm of Nathans and Hart in Halifax, which is one of the earliest Canadian imprints, existing in a single copy, now in the Fisher collection. The second is an 1837 broadside issued by the Toronto Patriot newspaper reviewing the events of William Lyon Mackenzie's uprising in early December 1837, including the encounter at Montgomery's Tavern and Mackenzie's escape to the United States. The third is a bilingual wanted poster issued by the Sûreté du Québec during the October crisis, offering a reward of \$75,000 to be paid jointly by the governments of Canada and Quebec 'for information leading to the arrest of the kidnappers or murderers of Mr. Pierre Laporte', with portraits of FLQ members Francis Simard, and Jacques and Paul Rose.

Endowments and other special funds are vitally important in our work to build outstanding research collections. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the antiquarian booksellers of the world, especially those few still remaining in Canada who locate these treasures and offer them for sale. Scarce items such as the broadsides rarely appear on the market and when they do we need to act quickly. Being able to draw on designated funds for special purchases makes that possible, and we are most grateful to the Friends of Fisher and to the individual donors and foundations for their generous support.



PURCHASED FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTOR: AN AMERICAN PRIVATE PRESS CALLED GEHENNA

Graham Bradshaw
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

“**A**ND BLACK GEHENNA call'd, the type of Hell.” This line from Milton's *Paradise lost* gave the name to the Gehenna Press, one of the most important, long-lived and prolific American private presses of the twentieth century. The founder and creative and intellectual force behind the press was Leonard Baskin (1922–2000), the noted sculptor, artist, printmaker and book illustrator, whose work can be found in numerous galleries, libraries and private collections throughout North America. Established in 1942 by Baskin while he was studying art at Yale University, the press published over one hundred titles of textual, artistic and bibliographical significance during its more than fifty years' existence. The majority of these titles were illustrated with Baskin's own highly distinctive, often grotesque, and always intriguing images of the human form, birds of prey, fanciful creatures and ferocious insects. It was while browsing in the library stacks at Yale

that Baskin came across the works of William Blake, which inspired in him “a burning desire” to learn how to print. Striking up a friendship with a printer on campus, Baskin gained access to both a Chandler & Price foot-treadle press and Caslon type, with which he printed a book of his own poetry; thus the Gehenna Press was born. After having taught himself the exacting technique of wood engraving, the second title from the press, *A Little Book of Natural History*, which included a series of engravings on linoleum and wood executed by Baskin, appeared in 1951. As Baskin commented, it was odd that the first book he published was without images and the second had no words. From these relatively modest beginnings, the Gehenna Press would evolve into a private press that produced highly sophisticated works, many printed in very small editions, using a variety of elegant typefaces and textured, hand-made papers, bound in cloth, vellum or leather or issued in boxes and portfolios, and

OPENING PAGE: Title page from Ted Hughes's *Capriccio*. Gehenna Press, 1990. **BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Copperplate etching from *Grotesques*; illustration from *Titus Andronicus*, 1973; engraving from *Castle Street Dogs*, 1952.



frequently containing extra suites of etchings, lithographs or woodcuts. In addition to showcasing Baskin's own artistic talents, other notable artists, such as Ben Shahn, George Lockwood and Rico Lebrun, were commissioned to produce illustrations for the books. The authors represented in these publications were widely varied, ranging from Alcuin, Euripides, Shakespeare, Goethe and Robert Burns, to Thoreau, Dickinson, James Baldwin, Archibald MacLeish, and Anthony Hecht. The themes were equally broad, encompassing the fields of art, literature, politics, the classics, natural history and bibliography.

The Fisher Library was fortunate in being able to purchase an outstanding collection of Gehenna Press material from the American collector, Ronald Cohen. Comprising approximately eighty-five titles, a significant number of books are present in two or three states, often with extra suites of plates; many are signed by Baskin and the other contributors or are presentation copies. Unusually for a private press, Baskin accepted



printing commissions from private individuals and organizations, and the collection contains some two hundred and fifty pieces of ephemera, including posters, menus, broadsides, business cards, bookplates, birth announcements, and invitations to weddings, bar mitzvahs and gallery openings. Four books from the press, randomly chosen, give a sense of the variety of the works now at the Fisher. *Castle Street Dogs*, published in 1952 in an edition of twenty copies, was the fourth title

issued. Baskin and his first wife Esther lived on Castle Street, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Together at this address, they printed a slight but handsome book of eight wood engravings depicting dogs that roamed the street outside their home. *The Wood Engravings of Leonard Baskin* (1961), in contrast, is a far more elaborate work, containing one hundred and eighty-eight images printed in various colours, many having appeared in previous Gehenna Press books. The engravings, varying in size from less than one inch square to fifteen by sixteen inches and contained within a portfolio, provide an excellent overview of Baskin's engraved work to that point. In the early 1970s, Baskin announced his intention to print, over the next decade, the complete tragedies, histories, comedies and poems of William Shakespeare. The first title to be published was *Titus Andronicus*, which appeared in 1973 in an edition of 250 copies, illustrated with twelve etchings and sixteen wood engravings by Baskin. The Fisher copy is specially bound in full leather with a

portrait of the Bard blocked in gold on the front cover, and carries an extra suite of the etchings, each signed by the artist. Sadly, only two titles of the Gehenna Shakespeare saw the light of day, the above-mentioned *Titus*, and *Othello*, which came out the same year. According to Baskin, his ambitions for this project were astoundingly greater than his financial means; or as he colourfully expressed it "the press dropped into the pit labelled 'hubris typographicus'...it [the enterprise] was an expensive fiasco." The final example is taken from the press's last decade. In *Grotesques*, for which Baskin also wrote a long essay on the history and nature of the grotesque, the stunning illustrations are organized into five subject sections: Birds; Imps & Punchinellos; Arabesque & Moresque; Insects; and Beings. The majority of the forty-eight copperplate etchings are printed in colour.

Taken as a whole, the output of the Gehenna Press represents both one man's passion for the printed text and a medium for his intellectual and artistic aesthetic. In his assessment of the work of the press, Colin Franklin, the bibliographer and antiquarian bookseller, remarked that the 'focus of a private press tends to be upon typography or illustration or text, but Gehenna has explored them all and excelled in each.'





IN PRAISE OF THE PAMPHLET: PURCHASING THE EPHEMERAL

P. J. Carefoote

Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

OVER THE NEXT few years, a minor battle will be renewed between book and church historians over the role of the book in the Reformation. The year 2017 will mark five hundred years since Martin Luther (1483–1546) nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of Wittenberg Castle church, initiating one of the greatest social revolutions ever seen in the Western world. There will be some scholars who will boldly assert that his Reformation could never have occurred without the invention of the printing press some seventy years before; there will be others who will firmly maintain that the appearance of the printed word was but one factor in a highly complicated movement that equally involved preaching, popular songs, and peer pressure. The truth, as always, is likely somewhere in between these two poles of opinion.

