

This Collector's Ouroboros, or A Reappearance Signaling a Journey's Near Completion

Philip R. Bishop



Sometimes things go full circle, and in the case of book collecting this certainly can happen. Symbolized as a dragon or a snake biting its tail, the Ouroboros can symbolize the return to an original point, especially after having gained experience and a measure of maturity along the way. It's like the completion of a journey which returns to its beginnings. The following tale is such an experience, here recounted for myself and the Bishop Collection of Thomas Bird Mosher & The Mosher Books.

My book collecting took focus from the day I started to buy Mosher's imprints back in the mid 1980's. Eventually I found a number of these unusual imprints and slowly found there was a wider variety than I had first expected. First I found one example, then another type of Mosher imprint, in this case from his Old World Series and from the Brocade Series. These were all found during the pre-Internet days mostly of only bookshops and bookfairs. Then I'd stumble upon more that didn't fit the pattern to which I had become accustomed. I remember finding my first Quarto Series volume on the shelves of Baldwin's Book Barn just outside of West Chester, PA. I had never encountered anything like it! Beautifully printed in a large squarish format. Finding such led me to discover the Mosher bibliography of the day—the Hatch bibliography produced at the Gehenna Press in 1966, itself a beautifully printed book entitled *A Check List of the Publications of Thomas Bird Mosher of Portland, Maine...* Finally, a roadmap!

What better way to use a roadmap than to come across a collection to buy. After stumping about sections of Maine, one of the dealers asked if I had run into William Hill of Cross Hill Books in Brunswick, Maine. He needed say not more and off we went. When we arrived and entered the bookshop there were two large bookcases filled with around 800 Mosher books. It was the first time I had ever seen a collection of The Mosher Books. What a treat to look through them, and what better way to sample the wide range of Mosher's productions. Before leaving I told Bill I'd be in touch. By March 1987 not only did I purchase the whole collection, but Bill told me he'd personally drive them down to my house in Pennsylvania because his brother just so happened to live nearby. It was also the time that a copy of the Hatch bibliography became mine to consult as I sorted the collection. This collection was followed by the purchase of another 300 volumes from the William H. Allen bookstore in Philadelphia. These volumes were apparently the remnants of Gertrude Traubel's collection. Gertrude was the daughter of Horace Traubel, author, printer, and famed chronicler of Walt Whitman's days in Camden, NJ. Thanks to George Allen, these volumes were added to my collection in September 1987. I was on a roll, and such larger influxes of Mosher books were feeding my appetite to find more while laying out the landscape and contours of the press. The Hatch bibliography was starting to be filled with check marks indicating what was in the Bishop Collection. Of course, at the same time, I was adding individual volumes when in bookshops I'd come across something I didn't already have. Remember, this was all before the

Internet made it possible to sit back and search for books in sales sites. So, my collecting strategy was to search for individual books, and add whole collections which represented a lot of diligent hunting and acquisition from other collectors. Buying such allowed me to upgrade copies I already had, and to advance the collection in large chunks (I know, “chunks” isn’t a book collecting term, but it suffices to get my point across). So onward ever refining, ever expanding, ever gathering variants, and branching out to acquire letters and manuscripts--all designed to fill in the bibliographical record and to uncover more of the Mosher story.

Then in September 1988 I was introduced to Mrs. Rosalie Marra of Lake Ariel, PA. She was the widow of Francis J. Marra, a newspaper man then living in Forrest Hills, NY, and an ardent Mosher collector. There was a total of 588 books in Marra’s collection. He bought most of his Mosher volumes at auction, and he was in contact with many of the folks then collecting Mosher, including William Hill whose collection I bought in 1987. Two letters from Marra to William Hill were in that collection I bought from Brunswick, Maine, but now I was previewing the whole Marra Collection whilst accompanying a bookseller who was working on a bid for the other books owned by the Marras. He made a bid at the end of the day, and she flatly refused. Unlike the Hill and the Allen collections, Francis Marra had prepared a lengthy list of the individual Mosher books in his collection. After closely inspecting the collection, I let Mrs. Marra know I’d be in contact shortly to tell her what I’d offer for the collection. My detailed letter of September 29, 1988 went to her along with explanations of why I would provide a fitting home for the Marra Collection which would accompany the 2,000+ volumes I had already assembled. I never heard anything back, so I called and all she had to say was that she wasn’t interested in selling me the collection. That’s where matters rested until I ran across something astonishing while reading the primary book trade journal *A B Bookman’s Weekly* of July 23, 1990 which is what the book trade relied upon for nation-wide connection during the pre-Internet days.

