

Ten Biblio-snippets

In addition to the little essay on my latest acquisition, the Rockwell Kent binding on a Mosher book, there have been several other things which have transpired which deserve at least brief mention. While my work on the *Collected Letters of Thomas Bird Mosher* continues apace, and still await word on when my article will appear in *Yeats Annual*, there have been a few things happening beyond my business and churning out appraisals for folks. Here are a few of the mini-highlights:

1. On June 9th I was pleased to become re-acquainted with fellow Delaware Bibliophile, Ronald Smeltzer whom I met, along with his wife and many other folks, at the Ticknor Society's Tenth Anniversary Dinner held in tandem with the Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Society's (FABS) Annual Book Tour centered at the Sheraton Commander Hotel in Cambridge, MA. As part of the "Booksellers' Showcase" I met a number of FABS members and had the honor to attend the "Boston and the Book Arts" Symposium. The presenters were John Kristensen, master printer and proprietor of The Firefly Press; Katherine McCanless Ruffin, Director of the Book Arts Program at Wellesley College; Todd Pattison, book binder and conservator; and Georgia Barnhill, Director, Center for Historic American Visual Culture at the American Antiquarian Society. The evening's program included a reception followed by a dinner, program and talk by who else? Nicholas Basbanes. It was quite a day and evening.

2. A literary scholar was recently in touch with me about the New York book collector, Emilie Grigsby (d. 1964) who inherited part of the Charles T. Yerkes's fortune back in the early 20th century, and who was recently highlighted in the recent Grolier Club exhibition and catalogue, *Ray Stafford, Rare Bookman*. Mosher helped build her personal library and the professor researching her found my contact information on the Mosher Press website. I turned over everything I know about Ms. Grigsby, her relationship to Mosher, and I think he was a bit surprised by the info and leads, but he's now well on his way to gathering all he needs. Out of deference to his work I omit the actual subject of his scholarly investigation.

3. I just received several items I sent to a conservator down South. A letter from Ellen Terry to Mosher, and an ultra-rare trial issue of *The Bibelot*, are now properly restored and ready for show at a Grolier club exhibit next year. By the way, one of the things I left out of my discussion in the "So, what's Next" essay (*Endpapers*, March 2012, pp. 23-26) should have been there, so I add it to these tidbits. I've been steadily having certain items in the collection preserved by a professional conservator. If I'm not going to add much to the collection while my attention is focused elsewhere, at least I can take what I have and see to it that appropriate items are properly housed in acid-free environments, paper is restored, bindings are repaired where needed, boxes are constructed to collect and house important material, and so on.

4. One of the fore-edge paintings I sold has been pictured and credited in the relatively new *Annotated Dictionary of Fore-edge Painting, Artists & Binders* (Los Angeles, CA: Jeff Weber Rare Books, 2010). This work comes with a catalogue raisonne of the fore-edge paintings of Miss C. B. Currie, and sure enough, entry #172 shows a color photograph of the Currie fore-edge Painting of “Richmond Hill” on John Galsworthy’s *The Forsyte Saga* (1933). I sold this book to Dr. Moskovitz in 2008. It’s always nice to see an old friend which once graced my bookseller’s shelves.

5. Another binding of note has entered the fold. In April I acquired an elaborate Otto Zahn binding on *The Kasidah* (Old World Series, 1896). This was indeed an important binding to Zahn in that it’s picture accompanied several contemporaneous articles either by or about Zahn, and Zahn himself sent a photograph to Thomas Bird Mosher to show some of the work that was being performed by Zahn at the Toof Bindery in Memphis, TN. What even helps to sweeten this all the more is that the book was bought by the corporate financier, Herber R. Bishop (1840-1902) and his wife Mary Cunningham Bishop, in fact it bears Mary’s vertical MCB label on the front pastedown. Nice to know that a Bishop once again owns this important volume.

6. Our home, Acorn Cottage, is situated amidst a stand of various oak trees which we refer to as Oak Acre Gardens. One new feature added this year are several stones dug from the property, each with a quote engraved on the stone from the likes of Blake or Shakespeare involving quotes on books and gardening. These stones appear along our garden walks and pathways, all designed as contemplative suggestions to the visitor to become involved with his/her surroundings, and as lovely reminders to my wife and I. Some say that gardening is the slowest of the performing arts. These stones are just another part of the set design. Of course right now what’s on stage is a tragedy. All the character roles are being reluctantly filled by wilting plants, dried leaves, collapsed patches of plants, drooping blooms, and dry-to-the-bone soil. We’ve been watering in triage mode from those hottest weeks in June and now into July without any rain to speak of. Perhaps all we’ll end up with are those quotes on stones. Hope not.