One point, however, is incontrovertible: Luther himself saw the immense value of harnessing the power of the press for the evangelical cause. Later in his life, during one of his famous “Table Talks”, he is recorded as

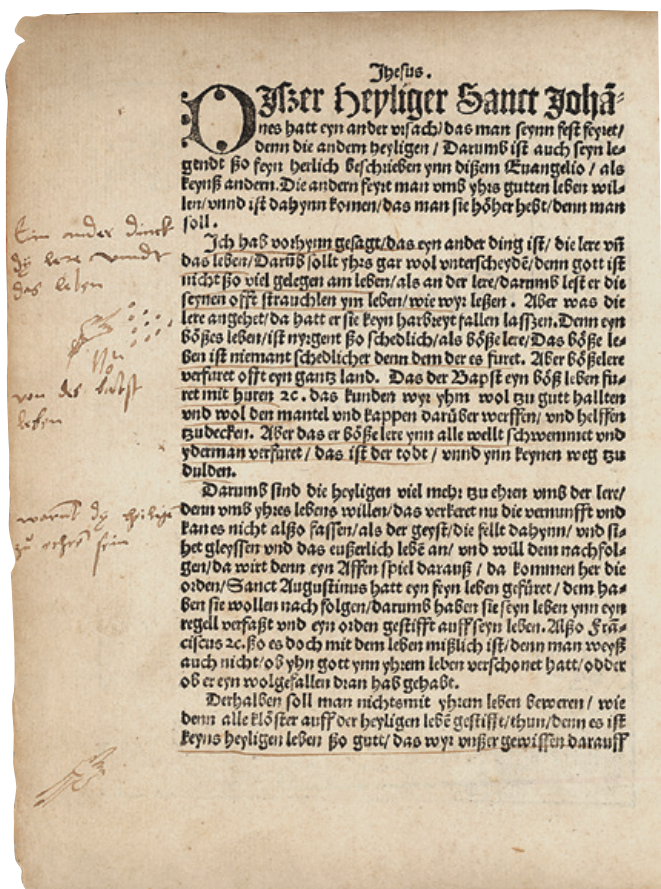
saying that “printing is God’s ultimate and greatest gift. Indeed through printing God wants the whole world, to the ends of the earth, to know the roots of true religion and wants to transmit it in every language. Printing is the last flicker of the flame which glows before the end of this world.” Other Protestants, including the great martyrologist John Foxe (1517–1587), heartily agreed and took full advantage of the relatively new invention. Thus, in the decade from 1520 to 1530, Protestant printing outstripped Catholic by a ratio of five to one. It was not until the end of the sixteenth century that a Catholic press grew in strength and influence, principally under the auspices of the Jesuit order.

When one thinks of the great printed works of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation there is a tendency to focus on weighty tomes of extraordinary gravity: Luther’s German Bible, Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, and Bellarmine’s *Disputationes* to name but three. Often overlooked in the discussion, however, is the role of the humble pamphlet that developed as a separate literary genre at

this time in response to the immediate needs of the reformers themselves. As John Flood noted in 1998, “the ‘brief, blunt, vulgar’ Reformation pamphlet intended for a wide but often unsophisticated and sometimes confused readership became a major tool of those who sought to change the religious loyalties of large numbers of people.” Unlike books, which could take weeks and months to print, pamphlets could be prepared and printed in a matter of days, and distributed easily by the German ancestors of chapmen at relatively cheap prices. They were also reprinted by less than honourable printers without the assent or involvement of the authors, making them even more widely available.

About seven million pamphlets were printed in the first decade of the Reformation alone, and more than a quarter of these originated from Luther’s own pen, making him by far and away the most popular author in this form of literature. The pamphlet was not merely a neutral vehicle for the dissemination of information; in fact, it actually helped to excite the controversies of the period itself.

OPENING PAGE: Title page of *Eyn Sermon D. Martini Luthers*, Wittenberg: 1522. **BELOW:** Opening part of Luther's sermon with contemporary annotations.



Given their essentially ephemeral character, they are especially worthy of being collected and preserved whenever they become available. When the listing of an early Luther pamphlet in the catalogue of an antiquarian bookseller in England came to our attention, we acted immediately to purchase it for the collection.

The Fisher Library is committed to acquiring material in ephemeral formats. In our stacks are vast holdings of pamphlets dating from the period of the Reformation through

hagiography generally associated with them. The Fisher copy has contemporary annotations, underlining, as well as manicules pointing out the salient features of the homily, while the printed coat of arms of Wittenberg on the decorative woodcut title page bears witness to the fact that the city had been both Luther's champion and defender almost from the beginning of his controversial career as a reformer.

Besides this sermon, the Fisher also owns two other contemporary pamphlets by Luther:

to the present day. The pamphlet we purchased in February of this year is particularly representative of those early controversies that gave birth to the pamphlet form itself: *Eyn Sermon D. Martini Luthers*, printed anonymously at Wittenberg (in fact, by Johann Rhau-Grunenberg) in 1522. Only five copies are recorded in public institutions, none of them in North America. The six-page sermon was preached on the feast of St John the Baptist, 24 June 1522, and reveals a Luther who is still conflicted about the meaning of traditional Catholic piety. On the one hand, he affirms the possibility of the intercession of the saints (a position he will reverse in the following year), but on the other, he argues that the teachings of the saints are vastly more important than the legends and

his *Iudicium D. Martini Lutheri, de Erasmo Roterodamo* (ca. 1523), and *Ermanunge zum Fride auff die zwelff Artickel der Bawrschafft ynn Schwaben* (1525). The former is a brief letter, indicative of the strained relationship that already existed between Luther and Erasmus, even before their debate over the doctrine of the freedom of the will that would occur in 1524 and 1525. The latter pamphlet is Luther's response to the "Twelve Articles of the Swabian League" and the Peasants' Revolt of 1525 and 1526, in which he reminds the people that the principles of reform do not justify the adoption of violent means to achieve a better world. A third pamphlet from the Fisher collections, *Anzeigung und Bekantnus des Glaubens unnd der lere* (1530), is the earliest printed German edition of the Augsburg Confession, outlining the basic tenets of the new Lutheran faith. Although the emperor, Charles V, had forbidden its publication without his express permission, the forty-six-page tract was printed even before the Diet of Augsburg was concluded.

