



The Book

Newsletter of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture
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Gura Added to Editorial Board

Philip F. Gura, professor of English and American studies at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, has been named to the Editorial Board of the American Antiquarian Society's collaborative history of the book in American culture. He replaces Cathy N. Davidson, professor of English at Duke University, who has resigned from the board and from the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture's Executive Committee because her research interests are now moving in other directions. Her slot on the Executive Committee will be filled in September.

Newspaper Carriers' Addresses and the History of American Graphic Design

[Editors' note: *One of the most interesting categories in the American Antiquarian Society's large and important collection of broadsides is the genre known as carriers' addresses. These were publications, usually carrying verse, that were delivered at the new year by newspaper carriers in exchange for gratuities from their customers. A long-standing bibliographical project to record these interesting pieces of ephemera will come to fruition this year with the publication by the Society of A Checklist of American Newspaper Carriers' Addresses, 1720-1820, compiled by Gerald D. McDonald, Stuart A. Sherman, and Mary T. Russo. The Society's holdings were investigated last summer by Ronald Labuz, professor of advertising design at Mohawk Valley Community College, who was awarded one of the Society's Albert Boni fellowships to do research on the history of American graphic design in the nineteenth century, a topic that has received little scholarly attention. Labuz found the carriers' addresses of great value in charting changes and developments in the design aesthetic. A note on his work at AAS follows.*]

In searching for a set of materials to help me document the changes in American graphic design from 1830 to 1870, several possibilities came to mind, including almanacs, trade catalogues, advertisements in city directories, mastheads, and sheet music. But perhaps no bit of ephemera is more interesting or more suitable for my purpose than carriers' addresses.

Between the 1720s and the 1870s, the carrier's address might have been an annual bit of sentimental puffery, a humorous analysis of current events, a political diatribe, or a

lyrical salute to a newspaper's advertisers in the past year. The content of the address varied from paper to paper and from year to year, but the intent behind the versification did not change: The address was distributed by carriers as a visual and verbal reminder for a tip at year's end.

The AAS collection includes over four hundred addresses produced between 1830 and 1870. Upon analysis, two points seem clear. The broadsides are indeed consciously designed and often with more proficiency than has typically been credited to the designers of the period. The 1834 address of the Boston Daily Evening Transcript, for example, reflects several visual strategies not unfamiliar to twentieth-century adherents of "clean" design principles. Beautifully balanced typography, liberal white space, a single large illustrative element, symmetry, and a limited number of typographic weights and typefaces combine to form a composition that, with a few alterations, might have been designed in 1925 in Germany or in New York in 1975.

The decisions made to create such visual statements vary not only from newspaper to newspaper, but from year to year and decade to decade. There is, however, visual consistency during distinct periods. Although much more work needs to be done to prove the point, it appears that design change from 1830 to 1870 occurred in the same manner as it is effected today, by designers imitating the best work of influential contemporaries. The raw material for the imitation were the copies of newspapers that printers exchanged with each other, which provided not only an exchange of news and information but of visual ideas as well.

Advances in printing and typesetting technology, commerce and advertising, literacy rates and public education, a burgeoning number of American typefounders and type designers, and, not least of all, the examples of British designers were also catalysts for modifications in style. But these social and economic factors do not seem to account for interesting and as yet unexplained anomalies of consistency.

A random selection of fifty addresses from the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century reveals that in every case, including five examples from 1825, the first line of verse begins with initial words all set in capital letters. Of nine examples created in 1826, only one address is designed with initial caps. After 1825, initial caps are unusual; before then, they seem universal.

From 1830 to 1845, highly decorative typefaces are rarely used in carrier's address display typography. The newly

designed sans serifs and square serifs (known as "Egyptians") were far more popular. After 1846, the well-known engraved, swashed, and filigreed faces of the later nineteenth century became commonplace. The usage is again consistent among many designers. The borders of these later addresses, however, belie an explosively decorative Victorian aesthetic. Rather than growing increasingly ornamental, the frames and borders of the 1860 became simpler. The effect of these typefaces is muted by border material which, instead of reflecting a monolithic movement toward decoration, often prefigured the natural, simpler forms of the Arts and Crafts period. In the 1850s, as many as forty different cuts, dingbats, rules, and sorts were brought together from the type case to create a dizzyingly elaborate frame. A typical frame of the late 1860s is constructed from four simple rules overlapping at corners. Such simplicity was apparently unthinkable to the typical designer circa 1855. A little more than a decade later, the decision was a familiar one.

