

... / 9

on historic repairs to Islamic bindings, Martha Romero on sixteenth century Mexican bindings created under the influence of European styles and techniques, and Sylvie Merian on the significance of cover embellishments for Armenian manuscripts. Three authors focus on early US binding: Consuela Metzger on colonial blankbooks and Julia Miller and John Townsend on mainly eighteenth-century scaleboard (thin wooden) bindings. Jennifer Rosner writes on a short-lived US enthusiasm of the 1850s, elaborately decorated *papier-mâché* bindings (and other objects) richly encrusted with mother-of-pearl scraps and other materials.

Robert Milevski describes the varied methods (eg, stamps, tickets) by which European, British, and American binders signed books they bound; he includes a few pages on fifteenth- to seventeenth-century books but focuses the bulk of his 86-page essay on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century titles. The final paper, by Jeffrey Peachey, is simultaneously the most general and the most specialized: his 65-page essay exhaustively (but refreshingly) describes and illustrates “The Compression of Signatures in Bookbinding Prior to Sewing” as it was done by beating, rolling, and pressing the folded sheets, with an intimate focus on the tools and machines used between the fifteenth and late nineteenth centuries. If you’ve ever wondered how the shape of a hammer face affected its use, wonder no longer!

The writing is, by and large, non-technical, and all of the articles are likely to be accessible to general readers. SHARPists will find a considerable number of fresh perspectives on books as objects.

Baker has her books printed and bound in Ann Arbor, which must permit more far opportunities to actually collaborate with printers than the usual procedure of sending disks to the Orient, and she specifies a calendared paper stock that reproduces color images beautifully (and produces a book weighing well over three pounds). She allows authors the numerous illustrations the subject requires: her generosity in this regard is extreme. With almost as many illustrations as pages, the images occupy nearly as much space as text, and the Kropf, Merian, Metzger, Miller, and Rosner essays are further supplemented with PDFs totaling 130MB on a laid-in DVD.

The volume concludes with brief author biographies and a carefully compiled name and subject index that usefully spans the col-

lection of essays. The DVD has a searchable file that gathers the text of all the captions in the other PDFs.

Sidney F. Huttner

The University of Iowa Libraries

Jeremy M. Norman. *Scientist, Scholar & Scoundrel. A Bibliographical Investigation of the Life and Exploits of Count Guglielmo Libri*. New York: The Grolier Club, 2013. xxii, 176p. ISBN 9781605830414. US \$35.

Scientist, Scholar & Scoundrel is a catalogue of an exhibition on the *Life and Exploits of Count Guglielmo Libri*, created by Jeremy M. Norman, and held at the Grolier Club, New York, between 28 March and 24 May 2013. The initial concept for an exhibition is often the easy part. Difficulties arise when matching exhibition logistics with the desired story to be told; creating a seamless integration of the aesthetically pleasing and the informed narrative. And of course the materials have to be available to show off – to document what is actually intended. Apart from the on-loan frontispiece illustration of Libri, the books and manuscripts displayed are from Norman’s personal collection, amassed deliberately over a period of ten years. This is a wonderful personal achievement.

Without doubt, the activities of Libri make fascinating reading. A catalogue of an exhibition is often limited by the purpose of that exhibition and largely shaped by the items on display. This is not the case with the catalogue under review. Norman’s clear and information-packed captions to those items on display are woven together with additional text that clarifies, elucidates and contextualizes the multi-dimensional activities of this mathematician, journalist, patriot, historian of science, paleographer, book collector, bibliographer, antiquarian bookseller, forger, and book thief. The catalogue is thus the exhibition *plus*, and I thoroughly enjoyed flipping back and forth from biographical and bibliographical detail to entry detail, knowing full well I was experiencing two bites of the cherry. For all this, Norman has to be congratulated.

Admittedly, Libri is remembered for his thefts from libraries across Europe; picture the caped, stiletto-carrying bookman foisting his academic credentials and smooth-talking on less-wary Keepers and making off with their book treasures. Norman, however, reminds readers of the positives surrounding

Libri: “no other book thief ever made so many constructive and valuable contributions to book collecting, book selling, and bibliography” (17). Indeed, he begins the catalogue with this aspect, including mention of Libri’s 1859 auction of historic bindings (item no. 69) and his 1861 mathematics and science sale (items nos. 71 and 72), both noticeable firsts that altered perceptions and approaches in those specific fields, and his *Monuments inédits ou peu connus* (item no. 83), impressive tomes that created a benchmark for further book auction catalogues.