All four of these pamphlets reflect the fact that this new literary genre not only addressed the religious problems of the day, but also the philosophical, economic, and political. Generally printed in the vernacular, their brief format ensured both their popularity and easy dissemination. While copies of hardbound humanist and Reformation-era books survive in greater numbers (including the late medieval *Imitatio Christi* and the *Ecclesie anglicane trophaea*, both purchased by the Fisher in the past year), they have somewhat skewed our perception of their influence. As significant as such weighty tomes might be, there can be no doubt that humble pamphlets, such as those the Fisher continues to acquire, were key to guaranteeing the wide-ranging changes that Luther and his contemporaries laboured so hard to achieve.



UP FOR AUCTION: AN ILLUMINATED HEBREW MANUSCRIPT JOINS THE FRIEDBERG COLLECTION

Barry Dov Walfish
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

WITH THE INVENTION of the printing press and the possibility of printing many copies of the same book in a relatively short amount of time, with reasonable accuracy, and at a much lower cost, one would have expected the market for manuscripts to dry up. But, this was not the case in the Jewish community. Though Jews embraced the printing press and began printing books in Italy and Spain in the fifteenth century (some 150 Hebrew incunables are recorded), the manuscript tradition was not abandoned. Torah scrolls, Esther scrolls, *tefillin* (phylacteries), and *mezuzot* (door amulets) are still produced today pretty much as they always have been by professional scribes (*sofrim*). Besides these ubiquitous ritual objects, scribes also produced a number of other works by hand, among them Esther scrolls for private use, marriage contracts (*ketubbot*), Passover *haggadot*, personal prayer books, miniature books of blessings for women, Grace after meals, books for circumcisers, amulets, Omer

calendars (for counting the days between Passover and Shavuot (Pentecost), guidebooks for holy places, Five Scrolls, *Haftarah* scrolls, and various documents (e.g., for certifying rabbis, circumcisers, slaughterers).

While the most impressive and sophisticated illuminated manuscripts were produced in the Middle Ages, in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, the work of illumination and decoration of manuscripts continued through the eighteenth century and beyond, mainly in Italy, where decorated marriage contracts were very popular, but also in German-speaking lands—Germany, Austria, Bohemia and Moravia. In these latter countries, the rise of a Jewish bourgeoisie led to wealthy Jews ordering illuminated manuscripts for their personal use. The scribes and illuminators usually came from Bohemia and Moravia, generally from poor backgrounds, and were able to succeed because of their talents, which were in great demand.

The Fisher Library has recently purchased one such manuscript, along with four other

printed items all previously in the possession of Albert D. Friedberg. It is a miniature of 23 folios, 9 ½ by 6 ½ cm in size, containing various blessings, including Grace after meals, the prayers before retiring at night, the blessing of the New Moon, blessings for beginning a voyage and other occasional prayers. It was written in Fuerth in 1738. Unfortunately there is no colophon that might indicate the identity of the scribe.

The manuscript has eleven illuminations, all in colour. The title page is quite elaborate. The text is flanked by Moses and Aaron, a common motif in printed title pages. Above them are two lions facing each other. Between them is a medallion with the letter *bet-he*, standing for *Barukh ha-shem*, or blessed is God. The text gives a detailed list of the contents and concludes that all of it is written in the font of the press in Amsterdam. Books with Amsterdam imprints were considered the gold standard for printing quality at this time, so scribes would emulate the font in their manuscript productions.

OPENING PAGE: Title page on the right facing “By the Rivers of Babylon” (Ps 137). **BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Rebuild Jerusalem (from the Grace after meals); Blessing the New Moon; Blessing before a sea voyage.

The other illustrations are all tied in with the text and include: a two-headed eagle with a crown in whose belly is the initial word of Psalm 137 “By the rivers of Babylon;” the eagle is probably meant to symbolize exile in Germany where the scribe is working (fol. 2r); a family seated around an empty table, apparently preparing to say Grace after meals (3r); a blurry illustration showing a hangman’s pole, presumably meant for Haman, illustrating the paragraph of the Grace after meals recited on Purim (4r); a large half-page showing a city with towers and a dome, illustrating the text “and rebuild Jerusalem” (6r); an eagle, whose breast displays a medallion containing the initial word “*Viyehi*” (11r); an angel, illustrating the prayer, “The Angel who saves me from all harm,” part of the bedtime liturgy (12v); an

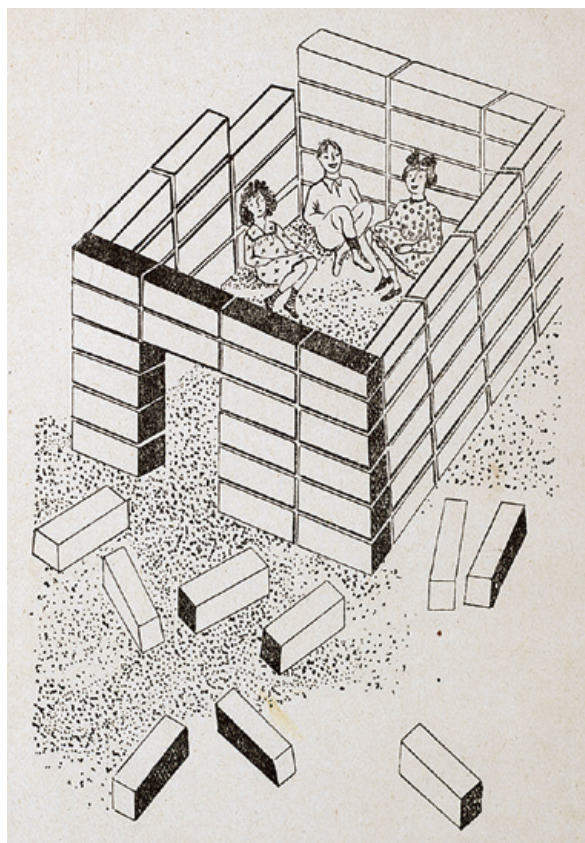
illustration for the prayer for blessing the new moon: a group of men and youth all wearing black berets stand together outside in an open space to bless the new moon which can be seen in the sky; one of them holds an open prayer book (17r); an illustration for the prayer for the traveller: a man is seated on a horse; two others walk before and behind him (20r); for the prayer for the sea traveller: two ships sailing the sea (21r); a small illustration with text showing a *sukkah* (hut or booth, used on *Sukkot*, the Feast of Booths) with three men standing next to it and a figure sitting inside it, accompanying the prayer for entering the *sukkah* (22v). The text of the prayers is in Hebrew, with the rubrics in Hebrew or Yiddish.

This manuscript, while perhaps not of the high quality of some of the items in the

spectacular Braginsky Collection (a private collection including many works from this period), is nevertheless an important representative of its class. One can imagine it being used and enjoyed by a wealthy Jewish businessman as he went about his daily routine. The illuminations will be profitably studied by art historians and may enable us to identify the illustrator. It is also an important witness to the liturgical rite of Ashkenaz (Germany) in the mid-eighteenth century and will be of interest to students of the history of Jewish liturgy.