There was an ad by Peter Tumarkin of New York advertising a Thomas Bird Mosher Collection of ca. 500 books, including a “Roman vellum copy of ‘Mimes Hatch 186.’” Was I ever excited—I called immediately. It was the Marra Collection! It had been bought, along with all the other books in the Marra residence, by a Russian living in New York with the first name of Anatole, and through some cooperative deal with Peter Tumarkin, the Marra Collection had been transferred to Tumarkin’s New York apartment. I hastily arranged a visit to see the collection with my

wife Susann in accompaniment. Upon close inspection I discovered that it was missing several books including a complete specially bound set of *The Bibelot*. I was assured that they were around and would be added should I purchase the collection. When I returned the special set of *The Bibelot* was restored, and the important vellum copy of *MIMES* was still there, but there were still several books needing to be added. In treating the contents of his collection, Mara himself catalogued his special copy of *MIMES* for the front page of his detailed fifteen-page, closely spaced, hand-typed list of books his collection:

Schwob, Marcel. *Mimes*. 1901. No. 2 of 6 copies on pure vellum, signed by Mosher, Mitchell S. Buck and Oscar Aurelius Morgner bookplates tipped in. Very fine in folding case enclosed in half morocco box, gold stamped on spine.

Thomas Bird Mosher Collection. In all ca. 500 titles with several dups. Includes: Roman vellum copy of “Mimes” Hatch #186; Ca. 8 quarto Series on Japan Vellum (limited to 25 or 35 copies ea., numbered); 5-6 fine bindings 2 in Art Nouveau style ca. 25 books inscribed to Mosher w/Mosher’s bookplate; a set of the “Bibelot” 21 vols. bound in red levant.; Ca. 70 copies on Japan vellum (limit 50 or 100 copies ea.) Several bound copies of Mosher catalogues from the earliest, one signed. **Collection: \$6,500**

Detailed list with Hatch Mrs. ‘cheerfully supplied upon application’.

PETER TUMARKIN
310 E. 70th St., New York, NY 10021
(212) 737-8783

The greater part of the collection was intact, and so I purchased the collection on a payment plan. A down payment with further financial arrangements were made then and there in Tumarkin's apartment. Shortly after I, along with my dear friend Jean-François Vilain, sorted through the collection. We gleefully loaded it into my van on Friday, August 24, 1990 and I know Jean-François was as excited as I was. Some of the books Tumarkin advertised were never located and a necessary compensatory adjustment was made when the last check went out the door. All in all, it was an important "score" with what would be an outstanding addition to The Bishop Collection, including an important addition of another Mosher book printed on real vellum.

Jean-François and I had embarked on mounting an exhibition of Mosher's oeuvre which we had begun planning even before the Marra Collection was purchased. I still have fond memories of him and me on my living room floor using masking tape to outline each display case and placing copies of the pertinent volumes in their place in the "display." We were certainly excited to see this additional Marra material from which we could select for the exhibition which would take place August-December 1992 at Temple University. With these living room layouts we were in the midst of organizing each exhibit case and writing the text placards. A major concern was the completion of our 112-page exhibition book-sized catalogue written by the both of us, *Thomas Bird Mosher and the Art of the Book* (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis Company, 1992). Jean-François was on his way to move from editor to publisher at the medical text publisher, F. A. Davis Company. A hefty salary allowed him to fill his own office with Arts & Crafts period books and private press books, but even those were but a tip of the iceberg when compared to what he owned at home. I should know, after all, I appraised the multitude of his book collections now at the University of Pennsylvania. Me? I was a lowly book cataloguer trying to transition to a bookseller career, and all the while buying Mosher books and collections as my passion for this press continued to escalate. The bills were piling up, and I wasn't able to get the stock necessary to finally fly my own flag in the bookselling business. Thank god for a wife who successfully continued with her own career in tourism and whose income I could but sparingly augment. Times were tight. Money was tight. Still, we plowed on.

