

21

WILLIAM MORRIS'S BOOK COLLECTING

Yuri Cowan

This chapter will describe Morris's practice in assembling his library, followed by the history of his collection during his life and afterward; will outline the major collections that now hold the particular early printed books and medieval manuscripts that belonged to him, as well as the major resources for identifying books from his collection; and will suggest ways in which knowledge of Morris's library can inform future approaches to the study of his art and literature, especially with regard to the works he published at the Kelmscott Press in the 1890s. This chapter will thus provide an introduction to an aspect of Morris that is currently under-examined and that should lead to a great deal of important new work on Morris from the perspectives equally of intertextuality, historiography, the history of libraries, and his creative practice, especially with regard to the production of books. It is important here to pay equal attention to the content, form, and history of the books that belonged to Morris; they are worth examining for their subject matter, for their design, and for their status as artifacts of material culture and with the marks of their former use and reception upon them. It is easy to be fascinated by Morris's rich collection of medieval manuscripts and incunabula, and they are key to our understanding of his taste and interests, but an important thesis of this chapter is that Morris's ordinary reading copies and his nineteenth-century resources on the history of the Middle Ages and on the history of art deserve greater attention from book historians and literary scholars alike.

Morris's collecting has been described by Paul Needham, Joseph Dunlap, Richard Landon, William S. and Sylvia Petersen, and Mark Samuels Lasner. His collecting went through several phases, of which the most important was the great acquisitive phase around the time that he was cultivating an interest in the practical side of book design, that is to say, from around 1889 to his death in 1896. His earliest collecting is not as easy to trace, and further research might be done. We do know that a number of the books (some of them fairly rare, like the Ulm Boccaccio of 1473) that he collected in this earlier period had been sold by the time he had greater funds in the 1880s and 1890s, and although early biographers such as J. W. Mackail considered that Morris had "sacrificed" his book collection to fund his socialist activism in 1880, Richard Landon (2014, 329–331) points out that this was not really the case, and that Morris had not sold more than twenty per cent of his collection, which by the time of a rough catalogue in 1876 (Needham 1976, 97) had included some six early manuscripts as well as a number of incunables and many Icelandic works. We do know that he ended up rebuying some of those earlier books—in better copies, according to Landon. It was at the end of the 1880s that he began a

more thoroughgoing phase of collecting, with an eye to assembling a library that was in some way illustrative of past practices of design and that could serve as inspiration for the Kelmscott Press, and also apparently with the idea that the collection would form a useful investment to provide for his family after his death.

It is clear that Morris's library was above all a social environment where he would discuss the books with friends and artistic collaborators and even visiting journalists. The books that made up Morris's collection, especially the early printed books, have been shown to be influential in very specific ways on the typography and ornamentation of the books of the Kelmscott Press

¹, and not only was Morris a benefactor of their example but so were Emery Walker, Edward Burne-Jones, and many others involved with the illustration, typography, and design of Kelmscott books. The medieval texts themselves—romances, popular and ecclesiastical religious texts, and histories, among numerous other genres—show Morris's interest in all facets of the social life of the past, including topics as diverse as hunting and gardening, chivalry and saints' lives, history and legend, painting and dyeing, medicine and cookery. Morris's artistic and design practices as they were inspired by these books have been the subject of work by John Dreyfus, Norman Kelvin, and others; I have also discussed this in connection with their subject matter's influence on Morris's social theories (Cowan 2008). Finally, one of the paradoxes of our study of Morris's collecting is that, since we rely so heavily on our documents of the *sales* of his library to form our picture of the books he owned, there is so far no single systematic study of his *acquisition* of his books. That is to say, the order in which he built his collection needs further research and clarification, and it could give us new insights into the development of his buying habits; the shifting of his priorities, tastes, and interests; and the resultant changes in his theories about book production. Another possibility is suggested by Norman Kelvin's description of Morris's relationship with one particular bookseller, Bernard Quaritch (1997); a similar treatment of Morris's interactions with booksellers like the Leightons would be welcome. Richard Landon has described the importance of Morris's first meeting the publisher and bookseller F. S. Ellis in 1864, introduced to him by Swinburne (Landon 2014, 329). This was an important relationship for Morris; it was Ellis who first guided him in the antiquarian book world and became from 1868 on Morris's publisher (see *Letters* 1.62–3). Their friendship, based on fishing and books, lasted to the end of Morris's life. An important area for future work on Morris will be found in exploring the networks that informed his buying, sharing, and adaptation of books, since collaboration and discussion were essential to Morris's creative practice (Cowan 2015).