We are very pleased to be able to add this important manuscript to the extensive collections previously donated by Albert Friedberg to the Fisher Library.





PURCHASED FROM QUARITCH: BOOK DESIGN OF THE CZECH AVANT-GARDE

Ksenya Kiebuszinski

Petro Jacyk Central & East European Resource Centre

IN 1927, KAREL TEIGE, a leading figure in the Czech avant-garde during the interwar period, and the theorist and spokesperson for the Devětsil group, criticized the book beautiful movement in his essay “Modern Typography.” He found the extravagance of art nouveau archaic and prone to academicism, and its decorativeness eccentric, illogical, and fantastic. All the elements of fine book design associated with Czech modernism led to “the danger of excessive bibliophilia and collectors’ snobbism.” He was reiterating the sentiment of Devětsil, whose original fourteen members, including Teige, declared upon the group’s founding in 1920 that ‘the era has split in two. The old times lie behind us, condemned to rot in libraries, while before us a new day glitters.’

Evidently, Devětsil’s creative program relegated the library and limited, fine-art editions into the realm of the old. Its representatives turned away from the book as a work of art towards conceiving it as a visual creation, wherein the textual component would be integrated into the design. Furthermore, they

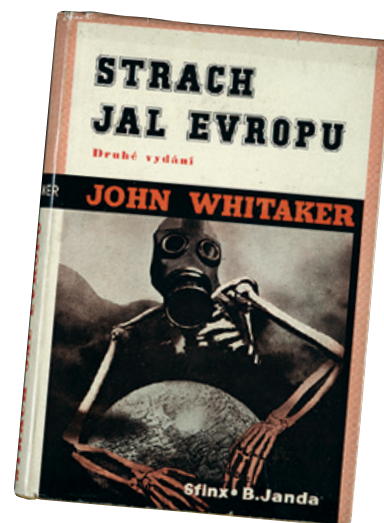
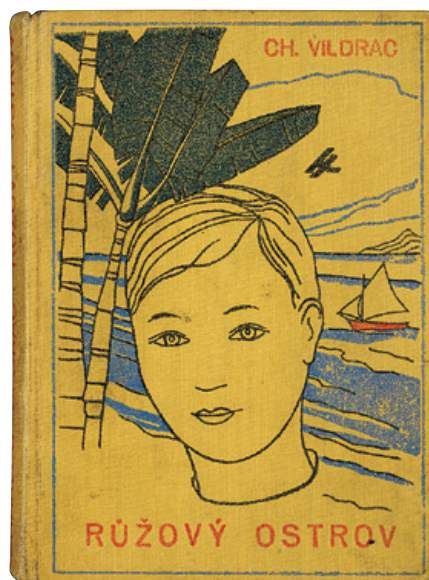
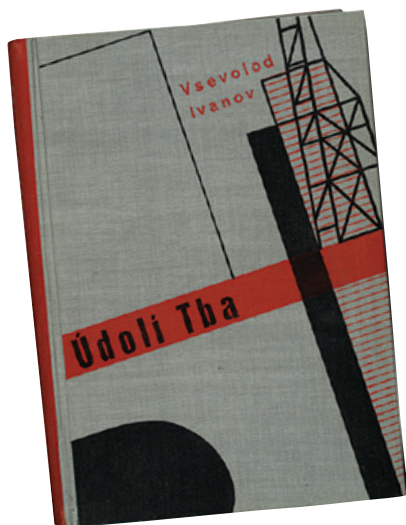
emphasized the social function of the book, its usefulness, its reliance on technology, and the collaboration of graphic artists with the printers. Their books were meant for a mass-market audience, to be in the hands of readers and not bibliophiles, or, apparently, librarians.

It is thus with some irony, but no contradiction, that the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library acquired a remarkable private collection of Czech avant-garde books, thus adding to its strong core collection of some three hundred titles. This new collection of about seventy-five books was purchased from the London-based book dealer Bernard Quaritch in November 2012, with funds from the Josef F. Scheybal Czech Collection Fund. The works, all with decorative cloth covers and/or dust jackets, many of which include eye-catching graphic details and inspiring illustrations, represent, if not the most recognizable, then some of the more unusual examples of book design in Czechoslovakia during the 1920s and 1930s. Their design is characterized by the use of a variety of colours and types; flat, abstract,

geometrical shapes; and photomontage. And, despite Teige’s condemnation of bibliophile editions, many were issued in limited, numbered copies.

Well represented in this collection are experimental works by the art group Devětsil: poet Konstantin Biebl (*Nebo peklo ráj*, 1931); prose writers Karel Konrád (*Rinaldino*, 1927), Karel Schulz (*Sever, Východ, Západ*, 1923), Vladislav Vančura (*Pekař Jan Marhoul*, 1929); artists Adolf Hoffmeister (*Piš jak slyšíš*, 1931), Josef Síma (L. Delluc, *Lidé z baru*, 1925), Karel Teige (V. Ivanov, *Údolí TBA*, 1931), Toyen (C. Vildrac, *Růžový ostrov*, 1930), among others. A number of the books were collaborative ventures, with the text, typography, and cover design involving two to three or more different members of Devětsil. One book is even devoted to an honorary member of the group, Charles Chaplin, and includes a book cover design by Teige and Otakar Mrkvička, and three caricatures by the French artist Fernand Léger (L. Delluc, *Chaplin*, 1924). Chaplin’s membership, as well as that of Douglas Fairbanks and

OPENING PAGE: An illustration by Toyen from C. Vildrac, *Růžový ostrov*, 1930. **BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** V. Ivanov, *Údolí Tba*, 1931; C. Vildrac, *Růžový ostrov*, 1930; Czech translation of John T. Whitaker's *Fear came on Europe*, 1937; Václav Mašek's illustration from the first Czech translation of Aleksandr Blok's *Dvenadtsat* (The Twelve).



Harold Lloyd, was mostly symbolic. Still, it was indicative of the far ranging interests of the leftist-oriented group which influenced all areas of the arts—film, theatre, literature, painting, music, architecture, typography, art theory, and criticism.