There was something that happened that helped with the finances. Apparently, I was not the only person to have espied the collection Tumarkin was offering in *AB Bookman*. Toward the end of 1990 or the beginning of 1991 someone else was reading that ad with the burning desire to own that copy of the pure vellum *MIMES*. I got a call from the ABAA bookseller Thomas G. Goldwasser who explained to me that he was representing a collector of Marcel Schwob and of American and British fin de siècle press books and he wanted to buy my copy of the pure vellum *MIMES*. He apparently called Tumarkin and found out who bought the collection, and giving me a ring was his next step. Was I interested in selling? Not particularly, but then I did get the rest of the collection which cost me money I really didn't have (which was why I bought on terms).

As much as I deeply regretted it, I sold the vellum *MIMES* knowing I desperately needed the funds. I was torn right up to and even after actually placing it in the mail. How in the world would it ever be replaced being one of only six copies ever printed on real vellum? How would I find another copy with such provenance? How would I match condition even if I did find another? What about the opportunity to display this special copy at the upcoming Temple exhibit? Gone. Wouldn't happen. We did exhibit another copy, one of fifty copies printed on Japan vellum and signed by Mosher. Nice, but it could have been the show stopper, copy No. 2 on pure vellum! What can I say? Life and pragmatic concerns intervened, and I forever saw my one-time opportunity to own it completely disappear. Goldwasser wasn't saying to whom he sold it, only

that it wasn't to someone in this country and a Marcel Schwob collector whom I presumed was in France, but I didn't really know for sure. End of story.

Years later while researching and writing the bio-bibliography, *Thomas Bird Mosher-Pirate Prince of Publishers* (New Castle, DE, Oak Knoll Press; London: The British Library, 1998) I came across another copy, actually two copies of *MIMES* on vellum. Imagine that! Not one but two! Both were once in a single collection, that of the great American book collector Norman Strouse, the one-time president of the world's largest advertising firm J. Walter Thompson. One was in a beautiful hand-tooled binding by The Adams Bindery (copy No. 5 of 6) and the other was in its original printed publisher's vellum binding with dust jacket and slipcase intact. "Two copies?" I asked myself, "how do they benefit having two copies." That question kept persisting in my mind. Why not ask if they were willing to sell one of the two copies? I'd be able to fill in the dark hole occasioned by my now orphaned copy. After discussing it with the head of special collections, it was decided to at least put in a request, back it up with a several thousand dollar offer, and giving them the choice to divest either copy from their holdings. I didn't care which one. I just wanted to vindicate myself, to correct an error of past years (yes, it still smarted). What did I have to lose? And so, my offer went off to the university. Lo and behold they accepted after conferencing with special collections, the library director, and getting approval from the university president. Their choice: to keep the copy in fine binding and to deaccession the "plainer" publisher's binding copy from their collections. All parties were pleased with the outcome, but I was especially pleased. A misalignment of the universe had been corrected—or at least of my own inner personal universe. But that wasn't quite the end of the story! I keep a census of Mosher's books printed on vellum, and a couple years after acquiring that special copy, I was able to correctly determine that not only was it in all likelihood the finest copy of the pure vellum *MIMES*, but that it also turned out to be the publisher, Thomas Bird Mosher's *own copy* from his personal library. How's that for provenance?! The void was filled, universe realigned, and gloriously so.