The design quality and the *raison d'être* of the addresses suggest that a newspaper would put forth its best effort in producing this annual project. Intricate frames and expensive engravings of the 1850s and the remarkable color work of the 1860s offer evidence to confirm this assumption. As an example of graphic ephemera, the addresses are exemplary of vernacular graphic design. For that reason, and because of the comparative neglect of this period and of vernacular design in general, carriers' addresses should be afforded a prominent place in any future history of American graphic design.

Book Notes

NEW BOOKS ON PRINT AND CULTURE

At first glance there is nothing glamorous about "godly" books and broadside ballads in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period. They seem far removed from the humanist, courtly, and secular literary cultures that gave rise to what we ordinarily denominate as "literature." And if bibliographical rarities and puzzles abound in the realm of "cheap" print, in the main these have not excited bibliographers, with the notable exception of the compilers of the Short-Title Catalogue, especially in its second edition. The magic wand that brings "cheap" and "godly" print to life is the question of "popular religion." The abundance of inexpensive forms of godly print in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries bears on the problem, as yet unresolved, of the structure and distribution of Protestantism among a but partially literate "people."

Tessa Watt in *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1991) takes us further down the path that Margaret Spufford followed in her pioneering study of chapbooks in the second half of the seventeenth century; indeed, *Cheap Print* originated as a thesis written under Spufford's supervision. It is an important book on several grounds. Of the three main sections, one

extends Spufford's history of the trade in chapbooks back into the late sixteenth century, though the focus is on a group of writers and booksellers who, in the 1620s, devised the genre of "godlies." Another is remarkable for recovering so thoroughly the religious iconography that adorned broadsides and wall paintings in churches. Here, the question of literacy is neatly redefined. A third deals with godly ballads; again the very meaning of literacy begins to shift.

There is nothing fancy about the "methodology" of *Cheap Print*; Tessa Watt has patiently sought out and examined the surviving broadsides and chapbooks themselves, and everything she says is founded on the materiality of her genres. She has painstakingly built up a description of certain genres and the book trades that promoted them from what she has held in her hand, supplemented by entries in the Stationers' Register and booksellers' inventories. She interprets her evidence as signifying much continuity between traditional popular culture and the new culture of Protestantism; so too she argues for a widely shared popular culture, not one divided according to region, wealth, or literacy.

The most recent of Roger Chartier's publications is a collection of three essays, *L'Order des Livres: Lecteurs, Auteurs, Bibliothèques en Europe entre XIV et XVIII Siècle* (Editions Alinea, 1992). One of these essays has to do with the relationship between the form of a book (or printed page) and the process of reading; here, Chartier draws on D. F.

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Editors: David D. Hall and John B. Hench

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McKenzie's *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, of which there is about to be a translation into French that Chartier has encouraged. Another, on authorship, brings together much of the emerging literature on "literary property" as well as relying on conceptual arguments by Foucault and Bourdieu. For the moment, these essays offer the best introduction to the possibilities of "the history of the book" as the history of culture. In their verve and sophistication, they have no equal in English.

D.D.H.

Video Notes

FORMAT IN THE HAND-PRESS PERIOD

Another collaboration between Terry Belanger, who moves this spring from the Columbia University School of Library Service to the University of Virginia, and the director Peter Herdrich has resulted in a new instructional videotape, entitled *The Anatomy of a Book: I: Format in the Hand-Press Period*. The second part, *The Collation of Books Produced During the Hand-Press Period*, is due to come out later this year.

The videotape deals clearly and effectively with a relatively narrow topic within the field of analytical bibliography. The script, written and narrated by Belanger, defines *format* as nothing more nor less than "the relationship between the size of the whole sheets of [hand-made] paper used in printing a book, and the size of the individual leaves that result when those sheets are folded and assembled into gatherings," a point stressed repeatedly throughout the half-hour production and in the accompanying workbook. It then goes on to describe in considerable detail the elements and distinguishing features (location of deckle and watermarks, orientation of chainlines, etc.) of the four most frequently encountered formats of the handpress period—folio, quarto, octavo, and duodecimo. One assumes that the full usefulness of this tape will be apparent only when it is viewed in conjunction with its companion piece on collation.

The production level of *Format in the Hand-Press Period* is high. Jazzy theme music—wryly titled *I Was a Fugitive from a Chain Line*—introduces the video. The close-ups of paper molds, sheets, leaves, and books are highly effective. The skillful lighting used in the production is especially helpful in letting the viewer see what (a watermark, for instance) is being discussed or described.

For those who wish to learn how bibliographical description may help shed light on certain questions of interest to the historian of the book, the video offers only a few tantalizing hints. Belanger's observation that books in the octavo format were customarily of a size convenient to hold in the hand suggests, of course, the intriguing relationship between format and intended use and audience. His later comment that English and Continental printers generally employed different ways of gathering sheets folded in the

duodecimo format (the Americans tended to follow the Continental pattern) is also useful. And his remark that half-sheet composition permitted a printer to go to press with less type set might suggest ways in which pressures of time or a dearth of supplies drove printing-house practice.