The best resource at this time for the books that formed part of William Morris's library is a comprehensive ongoing blog-based list of his books by William and Sylvia Peterson; between it and the work of Paul Needham (in his 2001 article "William Morris's 'Ancient Books' at Sale" and in his 1976 Morgan exhibition catalogue *William Morris and the Art of the Book*), Morris's library has been pretty thoroughly accounted for. The largest contemporary source available is the 1898 Sotheby's auction catalogue of Richard Bennett's resale of a large number of Morris's books, but this gives us, as will be seen, an incomplete picture, since Bennett and Morris's family both retained a number of books at that point—of the most precious in the first case, and of the greatest sentimental interest in the second—in their respective possessions at the time of the sale. The best resource for the books that were kept by Bennett and that are now in the Morgan Library in New York is the four-volume folio *Catalogue of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books* printed at the Chiswick Press in 1907 and compiled by a team of specialist bibliographers of the highest reputation, with facsimiles and bibliographical information for the most prominent books (James, et al.). For the books that were retained by Morris's family there is an auction catalogue, referred to by the Petersons as the "Lobb catalogue," of the 1939 sale of May Morris's books (*Catalogue*, 1939). Norman Kelvin's *Collected Letters of William Morris* (4.401–433), in addi-

tion to Morris's letters to booksellers and friends, includes a transcription of F.S. Ellis's initial valuation of Morris's collection in preparation for its eventual sale, in which Ellis lists as accurately as possible the prices that Morris paid for his manuscripts and early printed books (the original of this valuation is now in the Berger collection at the Huntington Library); unfortunately, Ellis did not record the dates of acquisition for these books, and of course it is only the medieval and early modern books that are included. At the Grolier Club of New York there are six London auction catalogues that were marked up by Morris from 1891 to 1895 (Needham 1976, 98), and those are the kinds of documents that we can use to build the picture and timeline of the kind that I have proposed above of Morris's buying habits and acquisitions.

There are also several unfinished attempts that Sydney Cockerell, as Morris's secretary, made at compiling a bibliographical account of Morris's library. There was even a plan to publish such a catalogue at the Kelmscott Press (a project with earlier parallels in, for instance, the Bannatyne Club's catalogue of the library of Sir Walter Scott, or George Robins's catalogue of Walpole's collections at Strawberry Hill), but after Morris's death this was reduced to the facsimiles reproduced in the Kelmscott "Some German Woodcuts of the Fifteenth Century," all of which represented illustrations in books from Morris's collection. Cockerell includes a brief description of the project in the Kelmscott book's colophon, noting that some of the woodcuts were made for an earlier article by Morris—itsself an important document of Morris's understanding of medieval printing—on "The Woodcut Books of Ulm and Augsburg" in *Bibliographica*; for more, see Peterson's *Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press*, 131–33. Some of the cataloguing notes by Cockerell and by Morris survive in various forms in the British Library and Morgan Library, although they do not add significantly to the material we have in more readily available form (for more on these notes, see Needham 1976, 98–99).

The story of the dispersal of Morris's library deserves to be known by all Morris scholars, and is worth telling again here. The medievalist Robert Steele concluded his "Obituary" of William Morris in *The Academy*, 10 October 1896, no. 1275 (261–62), with a plea to memorialize Morris by keeping his book collection together:

If so be that a monument is desired, there is one that would have pleased him above all others. For many years he had been gathering together a unique collection of books and illuminated MSS. Could these but be kept together as a whole, and presented to one of our national libraries, or to some great provincial centre, it would not only be a worthy tribute to his memory, but an absolutely unparalleled education in taste. It is to be hoped that the collection formed with such loving care will not be dispersed, and this magnificent educational opportunity lost.