7. Way back during my days in university administration I met a young man who was passionately interested in all things dealing with Theodore Roosevelt. He had been forming a wonderful TR collection and I acquired for this young collector a morocco-bound set of TR’s collected works signed by ol’ TR himself. This set has remained one of the cornerstones in Greg’s collection. We’ve stayed in touch off and on during his years in the service, and Greg has been an reader of my essays in *Endpapers* as mounted on the Internet. Greg is now Lieutenant Colonel Gregory Wynn of the U. S. Marine Corps and Assistant Professor of Naval Science in the Maritime College of the State University of New York & Fordham University. His TR collection is astonishing and he truly belongs in the league of Grolier Club membership. Just the other day I received *TR in '12-Exhibition Catalogue* in which he is listed as co-curator of the TR exhibition at the Theodore Roosevelt Birthplace (New York City, June 16-Sept. 9, 2012) and at the Oyster Bay Historical Society (Sept. 22-Nov. 11, 2012) along with the note: “Phil – With my compliments & appreciation for you musings & support.” I assure you, we haven’t heard the end of Greg Wynn’s upward bound career, nor of his TR collection par excellence,

and one of the finest young men with whom I have ever had to honor and privilege to associate.

8. I just ordered a copy of Malcolm Haslam's exhibition catalogue *Arts & Crafts Book Covers*. The catalogue runs 120 pages with 99 color illustrations. A friend of mine in San Francisco recommended it to me and has nothing but highest praises for the publication saying that it's the most important work on the subject of British A&C book covers since Taylor's *The Art Nouveau Book in Britain* (1966). There's lots of information on publishers and the artists of the period and I'm very much looking forward to receiving a copy since it includes a picture of the Selwyn Image designed "acorns and oak leaves" cover for *Representative Painters of the XIX Century* (1899) by Mrs. Arthur Bell. Readers of *Endpapers* may recall my essay "A few Ruminations over a Binding" from the September 2010 issue. It was there that I mentioned that my wife and I began to collection book covers with acorn & oak leaf designs to complement our life here at Acorn Cottage & Oak Acre Gardens. The binding of the Selwyn Image designed book I bought my wife for one Christmas is in stellar condition. I also hasten to add that it was this book and it's design that made quite an impression on the British binder, Katherine Adams, and Marianne Tidcombe complimented me on having acquired such a fine copy which I bought from Lime Tree Books of Rayleigh in Essex, England.

9. One of the professors at the University of Cambridge found the Mosher two-volume edition of Pater's *Marius the Epicurean* at a bookstall near campus. Nice thing about it is that it's a presentation copy sent by Mosher to the American poet, critic and editor, E. C. Stedman. Even better, there's a 2 ½ page handwritten letter from Mosher to Stedman. The professor found me in a google search. The whole story will have to wait until I get some pictures from the seller, but to cut to the chase, we came to terms and the books and letter (with envelope) is now in the Mosher Collection, and the transcription of the letter is in the working copy of the *Collected Letters of TBM*. Two birds, i.e. tasks, taken care of with one stone. Incidentally, it was E. C. Stedman who early on helped to influence Mosher's decision to publish *The City of Dreadful Night* (1892) by James Thomson.

10. In April I was in contact with Professor Katharine Cockin, Head of the English Department at the University of Hull, England. I forwarded Professor Cockin copies of all the letters I have from Ellen Terry to Mosher so that hopefully at least the last volume of her *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry* (Pickering & Chatto Publishers) will contain these. I also sent her summaries of a group of Ellen Terry letters I recently sold to Harvard University and encouraged her to contact the person through whom the purchase was made. Again, it's my pleasure to support academic project with whatever information I have involving Mosher. As I said last issue, that's all part of "So What's Next."

That's all for now. Search far and wide for your best books, and may you all have the satisfaction of seeing, handling, and reading from the physical book—whether new or old. Oh, one last thing, if you haven't read any of the biblio-novels of Carlos Ruiz Zafon, I highly recommend them. I'm presently reading *The Prisoner of Heaven*, but his

previous titles, *The Shadow of the Wind* and *The Angel's Game*, all involving books, writing and bookstores with a mysterious, sinister character thrown in for good measure. Everything eventually leads back to the secret world of Barcelona's the Cemetery of Forgotten Books. You'll get hooked, and mark my words, someone like Johnny Depp will probably buy the rights to have this produced as a film some day. N.B.: You don't have to read them sequentially, although the same characters appear in each. Enjoy!

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