This artistic association existed for about ten years, until, 1931, when it was dissolved. Its members, during the next decades, explored and experimented with other styles, variously incorporating elements of Constructivism, Surrealism, and Socialist Realism. Two of the more influential members of the Devětsil avant-garde, Jindřich Štyrský and Toyen

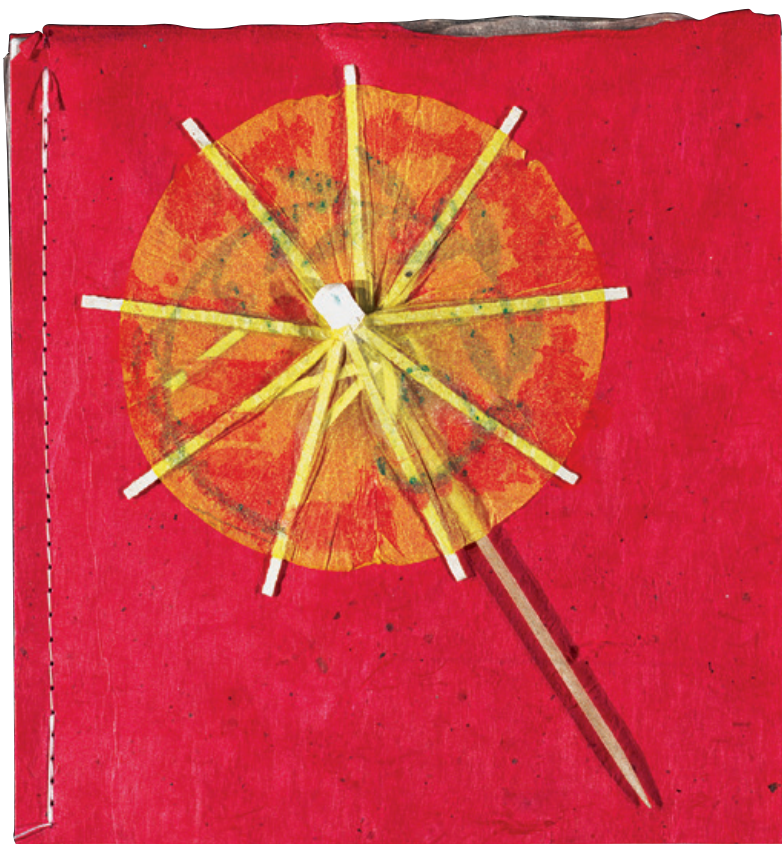
(pseudonym of Marie Čermínová, coined from the French word for citizen “citoyen”), while living together in Paris from 1925 to 1929, went on to develop Artificialism. This style was connected with the synthesis of picture and poem, or “picture poems,” and emphasized the abstract visualization of reminiscences. Later, in 1934, having returned to Prague, the two were founding members of the Czech Group of Surrealists. Among the purchased items in the collection are ten works with book cover designs or illustrations by these two artists. Štyrský’s designs made use of photomontages, such as the covers for the Czech translations of Dhan Gopal Mukerji’s novel *Caste and Outcast* (1932), and John T. Whitaker’s book *Fear came on Europe* (1937). The former depicts a Buddha floating over American skyscrapers; the latter shows a gas-masked skeleton clutching the globe. Toyen’s illustrations are characterized by usually simple, realistic and precise ink drawings, such as those included in the Czech translation of Charles Vildrac’s *L’île rose* (1930). Štyrský analyzing Toyen’s illustrations likened them to an ice cube melted by the sun: “They vanish, becoming invisible as *objects*, so that they might reappear transformed as arabesques and provocative interconnected points, lines, and surfaces.”

Many examples of book covers by František Muzika and graphic designs by Ladislav Sutnar are also present in the collection, as are collaborative designs for translations of works by French and Russian writers.

For Czechoslovakia, situated between the West and the East, Paris and Moscow were important sources of inspiration, and had a fundamental impact on Czech art of the interwar period. By way of the Soviet Union, Czech intellectuals familiarized themselves with post-revolutionary movements. Roman Jakobson served as press attaché at the Soviet Embassy in Prague, and the likes of Ilia Ěhrenburg, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Iurii Tynianov, and others lectured there. To the collections of Fisher Library has been added a number of Czech editions of Mayakovsky’s works, including the translation of his propaganda-art poem *150,000,000* (1945), with illustrations by Václav Mašek. The poem, first published in 1921, is an allegory of a battle between millions of Soviet workers against evil capitalists led by President Woodrow Wilson. Lenin dismissed it as “incomprehensible rubbish.” Mašek also illustrated the first Czech translation of Aleksandr Blok’s *Dvenadtsat* (The Twelve). Blok’s poem, completed in January 1918, describes the march of twelve Bolshevik soldiers just months after the October coup through the streets of Petrograd during a harsh winter’s night.

This wonderful collection of Czech avant-garde books will be properly cared for at the Fisher Library. All are welcome to read, handle, and study the volumes. Many will be on view in an exhibition planned for September 2015 on modern Czech book design.





‘A DEATH GREATLY EXAGGERATED’: THE EVOLUTION OF AN EXHIBITION

John Shoesmith
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

MY INITIAL PLAN when my proposal for an exhibition on the Canadian small and fine press was given the green-light by the Fisher’s exhibition committee two years ago was fairly straight-forward: I wanted to do a thorough and comprehensive historical survey of the small press in Canada. After all, there is a rich history to mine, going back as far as the beginning of the twentieth century, with publications such as *The Sunset of Bon Echo* and *Le Nigog*. The trend continues after the Second World War when a modern Canadian literary voice—the CanLit canon as we know it today—began to emerge through publications like *First Statement* and publishers such as Contact Press, founded by poets Irving Layton, Raymond Souster and Louis Dudek in the early 1950s. They served not only as an inspiration for a generation of Canadian writers, some of whose first books were published by the likes of Contact Press, but also provided a model for other small press publishers. In short, they helped to spawn a flourishing movement that continued into

the 1960s with independent publishers such as Coach House and House of Anansi. An exhibition that examined this history made sense.