Unfortunately, this was not to be. One would certainly think Morris's library might have been worth more if sold as a whole collection with such a notable provenance than if sold in parts, and since Steele was personally connected to the matter (a friend to whom Morris bequeathed many of his literary papers, in fact) his urgings here seem to have had Morris's family's interest at heart as well as the public's. But Paul Needham, in the most meticulous and detailed account of the circumstances we have of the sale of Morris's collection, an article which I draw on heavily for this section, suggests that Morris's library was not worth quite as much as it could have been because the books had for the most part been only been bought within the previous five or ten years (2001, 177).

In the event, Morris's friend Charles Fairfax Murray made an attempt to purchase the library entire, but since he could not come up with ready cash, no satisfactory arrangement could be made, and Morris's executors F. S. Ellis and Sydney Cockerell had to find another buyer. Thomas

Chatto, of the bookshop of Pickering and Chatto, found a “man obscure or entirely unknown to the book world of his day” (Needham 2001, 183), the industrialist Richard Bennett, who was willing to buy the collection at £18,000, plus a commission of £2000 for Chatto, which was £8000 more than the initial valuation that Ellis had established (Needham 2001, 184). In November of 1896, the book label “From the Library/of William Morris/Kelmscott House/Hammersmith,” familiar to anyone who has examined a book that belonged to Morris, had been printed by Morris’s executors at the Press and inserted into the books in the collection (Peterson 1984, 182). The sales process was completed and the books moved by 1 May 1897. Bennett took his pick of the early printed books and manuscripts and sold the rest at auction. It was certainly not the fate that Steele had expressed a hope for, and it was in some ways a fairly dismal end to the story of the collection of books out of which Morris and his friends had gained so much aesthetic enjoyment over the previous decade. However, it is also a useful illustration of the way in which one person’s library, the expression of a particular taste and set of principles, will not always be valued in the same way by other collectors with different desires and goals.

Bennett’s collecting principles were certainly unlike Morris’s; Landon describes with some amusement how Bennett “disliked folios and refused to have any books over thirteen inches in height on his shelves” (2014, 337). This suggests a rage for order very unlike Morris’s Gothic pragmatism, and Bennett’s divergent tastes had serious consequences for the dispersal of the collection. At the Sotheby’s sale of December 1898, Bennett disposed of a large number of the books that he did not want. Essentially, he kept about half of the manuscripts and incunabula, and sold almost all of the later books (for the details, see Needham 2001, *passim*). Morris’s friends looked on disapprovingly: “What a dolt and idiot must that Bennett be to . . . turn out that Hegesippus,” wrote Ellis to Cockerell (Needham 2001, 185), referring to the twelfth-century manuscript of *De exordio judaeorum* in a contemporary Winchester binding that formed lot 580. From this point on, many of these books have not been traced, and particularly the nineteenth-century books appear in the Petersons’ catalogue with regularity as “Unlocated.” It is satisfying to find that several members of Morris’s circle, including Walker, Douglas Cockerell, and T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, were on hand at the December sale to buy books that must have reminded them of their friend². Another collector, Thomas Ryburn Buchanan, was also there and bought three manuscripts that were eventually bequeathed to the Bodleian (see Kidd 2000). The usual dealers—Quaritch, Leighton—were of course present as well. The catalogue itself has been digitized by Google and could at the time of this writing be found on archive.org as well as the William Morris Archive <http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/Images/CatalogueMSL/pageflp1-50.html>

Perhaps one of the most intriguing outcomes of Bennett’s sale of his unwanted books from Morris’s library is that it now has a presence comprising some 198 volumes in the Wellcome Collection in London. This came about because the major buyer at the Sotheby’s sale was Henry Wellcome himself, in his first major book acquisition, buying over a third of the books on offer under the name of “Hal Wilton.” The story is told in a blog entry by Ross Macfarlane on the Wellcome Library website, including the melancholy fact that many of the books and manuscripts were resold in the 1930s and 1940s as being duplicates or else as not being entirely pertinent to the library’s emphasis on the history of medicine. Wellcome’s acquisition of Morris’s books is indeed a fascinating story but not, upon reflection, an entirely surprising one. Examples of what Morris called in his preface to Steele’s edition of Bartholomaeus Anglicus’s *De Proprietatibus Rerum* “knowledge-books of the Middle Ages” were among the works that Morris went to in order to build up his picture of the popular knowledge, life, and work of men and women of the past, beyond the political history and obsequies of books that had been directed more towards elites. In the Wellcome Library’s collection, such works of popular and

scientific knowledge include Pomponius Mela's geographical works, published at Vienna by Johannes Singriener in 1518; Pliny's *Cosmographia*, printed at Ulm by Johann Reger in 1486; and Hartmann Schedel's *Liber Cronicarum* (the so-called *Nuremberg Chronicle* that was printed by Koberger at Nuremberg in 1493). The latter is one of the most famous incunables, although not exactly rare; it is a book which Morris must have bought copies of at various times, since he gave at least one away, to William Michael Rossetti and his wife Lucy at their marriage in 1874 (Needham 1976, 22).