Interacting with social media can be trying and disappointing at times, but there are other advantages which help to compensate and balance the scales. One such advantage resulted from an Instagram message I received from <machenbachsbooks> the Instagram name for James O'Sullivan who lives in Cardiff, Wales of the United Kingdom who is a serious collector of the fin de siècle, among other interests. On November 19, 2025 he messaged me indicating he "saw a copy of the vellum 'Mimes' for sale over here recently. I know you have the copy 4 but just thought u might like to know. I haven't previously seen (or, at least, noticed) a copy for sale previously, for obvious reasons." That started a furious chain of back and forth messages. I wanted more information on this copy. Who was offering it. Which number? I was looking forward to lots more information, and the messaging conversation continued:

(from James) "It's number 2. Part of Barry Humphries collection, now being dispersed. The bookseller Paul Rassam was offering it. I'll forward you further details in a few moments. (Apologies for delay; we are in very different time zones.)"

(Bishop) "Oh, this is wonderful news. I knew Barry Humphries was very interested in Mosher, but didn't know he had obtained a vellum copy of *MIMES*. I bought Mosher material from a lady in Maine who told me Humphries (a.k.a. Dame Edna) had come to her bookshop several times to buy Mosher material. Looking forward to your further details."

One of six copies on vellum

197 SCHWOB, Marcel. *Mimes*. With a prologue and an epilogue. Done into the English by A. Lenalie. Portland, Maine: Thomas B. Mosher, 1901. First edition of this translation. Decorated Japan vellum wrappers over boards. Frontispiece. Bookplates of Oscar Aurelius Morgner, Mitchell S. Buck and Barry Humphries to preliminary blank leaf. Wrapper faintly dust-marked, one centimetre thin internal repair to head of wrapper spine and two centimetres across adjoining corners, else a fine copy in cloth chemise and black morocco-backed slipcase, spine lettered in gilt.

'6 copies of this book have been printed on Pure vellum numbered and signed by the publisher and the type distributed'; this copy is numbered '2'.

Then he sent me a photo image of the listing in Paul Rassam's catalogue, and my jaw dropped. He said it was copy No. 2, but that didn't ring a bell at first. What copy was this, but the picture of the listing answered all my questions. My gawd, this is the copy I sold to Goldwasser thirty-four years ago!!!!!!!!!!!!!! So that's on whose behalf Goldwasser was buying it. How about that. Mystery solved. Barry Humphries has been called by some as "an extremely determined and voracious collector." I certainly would have loved to have met him and to have discussed his

interests, including that in Mosher. I probably would have invited him to my home to have some fun playing in the Bishop Collection. James O'Sullivan continued to answer my questions and volunteered this comment:

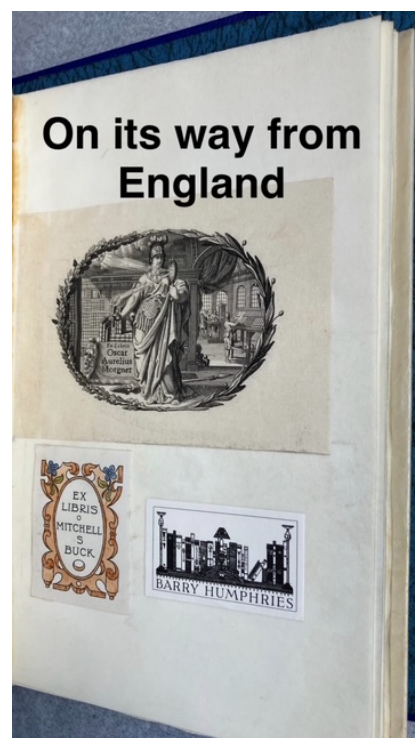
"Humphries would have been great to talk with. Rassam visited him fairly regularly I believe and said that the collection was breathtaking. I suspect that his Mosher interest was primarily a matter of where it intersected with his other author interests &/or fine editions (as opposed to being focused on Mosher per se), but I'm sure he would have liked to pick your brain on the subject and I'd be surprised if there weren't at least a few other choice Mosher items in it somewhere..."