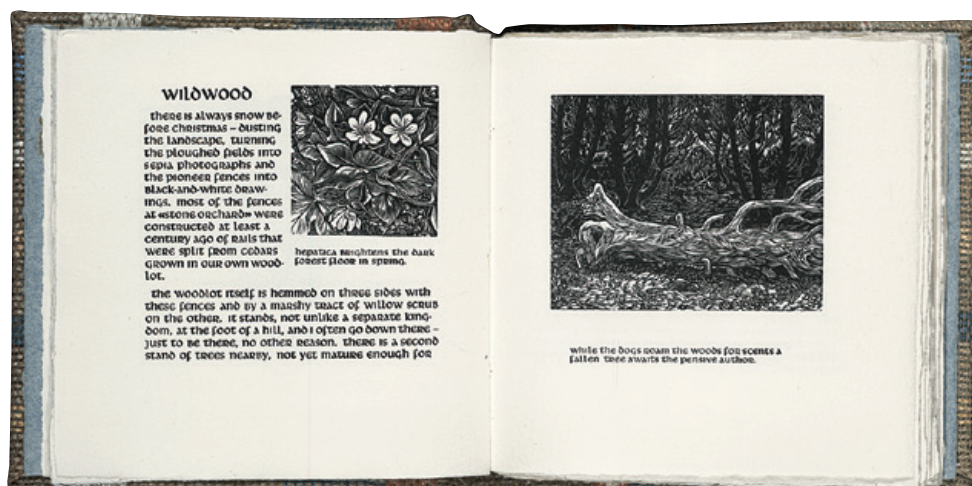
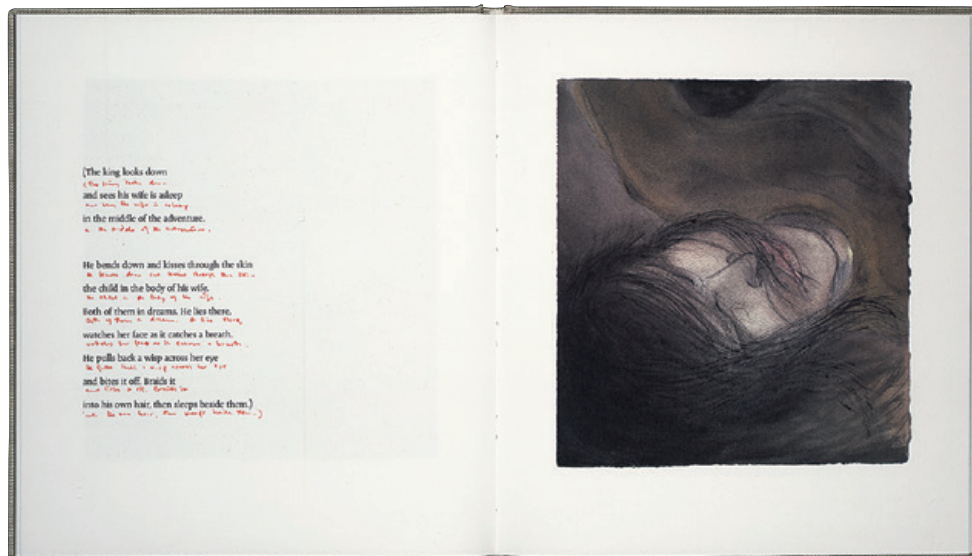
I had already covered much of this territory during research for an assignment as a second-year student at the Faculty of Information Studies (now iSchool), and also in Richard Landon’s rare books class here at the Fisher Library in 2005. Our assignment was to create a virtual exhibition, using previous Fisher exhibitions as models. After some trial and error, I settled on examining the development of the literary small press in Canada, titling my assignment “The small, small, small press in Canada.” Through this assignment, I had a template to work from, and I figured a little extra research here and some tweaking there, my exhibition would be all set to go.

But while that assignment planted the seed, the nature of the exhibition has changed and evolved considerably since. A major consideration factor, lurking in the shadow as I researched and considered what to display,

was the growth of electronic publishing and e-books. The knives seemed to be out for the once-venerable printed book. So-called experts were not giving the physical book much hope for survival, as more and more people gravitated toward their electronic reading devices. It gave me pause: here I was, providing a historical retrospective of the Canadian small and fine press; at the same time the future of the printed book itself was being questioned. So I shifted direction. Instead of simply honouring the past, why not emphasize the present and the future of the printed book through the small press? In other words, celebrate the printed book as it is being produced today. My only concern was whether there was enough material to celebrate.

This fear quickly dissipated, however, as I began to examine the Fisher’s small and fine press holdings. Using the year 2000 as my general cut-off date, I looked at approximately three hundred small press items in our collections from some of this country’s finest, and sometimes tiny and obscure, small press

OPENING PAGE: Cover of Elissa Joy's *Drinking Songs*. Toronto: Pas de Chance, c2004. **BELOW, CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:** Illustration from Ross Lort's *All Creatures Great & Small*. Vancouver: Charles Bradbury, 1931. Michael Ondaatje's *The Story*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, c2004. Timothy Findley's *If Stones Could Speak*. Stratford, Ontario: Pebble Productions, 1999.



publishers. As my faith in the future of the printed book became more assured, I felt emboldened. It was a treat to explore the variety and the creativity of the books from these amazingly talented and dedicated small press publishers, many of whom are books craftspeople of the highest order. How could the physical book die in the face of this lively spirit? Hence, the title, stolen of course from Mark Twain's retort on rumours of his own demise: *A Death Greatly Exaggerated*. The book, particularly in the hands of the small and fine press, is nowhere near close to expiring its final breath.

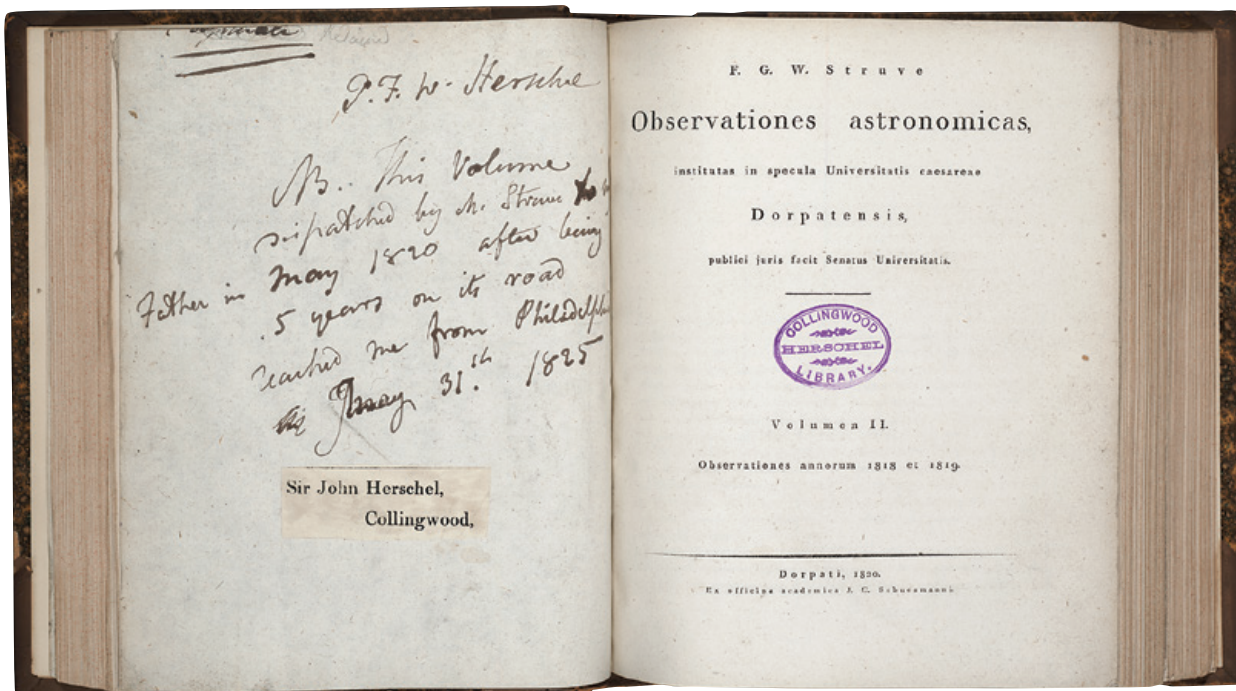
I consider the small press publishers as heroes of a sort. All of them, without exception, are not in it for the financial rewards. Rather they're making books for the love of the craft and for the love of the physical book. I wanted a fairly comprehensive representation, including geographical, of the small and fine press as it exists today in Canada. All the different facets of the contemporary small press community are represented, from almost every region of the country, from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. I begin with the literary presses, both the veterans such as Coach House and House of Anansi, along with the newcomers including Gaspereau Press in Nova Scotia and BookThug in Toronto. From there we move on to illustrated works, such as works by wood-engravers George A. Walker, Gerard Brender à Brandis and Wesley Bates; then on to publishers such as Shanty Bay Press; and finally artists books, where the book's content is often taking a backseat to