This videotape costs \$275 and is available from Viking Productions, 446 West 47th Street (2D), New York, N.Y. 10036. It comes with a workbook and a set of facsimiles. The workbook consists of the video script, a very useful glossary of bibliographical terms, a list of the books used as props in the videotape, and a list of suggested readings. An illustration or two, and perhaps a chart summarizing the key characteristics of the various formats described in the script, are about the only things missing from the workbook. The facsimiles provide the means for hands-on demonstration of the points made in the tape.

J.B.H.

Conferences and Workshops

A call for papers has been issued for the Third International Conference of Word & Image, which will be held August 15-21, 1993, at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario. The conference, to quote from the prospectus, "will focus on the coexistence of words and images in one (not necessarily aesthetic) object: the interface and fusion of word and image. The conference will be characterized by diversity of approach: each day will offer both comparative and contrastive elements, focus on fusion as well as collision, cover canonical and extra-canonical subjects/objects, be culturally diverse, and open up unexpected areas of further research." The conference will be sponsored by the International Association of Word & Image Studies. Two-hundred and fifty-word abstracts of proposed twenty-five-minute papers should be sent by June 30, 1992, to A. W. Halsall/David A. Goodreau, Centre for Rhetorical Studies, 1611 Dunton Tower, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6, Canada.

The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) solicits proposals of papers for the organization's inaugural conference, to be held June 9-11, 1993, at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. There is no set theme for the conference. Proposals (of no more than two pages) and other inquiries about the conference should be sent to Simon Eliot, The Open University, 4 Portwell Lane, Bristol BS1 6ND, England. The proposal deadline is July 1, 1992.

A series of three symposia, "Laboring at the Crossroads: Walt Whitman and the Birth of an American Mass Culture," will be presented on three weekend afternoons in May by New York's South Street Seaport Museum. The location will be The Seaman's Church Institute, 241 Water Street, New York City. The sessions, which are part of a citywide observance of the centenary of the poet's death, are as follows: "Journalism, Whitman, and New York," Sunday, May 3;

"Publishing, Whitman, and New York," Sunday, May 17; and "Printing, Whitman, and New York," Saturday, May 30. All three symposia begin at 2 p.m. and are open to the public free of charge. For further information contact Kathleen Condon at (212) 669-9400.

Dartmouth College Library's Graphic Arts Summer Workshop, August 26-29, 1992, will focus on AAS founder "Isaiah Thomas and His Books." Registration is limited to twenty persons, first-come, first-served (deadline is July 15). The fee is \$350. Contact Roderick D. Stinehour, Graphic Arts Summer Workshop, 115 Baker Library, Hanover, NH 03755.

New AAS Fellows Working in Field

About half of the researchers selected as American Antiquarian Society visiting fellows for 1992-93 are working on projects that in one way or another fall within the rubric of the history of the book. They are Richard D. Brown (University of Connecticut), "The Idea of an Informed Citizenry in Early America, 1650-1865"; Daniel A. Cohen (Florida International University), "Beyond Domesticity: Literary Images of Working-Class Women, 1790-1860"; Patricia Crain (Columbia University), "Cultures of Reading in the American Renaissance"; Marcus L. Daniel (Princeton University), "Ribaldray and Billingsgate: Popular Journalism and Political

Culture in the Early Republic"; Sally F. Griffith (Villanova University), "Boosterism in Nineteenth-Century American Newspapers"; Russell L. Martin III (University of Virginia), "Almanacs of the Southern States, 1732-1860"; William B. Todd (University of Texas, Austin) and Ann Bowden, "A Descriptive and Historical Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott, 1792-1836"; Jeffrey Walker (Oklahoma State University), "Collegiate Literary Culture in Eighteenth-Century America"; Ellen E. Westbrook (University of Southern Mississippi), "Cultural Captives: Euro-Amer-Indian Literary Landscapes"; and Ronald L. Zboray (University of Texas, Arlington), "Literary Enterprise in Antebellum America: Publishers, Novelists, and the Reading Public."

Baym's Wiggins Lecture to Be Published

Nina Baym's James Russell Wiggins Lecture, "At Home with History: History Books and Women's Sphere Before the Civil War," delivered last fall in Worcester, will be published in both the spring issue of the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* and as a separate pamphlet in the Wiggins Lecture series. The separate will be available through the Society (late May publication). The cost is \$7.50. Please add \$1.50 postage and handling for mail orders. A subscription to the AAS *Proceedings* costs \$45.00 per year.

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