The Florentine’s stellar academic career is also covered, and one can only be staggered at Libri’s precociousness – a doctorate in mathematics and first scientific paper (on number theory) at 18; professor of mathematical physics at the University of Pisa at 21. A chronological approach ends with Libri’s return to Italy, his death (September 1869), and “Life after Libri,” including the dispersal of his own collection, the repatriation of books and manuscripts, including those once owned by Lord Ashburnham, and the beginning of the work required to tease out bibliographical and provenance details, the chief aim being to determine rightful owners of many of the stolen items. Norman aptly states that Libri scholarship is on-going, the “intricate web of theft” (90) requiring much more detective work to uncover the full extent of his crimes. Indeed, on an Antipodean level, I can bring to mind the books and manuscripts Governor Sir George Grey (1812–1898) obtained in 1859 that have a Libri provenance and which are now housed in the Grey Collection, Auckland, New Zealand. Admittedly they were acquired via Quaritch, but who knows their true status. Libri’s second wife, Helen de La Motte, travelled to New Zealand and established a French kindergarten and prep school in Auckland in the early 1880s; I wonder what treasures she carried with her.

Of course there is the all-important “L’Affair Libri,” which is documented in the middle portion of the catalogue. Prosecutor Boucly’s report of 4 February 1848, with useful English translation in Appendix I, initiated the investigation. This item, the reprint, Libri’s rebuttal of 30 April 1848 (items no. 31, 32, and 33) and the endless variations are displayed, including the version designed for English readers (item no. 34). “L’Affair Libri” tit for tat continued, with French zeal winning the day. Over June and July of 1850, Libri was tried *in absentia* and sentenced to 10 years’ solitary confinement with hard labour. As he

did not return to France, he did not serve it. His name was eventually removed from the rolls of the Légion d'honneur, the Université de Paris, and the Académie des sciences.

What Norman reveals so clearly throughout the affair is the polarisation that occurred. The pro-Libri camp rallied in France and England, with François Guizot, French minister of public instruction; bibliographer Jacques-Charles Brunet; Paul Lacroix (Bibliophile Jacob); Antonio Panizzi of the British Museum; Lord Ashburnham; poet/librarian Prosper Mérimée, mathematician Augustus de Morgan, and others, offering staunch support. Political persecution was the frequent (and perhaps more real) catch-cry, like the naïve Lepelle de Bois-Callais's "a loyal friendly hand to the bibliophile who has been unfairly persecuted..." (81). Others, like Brunet, found the crimes too preposterous for words. The anti-Libri brigade included Boucly, François Arago (an old friend turned foe), investigators Ludovic Lalanne and Henri Bordier, and the persistent French judicial system. French-British antipathies arose from the ensuing scandal, including a definite anti-Catholic sentiment.

Acknowledging the fact that Libri did steal books and manuscripts, Norman asks the obvious: "How did Libri get away with it?" Succinctly put, the reasons were Libri's expertise in both bibliography and paleography; his very clever exploitation of political environments; and the book-world that existed in Europe during the nineteenth-century (16–17). In treating the latter, Norman contextualises the state of bibliography, bookselling, and record-keeping admirably. Libraries in Europe were often under-staffed and thus poorly supervised; many librarians lacked the training necessary for the increasingly sophisticated bibliographical and provenance work required on such material, particularly manuscripts; poor record-keeping ensued; and there were immense backlogs of uncatalogued books and manuscripts. In short, chaos reigned. The clever and scholarly Libri capitalised on this, and somewhat perversely, was the right man at the right time and place.

Norman pays his due to P. Alessandra Maccioni Ruju and Marco Mostert's *The Life and Times of Guglielmo Libri (1802–1869)*, a much more detailed work published in 1995. Dues must go to the Grolier Club, which hosted the exhibition. I do hope that the exhibition now travels, enabling a wider audience to view the items on display. If not, at least an online version that would provide scholars

around the world the opportunity to utilise what is an excellent, readable resource on Libri and nineteenth-century book history.