the structure and the aesthetics of the book itself. Tony Calzetta's *How God Talks in His Sleep* and Alberta-native Dea Fischer's *River Worn*, which uses photographic images of stone textures found on the banks of the Kootenay River in British Columbia, are two examples selected for the exhibition. The dynamic small and fine press scene in British Columbia is covered, beginning with Mission, BC's Barbarian Press, whose stunning fine press edition of Shakespeare's *The Play of Pericles Prince of Tyre* is an outstanding example. The exhibition then moves on to what I call chapbooks, micropresses, and the self-published. In total, there are over sixty items on display, including small and miniature books, and some stunning broadsides hanging on the wall in the Maclean Hunter Reading Room.

As I point out in the catalogue's introduction, this exhibition is not meant to be *the*

definitive statement of the small and fine press, but instead reflects my own tastes and whims. Many interesting items had to be omitted because of constraints of space, which also points to the richness of the Fisher's small press holdings. We're dedicated to building this collection, to making ourselves the best repository for the small press community. I hope people come away with an appreciation that the printed book, particularly in the hands of the small and fine press community, is truly alive and well, and thriving, here in Canada.

The exhibition, originally scheduled to end on 30 August, is being extended into the first week of September in order to hold a small press fair here at the Fisher. So please join us on Saturday, 7 September where you can take one last look at the exhibition, meet many of the publishers represented in it, and purchase their wonderful books.



EXPLORING SIR JOHN HERSCHEL'S LIBRARY: AN ALUMNUS'S ADVENTURE

Peter Broughton

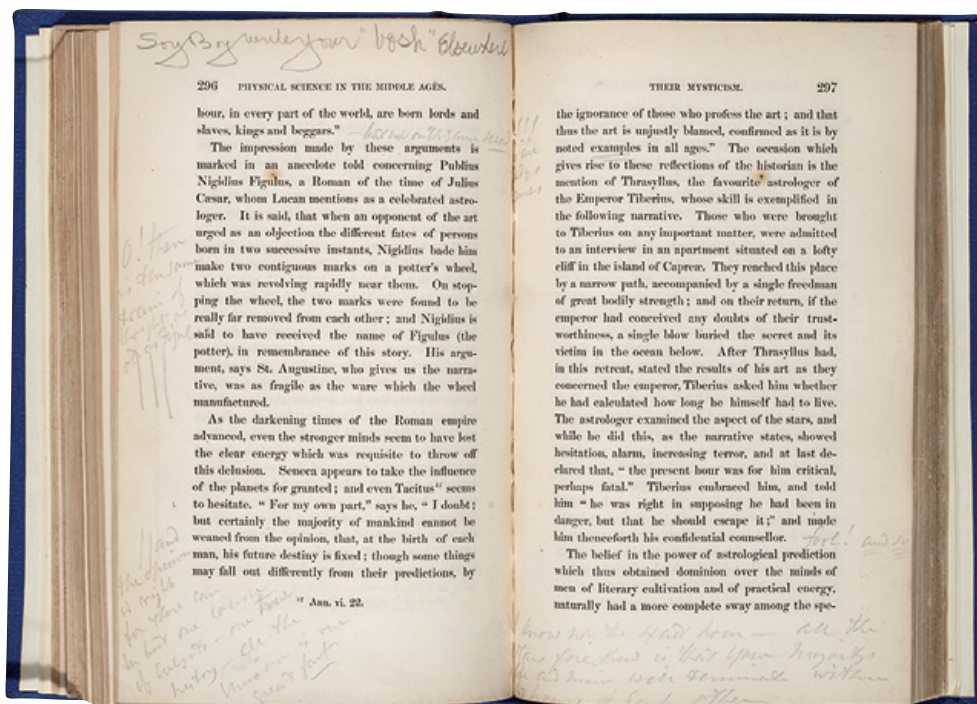
EVER SINCE RECEIVING my BSc fifty years ago this month, I have retained the great privilege of using the University of Toronto libraries. Retained may not be the right word since, as a student in the notorious MPC (maths, physics and chemistry) course, I rarely looked at a library book and used the facilities mainly as a place to work. My classmates and I (so we would claim) were totally immersed in doing problem sets, conducting experiments, writing lab reports, attending lectures and trying to pass tests and exams. It was not until I had been teaching high school for some years and took an MSC course in the history of mathematics from Kenneth O. May that I began to understand the richness and intellectual value of the campus collections. I especially appreciated his organized research methods and began using them to investigate various topics in the history of astronomy, which I found to have a broader appeal than mathematics. Now in retirement, I use the libraries more frequently than ever, as I enjoy research and writing about my specialized interest. While I can appreciate

George Bernard Shaw's point that education is wasted on the young, I also understand that youth is the time to plant seeds even though students (and working adults) are often kept too busy to cultivate their intellectual gardens.