I wasn't going to wait around, and promptly contacted Rassam. Then I reported back to James:

"More good news. The vellum MIMES is still available and all that's needed is to settle on price and conditions of payment. If that runs smoothly, I'll do more to complete the circle." To which James responded "Excellent. Congratulations." I reminded James that "it's in part because of your fortuitous note to me yesterday occasioned by your seeing my 'Story' post on Instagram. For that I am eternally thankful and you will find your name on the essay I'll be writing [in fact am presently writing] and posting to the Mosher website to commemorate the event." By Nov. 23rd I posted the above picture as another Instagram "Story" to announce just this: something was coming from England with the displayed provenance. Nobody but James knew what the precise details were behind the post. Reactions came pouring in, but I remained quiet.

From the first notification from James O'Sullivan on Nov. 20th until the conclusion of a delightful exchange with Paul Rassam on Nov. 20th-21st.* all was concluded, agreed upon payment sent to Rassam, and the book was shipped on the 22nd. It arrived, or should I say *returned* here, on Nov. 28. Before sending Paul Rassam again looked over the volume one last time and commented, "What a glorious production MIMES is in the vellum issue. It's a real knockout, isn't it?" and upon my notification to him that I had received it and was quite pleased, he added,

*Incidentally, Paul used to do the big ABAA show in New York about the same time I did, and we agreed that we must have passed one another frequently--small world.).



“That’s one of the pleasures of being around for a long time: the books that come back, along with those that you missed from a catalogue or got outbid for first time around.”

So why did I go after a vellum copy of *Mimes* when I had a perfectly fine copy from Mosher’s own library? Why did Norman Strouse have two copies as mentioned earlier? Why did I reason with the institution from whom I bought the vellum *Mimes* that two copies didn’t necessarily have to be useful for them when just one would suffice, and tempting them with extra funds supplied to use at their discretion? All good questions.

Answering first the question for Norman Strouse, he managed to have a fine copy in publisher’s slipcase and dust jacket, but he added another because it was in an extra binding from The Adams Bindery of New York, the famed bindery of Ralph Randolph Adams. I myself have duplicate titles, even of those printed on vellum, which I’m more than happy to acquire if in different full leather, gold-tooled or mosaic bindings. Here one is displaying not only the vellum book itself as the publisher saw fit to release it, but also the added attention paid to the vellum imprint in the hands of a skillful art binder. As for the institution, such matters may not be as particularly important, and funds are always an ongoing concern. As for me, I still wanted to fill the void of that missing Morgner-Buck copy. Still, why did I find it necessary to buy back the Morgner-Buck copy after I got one of Strouse’s copies?

There are several reasons why I had to have that copy, all of which can be summed up by saying it was personal. Call it my personal “Oureboros.” That copy of *Mimes* represents a circling around to my very beginnings as both a book dealer and a Mosher collector. There had been a significant amount of angst over selling it in the first place to the bookseller who acquired it for a Schwob collector. I never forgot releasing it from the collection, and the downhearted feeling that I had quite possibly blown my chances of ever owning a vellum copy of such a magnificent American Art-Nouveau book whose cover was specially designed for Mosher. It’s not mere sentimentalism, but rather speaks to the inner fabric of the collector’s spirit and motivation, his/her reflective thinking, and his/her drive and accomplishment in building a truly meaningful collection.