Donald Kerr
University of Otago, Dunedin



Jane Marguerite Tippett. *The Multi-faceted Mr. Morris: A Record of the Exhibition in the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection, University of Delaware Library, 1–30 October 2010*. Newark, DE: privately printed by Lead Graffiti, 2011. 56p. ISBN 9780984789405. US \$125 (hardbound). ISBN 9780984789412. US \$50 (wrappers).

The colophon to this elegantly designed exhibition catalog declares it to have been "printed slowly & patiently," Lead Graffiti's flawless letterpress placing it squarely in the Arts and Crafts tradition that its subject set in motion more than 100 years ago. The catalog achieves its aim of presenting a lively sense of the multiplicity of William Morris's interests and efforts, and of his contributions in each of those realms, from his early fascination with Icelandic saga to his Socialist activism to his engagement in the details of textile production and book design.

The objects represented in the catalog provide tangible evidence of Morris's circle, yielding a sense of immediacy to his extended acquaintance among Britain's literary, artistic, and bibliographical firmaments. The objects are the fruits of the passion and dedication of their collector, Mark Samuels Lasner. This small but perfectly curated selection forms the spectacular tip of an impressive Pre-Raphaelite and late Victorian iceberg. One of the treasures is the guestbook of Edward Burne-Jones, whose numerous caricatures reveal a humorous side that might surprise viewers familiar only with his earnest paintings and book illustrations. The catalog's charming "visual nuggets" (as the printer's promotional literature describes its graphic elements) taken from items in the Samuels Lasner collection include a detail from Burne-Jones's delightful caricature of William Morris taking a constitutional. This alone is worth the price of admission for fans of either figure. Other glories in the collection include a Dante Gabriel Rossetti drawing of Jane Morris; William Morris's splendid calligraphy and illuminated initials in a manuscript catalog of a portion of his library; first-rate associations, such as a copy of *News from Nowhere* inscribed by Morris

to Burne-Jones; noteworthy book bindings, including *Roots of the Mountain*, the only book to have been edition-bound in Morris & Co. textiles; and many important letters and rare photographs.

This reviewer regretfully missed the October 2010 exhibition at the collection's home in the University of Delaware Library. Fortunately, the exhibition was largely reprised in Washington, D.C., in Spring 2013 in the National Gallery of Art's *Pre-Raphaelites and the Book*, with some pieces appearing in the remarkable concurrent show, *Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Art and Design, 1848–1900*. 2013 was a banner year for Morris in Washington, thanks also to the beautifully conceived exhibition *How We Might Live: The Vision of William Morris* at the University of Maryland's Hornbake Library. [This last was reviewed in *SHARP News* 22.3, p.9] One delightful difference between the selection included in this catalog and that put on display at the National Gallery is the former's much more fulsome view of the extent of Morris's interactions with younger figures, including Yeats, Beerbohm, and George Bernard Shaw. The only complaints one might be tempted to raise have to do with the catalog's crisp inkjet plates. Their number is limited to eight, and while this is understandable given the added cost of full color, it is too bad that they depict neither the catalog's additional items nor the wood engraving by Edmund News of the library at Kelmscott House. Moreover, the photographs present the objects in their entirety, from above and at an angle. This design decision produces an illusion of three-dimensionality that serves as a good reminder that the catalog stands in for an exhibition; nonetheless, one may not be able to help wishing for a little more close-up detail of Burne-Jones's caricatures or Morris's calligraphy.

For viewers who merely want a record of the exhibition or a disposable opportunity to read the labels at their leisure, the catalog embodies the irony inherent in the tension between Morris's socialist views and his Arts and Crafts ideals. (At once broadly populist and restrictively elitist, the output of Morris & Co. and the Kelmscott Press drew inspiration from a time when the vast majority of books and household goods were hand-crafted by ordinary folk; yet Morris's rejection of the techniques of industrial mass production priced his goods beyond the reach of such folk.) For those on the other hand who fall in love with the notion of the hand-crafted