There is scarcely a library on campus that does not have some items of value to those interested in the history of science. A great many primary sources are found in the Gerstein Science Information Centre which houses over a million volumes of journals and books; the periodicals date from the seventeenth century to the present time. The oldest are stored on the lowest level, which I like to think of as Gerstein's continually expanding catacombs, as journals that were once current are interred with their ancestors. This process necessitates occasional massive reshelving, which explains why, one day in December, 2010, I happened to notice on a book trolley some leather-bound volumes with *Observationes Dorpatensis* on their spines. Dorpat was one of Europe's most renowned astronomical observatories of the nineteenth century, mainly because of the work done

there by one of its early directors, Wilhelm Struve. My interest was aroused because I was preparing a talk about Struve's contemporaries, William Herschel and his son John, Britain's most famous astronomers of the time. I picked up one of the volumes, turned to the title page, and was flabbergasted to see what is shown in the figure above. The information that Struve had sent this very volume to the elder Herschel was contained in a handwritten note by his son, in whose Collingwood library, as the bookstamp evidence showed, the volume had been housed. Too excited to keep this information to myself, I took the volume up to the reference desk to show the librarian, Bonnie Horne, what a treasure was in their collection and to suggest that it might be more appropriate to transfer it to the Fisher Library. Perhaps she already knew that some of Herschel's books were in Gerstein and was too tactful to prick my balloon. Anyway, she apparently appreciated my initiative, for shortly thereafter I was pleased to see that the Dorpat volumes had been moved to the Fisher Library, and, moreover, the Herschel associa-

BELOW: Sir John Herschel's annotations about one's whole life being determined at the moment of birth on pages 296 and 297 of Vol. 1 of Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences*.



tion was now shown in the catalogue record, so that anyone searching on Herschel's name would know of their important provenance.

How, I wondered, could Herschel's books have ended up in Toronto? And what others were there? Surmising that they may have reached the university as a result of an appeal following the great Valentine's Day fire of 1890 which destroyed the university library, I examined old accession ledgers, now held in the University Archives, and found, to my delight, that entry after entry in 1893 showed the provenance, 'Donated by Sir W. Herschel,' i.e., Sir John Herschel's eldest son, William James Herschel, who became the second baronet of Slough on his father's death in 1871. Best known as the inventor of finger-printing, he was primarily a civil servant in India.

Sydney Ross documented the story of the John Herschel's library and its ultimate fate in his *Catalogue of the Herschel Library* in 2001, a copy of which is held at Fisher. John Herschel's complete collection at the family estate of Collingwood at Hawkhurst, Kent, England was catalogued by one of his daughters, Isabella, in 1889 and an annotated transcription forms the main part of Ross's book. As it happened, a University faculty member, William James Ashley (1860–1927) (later knighted for his work as an historian of economics), was heading for England in the summer of 1892 and was able personally to select books from the Herschel library for the University. As Ross tells it, he chose 'a number

of Observatory publications, scientific serials, and miscellaneous books, amounting to 582 bound volumes and two hundred unbound numbers of periodicals'. The accession ledgers in the archives show that the total estimated worth was \$1300 (equivalent to roughly \$100,000 in today's dollars). All were published during Sir John's life, though three of them are early enough to have been in his father's library. The other main academic repository of Herschel's library is the University of Texas, which holds fifty one of his volumes. Nearly all the Herschel volumes in the Toronto accession ledgers can be identified with entries in Ross's catalogue. I resolved to track down as many of the Herschel books at Toronto that I could, and examine them for marginalia. It was not an easy task since multiple copies of many of the titles exist, often in several campus libraries, and so sometimes a number of copies had to be retrieved to find the desired one. Fortunately for future researchers, arrangements are now being made by Anne Dondertman and Philip Oldfield to bring all of Herschel's books and many of his periodicals together at the Fisher Library.

Like most Victorian scientists, Sir John had eclectic interests and that were certainly reflected in his library, which included such diverse fields as philology, philosophy, physiology, and psychology, to take just those beginning with 'P'. Since many of the volumes were donated by their authors, one must be cautious about ascribing them to any

particular interest on Herschel's part. On the other hand, his annotations in several volumes leave no doubt that he read them carefully. I have found about twenty such examples in four campus libraries, in storage and electronically scanned (by Scholars Portal and the Internet Archive). Space here precludes any extensive discussion of these books, or of Herschel's jottings in them, but Charles Babbage's *Ninth Bridgewater Treatise* and William Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences* are two notable examples. The authors, personal friends of John Herschel and members of the influential Cambridge Network, may be familiar to readers as they play principal parts in Laura Snyder's recent and engaging story, *The Philosophical Breakfast Club*. Herschel wrote an extensive critique of Whewell's work for *The Quarterly Review*, which often parallels passages that he highlighted in the Toronto copy. Other annotations in both books give some indication of Sir John's beliefs, especially that one's whole life is determined at the moment of birth. The *Observationes Astronomicae Dorpatensis*, which began my quest, also contains extensive marginalia, particularly in a later volume of the series that contains the work of J. H. Mädler, Struve's successor. John Herschel was always a devoted son and expended much effort in his later years editing his father's double star observations. Naturally he was eager to compare those with measurements of the same objects made by other astronomers, and this motive is abundantly clear in the meticulous care he took to analyse the Dorpat observations and to perform many of the calculations anew. He was scathing in his pencilled criticism of Mädler's work as "abominable carelessness" and "very bad." Ironically, when Sir John finally produced the catalogue of his father's work in 1867, he admitted to 'a somewhat formidable list of errata in the printed catalogue, which I consider it a duty to communicate, apologising, as best I may, for their occurrence, and making the only amends in my power by pointing them out.'

A complete academic paper about Herschel's books at the University of Toronto is planned for *Annals of Science*, coauthored with Gregory Good, who studied at the University's Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science, and who wrote his doctoral dissertation on 1982 on Herschel's optical research. Currently he is Director of the Center for History of Physics, American Institute of Physics.

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We thank all members who wish to remain anonymous.

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Exhibition Hours

9–5, Monday to Friday, year round
9–8, Thursdays only, 19 September–24 April
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
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A Death Greatly Exaggerated: Canada's Thriving Small and Fine Press

30 September to 20 December 2013

'Chevalier du bracelet': George Barbier and his Illustrated Works

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The University of Toronto and WWI

PLANNED EVENTS 2013–2014

All lectures begin at 8:00 p.m. (unless otherwise noted)

Wednesday 25 September 2013

The John Seltzer and Mark Seltzer Memorial Lecture

The Libraries of the National Trust

Mark Purcell, Libraries Curator to the National Trust

Tuesday, 29 October 2013

The Alexander C. Pathy Lecture in the Book Arts

Binding Barbier: Designer Bookbinding in the French Tradition

Robert Wu, Toronto bookbinder and book artist

Monday, 10 March 2014

The Leon Katz Memorial Lecture

Afterlives of Canadian Women Writers

Carole Gerson, Professor, Department of English, Simon Fraser University and Co-Editor, *History of the Book in Canada, Volume 3*

Wednesday, 2 April 2014

The Gryphon Lecture on the History of the Book

The Art of the Late Medieval Manuscript

Alexandra Suda, Assistant Curator, European Art, Art Gallery of Ontario

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Thank you!

Editor's Note

This issue was edited by Philip Oldfield, Anne Dondertman 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.

Queries or corrections for the mailing list or membership list should be addressed to:

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For more information about the Fisher Library, please visit the web site at www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/.

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