Also in tune with the Wellcome's mandate, herbals and medical treatises had also long been sites where Morris could learn about the practical everyday uses of various plants in the Middle Ages. The most famous and common herbal of the Early Modern period, John Gerard's *Herball, or generall historie of plantes*, is a book that was a touchstone for Morris on many levels: Norman Kelvin describes how Gerard was one of Morris's sources when he was first beginning to practice the art of dyeing (1.259, n. 4), and how it was even later used as a reference work at the Merton Abbey works (3.352, n. 5). He owned multiple copies, of which the Petersons trace three (it is not clear which, if any, was the one in place at Merton Abbey). The first edition of 1597 (lot 544 in the Sotheby's catalogue) owned by Morris has now found a home in the Clements Library at the University of Michigan. Another copy (1636) was bought at the 1898 sale by Wilfred Scawen Blunt, who with characteristic insouciance coloured some of the woodcuts and later gave the book as a gift to Sydney Cockerell; it is now at the William Morris Gallery. And a third copy, in the 1633 edition, was another of Morris's gifts, to May Morris in 1882; as part of the May Morris Bequest, it is now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries (see below).

Morris owned quite a number of such medical, herbal, and scientific incunables and manuscripts, and they include many that Henry Wellcome doubtless would have coveted, such as the Morgan Library's M 165 (a fifteenth-century French manuscript, Aldobrandino da Siena's *Régime du Corps*); or, at the same library, the hand-coloured copy of Joannes de Cuba's *Ortus Sanitatis* (*The Garden of Health*), printed at Mainz by Jacob Meydenbach in 1491; or, again at the Morgan, the Dutch translation of *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (*All't Werk van Bartholomeüs Engelsman*) printed by Jacob Bellaert at Haarlem in 1485 and with its full-page woodcuts also hand-coloured. These works, along with many others of the most notable manuscripts and incunabula that had belonged to Morris's collection, were not in the Sotheby's sale because they were among the works which Bennett had kept for himself. Obviously Bennett had more taste than Ellis gave him credit for, since his larger collection was sold in 1902 to the wealthy American banker Pierpont Morgan, in which the remaining books from the 1898 auction were interspersed among many even more lavish medieval manuscripts and notable incunables by Caxton and others, to the tune of £130,000 (Needham, p. 197)—an amount that puts the sale of Morris's collection into humbler perspective. The Morgan's folio four-volume printed catalogue of the Bennett sale is a rich and well-illustrated work, and Morris's books take up just one of the four volumes. Needham's catalogue of the 1976 Morgan Library exhibition *William Morris and the Art of the Book* is an essential resource for anyone wishing to follow the choicest items of Morris's library; all the major incunables and manuscripts that belonged to him can be found there. They include beautifully illustrated printed books such as the Franciscan Stephan Fridolin's *Schatzbehalter* or spiritual "Treasure Chest" printed by Anton Koberger in 1491 or the beautiful copy of Augustine's *Cité de Dieu* printed at Abbeville in 1486–87 by Pierre Gérard and Jean Du Pré (Needham 106–107). The medieval manuscripts in the Morgan include not only what one might call workaday psalters and books of hours (among them the thirteenth-century Clare Psalter, from which Morris printed the *Laudes Beatae Mariae Virginis* in 1896, and the fifteenth-century book of hours, now M. 99, from which the English translation of *Psalmi Penitentiales* was printed in 1894, as discussed by Curt F. Bühler), but also the very finest ones that

Morris owned, such as his last two major, expensive, and one might almost say reckless acquisitions, the Worksop Bestiary (M. 81) and the Windmill Psalter (M. 102), both of which he bought in the last six months of his life. Adding to this collection the Morgan's separate acquisitions of some of Morris's authorial manuscripts and Kelmscott material, the Morgan Library is a major centre for anyone wishing to work on Morris's relationship to the book arts. Digital images of some of these manuscripts can be found through the Morgan Library's online catalogue, Corsair, as well as on the William Morris Archive <http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu/manuscriptslist.html>, under "Manuscripts at the Morgan Library, New York."