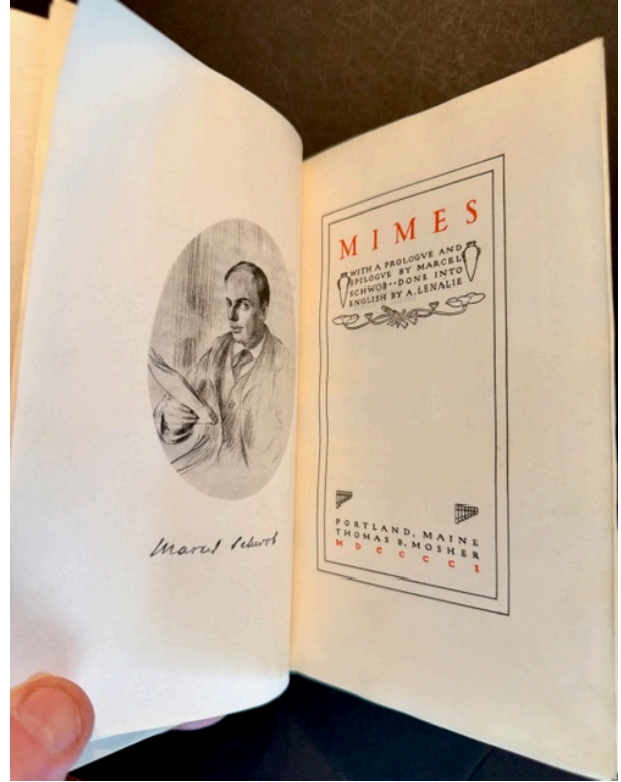
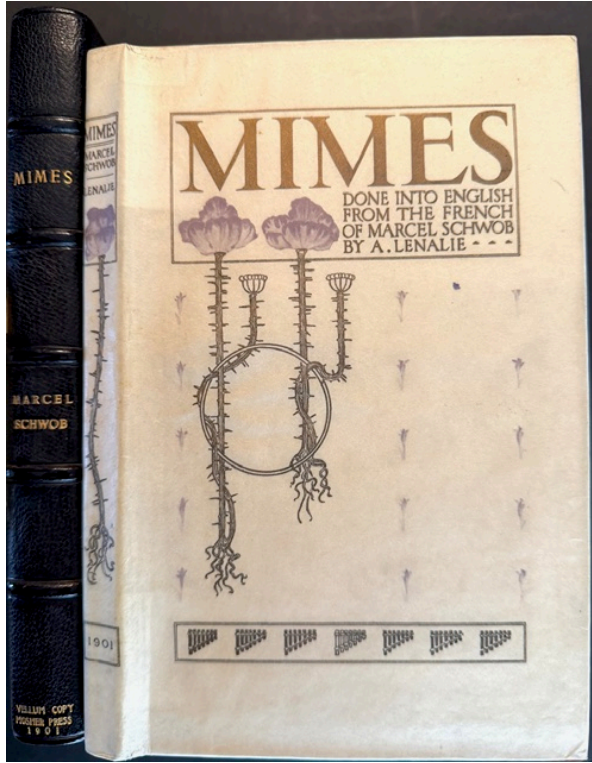
Other collectors have experienced similar things. When I shared my story with the great Victorian, Edwardian, fin de siècle book collector, Mark Samuels Lasner, he told me it was very similar to the return of what he considered his “first rare book,” a copy of the Kelmscott *Gothic Architecture*. His grandmother bought it for him on a trip to London in 1971, but he later gave it to his “wonderful college professor” on the prof’s 70th birthday. The book eventually ended up at one of the athenaeums, but the ever-vigilant Lasner got it back in 2019. Some important books come full circle during an ardent collector’s lifetime of acquisitions.

Below I have given a succinct write-up for the Morgner-Buck-Humphries, or should I give the even fuller provenance: the Morgner-Buck-Marra-Bishop-Humphries-Bishop copy which is followed by some pictures of the very book in question, including Barry Humphries ownership:

◆ VELLUM BINDING & IMPRINT ◆

Schwob, Marcel. *MIMES*—With a Prologue and Epilogue by Marcel Schwob. Done into English by A. [Aimee] Lenalie. Portland, ME: Thomas B. Mosher, 1901 (Bishop 242). Copy No. 2 of 6 signed by the publisher and printed entirely on pure vellum, including the now famous Art Nouveau cover designed by Earl Stetson Crawford. Preserved in quarter morocco slipcase. This copy was once in the Bishop Collection but regrettably sold in 1991 to gather funds necessary for Bishop to start his antiquarian book business. Now 34 years later, it returns home to Bishop’s Mosher Collection where it resides next to copy No. 4 of 6 which was Mosher’s very own copy from his personal library. The Oscar Arelius Morgner (books-on-books collector); Mitchell S Buck (classical scholar and author) copy; and copy from its more recent residency with Barry Humphries (1934-2023), the famed Australian/London comedian,

entertainer, and creator of the persona Dame Edna Everage, among others), book collector extraordinaire (and art), especially of fin-de-siecle literature and works by Oscar Wilde, to whom the Bishop's copy of *MIMES* was unknowingly sold. Special thanks given to @machenbachsbooks for alert of this book offering by Paul Rassam in the UK, and many thanks to Barry Humphries who preserved this copy of *Mimes* as curator of his own book collections, and whose ownership and bookplate add a bit of "spark" to this copy.



6 copies of this book have been printed on Pure vellum numbered and signed by the publisher and the type distributed.
No. 2
Thomas B Mosher





Barry Humphries pictured among the contents of his library collections

Two brief write-ups on Barry Humphries appear below marking the occasion of the first and primary sale of his library. There are many articles and videos on the Internet to choose from, but the following two write-ups succinctly express his life breadth as a book collector. --PRB



Above as Dame Edna

The first is from *FineBooks & Collections* (on-line), March 7, 2025:

Barry Humphries' Personal Library to Auction

The Library of Barry Humphries live auction will feature a wide array of books, manuscripts, works on paper and objects from the extensive library of the legendary comedian, actor, author, and satirist.

Best known as Dame Edna Everage or Sir Les Patterson, Humphries was also a keen book collector from an early age and became one of Australia's foremost collectors. One of the 40 members of the Roxburghe Club, his house in south Hampstead, London, contained 7,000 books, many of them first editions from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Highlights from the sale at Forum Auctions on March 26 include gothic novels in first edition, and rarities by writers and artists of the Decadent movement, many of which are housed in fine Morocco-bound boxes and slipcases designed by Barry Humphries himself. Of particular note is one of 25 copies of Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, illustrated by Aubrey Beardsley, one of 25 copies on Japanese vellum (estimate: £4,000 - £6,000). Published by Leonard Smithers in 1896, this edition includes some of Beardsley's finest illustrations.

Other highlights include:

- Evelyn Waugh's *Decline and Fall*, *Viles Bodies*, *A Handful of Dust*, and *Black Mischief*, together in four volumes, each number 3 of 12 large-paper copies signed and numbered by the author, 1937 (estimate: £10,000 - £15,000)
- Eight original book illustrations by Hans Pellar for *Der verliebte Flamingo*, c.1923 (estimate: £6,000 - £8,000)

- James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, first edition, original boards, the John Sparrow copy, 1824 (estimate: £4,000 - £6,000)
- Charles Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, first edition containing the six suppressed poems, first issue, Paris, 1857 (estimate: £4,000 - £6,000)

“The sale will be a celebration of Barry’s life-long passion for beautifully illustrated works and rare editions and I hope these volumes will find new homes where they will be treasured by other collectors,” said Lizzie Spender, widow of Barry Humphries.

This second write-up is taken from *Rare Book Monthly*, March 2025 issue:

Dame Edna Oh Dear!: The Library of Barry Humphries to be sold on March 26th at Forum

- by Announcement, Rare Book Hub staff

On 26th March, Forum Auctions will offer the library of Barry Humphries. The sale will feature a remarkable array of books, manuscripts, works on paper and objects from the extensive library of the legendary comedian, actor, author, and satirist Barry Humphries (1934-2023), who delighted audiences for several decades with his eccentric stage and television characters Dame Edna Everage and Sir Les Patterson.