Since Bennett's two sales, then, Morris's library has ultimately ended up in two sizeable collections and many smaller ones³. Although the most prominent books, and the largest number of them, are in the Morgan Library, the collection from the Sotheby's sale that is still extant in the Wellcome Library is most notable for its inclusion of many of Morris's more ordinary working copies: eighteenth- and nineteenth-century French and English works on dyeing, for instance, such as James Haigh's *The dyer's assistant in the art of dying wool and woollen goods* (York, 1787), Claude-Louis Berthollet's *Éléments de l'art de la teinture, avec une description du blanchiment par l'acide muriatique oxigéné* (Paris, 1804), or J. Ch. Leuchs's *Traité complet des propriétés, de la préparation et de l'emploi des matières tinctoriales et des couleurs* (Paris: De Malher, 1829, 2 vols.), all of which will be of interest to scholars examining the technical works that Morris drew upon for his textiles. Finally, although quite a few nineteenth-century editions of Icelandic texts were among those deaccessioned and sold by the Wellcome in the 1930s, there is still a substantial collection of Iceland-related material at the Wellcome, including *Landnámabók* in Icelandic and Latin (Copenhagen: A. F. Stein, 1774) as well as geographical and ethnographical works on Greenland and on the Sami people. Even if the Wellcome has not kept its initial holdings of Morris's books intact, the outlines of Morris's collecting principles can be found in what remains, and there is room for a detailed study of the volumes that are still there.

The Huntington Library also contains books that belonged to Morris, arrived via the sale of the Helen and Sanford Berger collection as well as through the library's more general collecting over the years. In the Berger collection, in addition to its rich coverage of books and material directly from and about Morris, the Press, and the Firm, are several books from Morris's library. Attesting again to the great joy Morris found in giving books away as gifts is a copy of one of Morris's favourite medieval authors, John Froissart, presented to Georgiana Burne-Jones's sister Louisa in 1857, in the modern Thomas Johnes translation. Also in the Huntington's collection is the poet Mathilde Blind's *The Heather on Fire: A Tale of the Highland Clearances* (London: Walter Scott, 1886), inscribed to Morris by the author "with sincere admiration." Blind was well connected among the Pre-Raphaelites and the Aesthetic Movement more generally, as described by James Diedrick in his recent study of her, and the presentation volume is an illustration of the literary networks of the period. It is not clear how well Morris and Blind knew each other, and no correspondence with her appears in the *Collected Letters*, but she was a friend of Eleanor Marx and moved in the same socialist circles. At any rate, *The Heather on Fire* is just the kind of political verse and appeal against injustice that might be assumed to speak to Morris, with its vivid descriptions of Orkney fishermen, hard-scrabble farmers, and the burning of their homes, and although we have no way of knowing how thoroughly he read the poem and its detailed historical notes, it and another book from Blind remained in his possession long enough to form part of lot 1022 (with other presentation copies) of the Sotheby's sale in 1898.

Beyond the Berger Collection, among the books from Morris's library also now at the Huntington are two fifteenth-century medieval manuscripts of Italian manufacture that belonged to him, both of which sold at the Sotheby's sale in 1898 and made their way to California at different times. One of these is a Humanist manuscript of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (MS

HM 01031) and the other a Gothic MS of Vergil's *Georgics* and *Aeneid* (MS HM 001036)—the latter an important narrative for Morris in both literary and book-historical terms, since he translated the epic into English and also created his famous Pre-Raphaelite manuscript of it with Edward Burne-Jones and Charles Fairfax Murray (Tittle 2015). Since Morris's collecting took place after the making of his *Aeneid* manuscript, these medieval manuscripts cannot be said to be "influences" on that opus, but they certainly form a picture of the kinds of manuscript creation that inspired Morris's work and that he was now in the 1890s finally able to afford for himself. High-quality images from both of these manuscripts can be seen on the Digital Scriptorium website, which also displays images from several other Morris-related medieval manuscripts that are now in American institutions. One of these is a fifteenth-century French psalter written for use by a member of the Celestine order and inscribed "To Jenny Morris" from "William Morris ... January 17, 1892" that is now in Columbia University's collection. As Jenny's property, this book would not have been part of the larger sale. Many books that Morris similarly gave away doubtless wait hidden, to surface again in collections and bookshops the world over.