Ben Macintyre, a long-time friend of Humphries, once noted that while most people knew ‘Humphries as Dame Edna Everage or Sir Les Patterson [...] another of his characters, and a defining one, [was] an old-fashioned, self-proclaimed bibliomaniac’. Born and raised in a suburb of Melbourne, Victoria, the renowned entertainer was in his personal life an ardent literary enthusiast, who purchased rare books from a very early age and ultimately became one of Australia’s foremost collectors in the field. One of just 40 members of the exclusive Roxburghe Club – a society for bibliophiles – his house in south Hampstead, London, contained 7,000 books, many of them first editions from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The sale at Forum comprises highlights from the remarkable library, a testament to Humphries’ taste for the beautiful and the unusual. The 1890s and the Decadent Movement are an undoubted focal point of the collection. While this certainly includes plenty of works by or relating to the better-known figures from the period such as Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley, Humphries’ love of the obscure drove him to unearth rare titles by lesser known figures: Lionel Johnson, Andre Raffalovich and Ernest Dowson, to name a few. Even when collecting standard works by Wilde, Humphries could not resist to bring his unique sense of humour to the fore – a first edition of Wilde’s *Dorian Gray*, published in Lippincott’s magazine, is here found bound in purple cane toad.

Bindings were another passion for Humphries and again, while he owned many sumptuous bindings that you might expect to find in other great libraries, including richly gilt morocco bindings by Cretté and Paul Kersten, his unique eye and style is evident here. A large number of the books are housed in boxes designed by Humphries himself and these can range from replications of pictorial cloth (the eponymous mist of M.P. Shiel’s *The Purple Cloud* is recreated

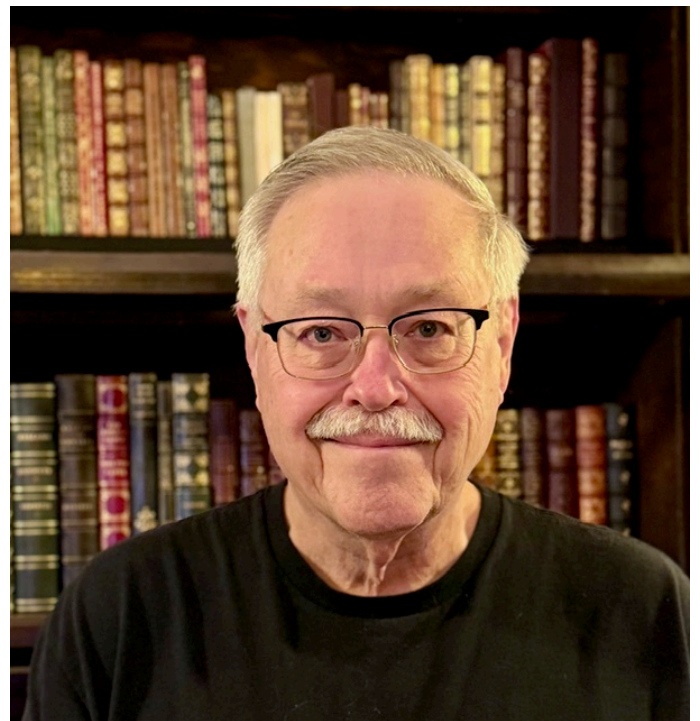
with inlaid purple morocco) to more abstract decorations and even the odd sly joke (his native cane toad again makes an appearance here).

The Gothic and macabre are also a running theme, from the likes of Ann Radcliffe and Beckford (including his own copy of his gothic masterpiece *Vathek* and several books owned and annotated by him) to later masters of supernatural and weird fiction such as Sheridan Le Fanu, M. P. Shiel and M. R. James. Aleister Crowley was clearly another favourite, appealing both to the bibliomaniac with the extraordinary rarity of some of his works (Humphries owned one of only two copies on vellum of *Ahab and other poems*, the only copy that remains in private hands) and seemingly also to Humphries' humour and his love of the bohemian and transgressive; an aspect of his character that is evident in so many items in this extraordinary collection.

...and lastly



The two vellum *Mimes* now side by side on the shelf



Philip Bishop, collector, independent researcher, writer

Incidentally, this is the forty-fourth printed-on-vellum Mosher book to have entered The Bishop Collection of Thomas Bird Mosher and The Mosher Books