A number of the books that belonged to Kelmscott Manor and to the family were sold at auction after the deaths of May Morris and her companion Mary Lobb in 1938, and these are fewer than in the Morgan and elsewhere, but perhaps of greater significance, since they are the books that were not sold as part of Morris's collection but rather kept back as the personal property of Morris's family. We have seen some such books already (May's copy of Gerard's *Herball* and Jenny's psalter among them). The books in the Lobb sale are intriguing for the glimpses they show into the diverse nature of the Morris family's ordinary reading: Victorian poetry, of course, but also ballad collections like William Motherwell's *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern* (1827) and other works on folklore, as well as works edited by Frederick James Furnivall for the Early English Text Society, and still more books on plants. It is fascinating to find in the Peterson's catalogue that one incunable that seems either by accident or design to have eluded the sale and been kept in the family up until May's death was Erhard Ratdolt's 1482 Venetian edition of Euclid's *Elementa Geometria*—not as famous perhaps as some more splendid fifteenth-century folios, but a superb choice to retain, with its intricate decorations designed in-house and its interesting woodcut geometrical diagrams. Indeed, Ratdolt's printing is of more than just aesthetic interest: Stanley Morison recounts how Ratdolt was the first, and for some time the only, printer in Italy who (like Morris) designed his own printed ornaments for the pages he printed, rather than having them decorated by hand by professionals.

The Society of Antiquaries of London has also ended up with a few books that came from the May Morris bequest of Kelmscott Manor and its contents in 1939, since the Society was the residuary legatee after Oxford University gave up the bequest in 1962. May Morris also gave items to the Victoria and Albert Museum and a collection of papers to the British Library (which is supplemented by the papers formerly in the possession of Robert Steele). The books belonging to the Society of Antiquaries include a single bound volume of four sixteenth-century Italian writing books by three different hands, which was used by Morris and by his daughters to practice calligraphy from. This book's interesting production history and subject matter has been described by A. S. Osley in his article "The Kelmscott Manor Volume of Italian Writing-Books." The cutting of woodblocks to represent cursive writing was very difficult, and in the 1520s two Italian artists, Ugo da Carpi and Eustachio Celebrino, independently developed the process and skills necessary to reproduce cursive writing; they collaborated (not always peacefully, as Osley colourfully describes) with two writing masters, Giovannantonio Tagliente and Ludovico Vicentino degli Arrighi, to produce the four books that were bound together in this volume. As a material instance of the sometimes tempestuous process of collaborative book production and of the complicated relationship between handwriting and printing, it is easy to

see how Morris was drawn to acquire this book for both calligraphic and printing-historical reasons, as well as why it was retained in the family's possession.

One cannot pass over the discussion of Morris's library without speculating on the whereabouts of Morris's own copies of books from the Kelmscott Press. It is in some ways hard to identify those copies of the Press books that "belonged" to Morris. Indeed, perhaps the most evocative lesson to be drawn from the great number of presentation copies in the "Related Materials" notes in each entry of Peterson's *Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press* is that one of Morris's great joys in making, as in acquiring, books was to give them away. But he certainly kept a set of Kelmscott books for himself: a photograph of Morris's library at Kelmscott House reproduced in *William Morris and the Art of the Book* asserts that "The upper shelves of one case are mostly filled with vellum-bound Kelmscott Press editions" (99). And Peterson in *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure* describes how in August of 1897 Cockerell "sold Morris's vellum set [i.e., printed on vellum, rather than just vellum-bound as above] of the Kelmscott Press books (for £650) to Henry Gamman, an old friend from the Coal Exchange" (269), and surprisingly not all of these Kelmscott books have been located, although his copy of the Chaucer, now in private hands, is the vellum copy number 1.10 in the Petersons' *The Kelmscott Chaucer: A Census*. The British Library has Emery Walker's set of Kelmscott Press books, including an intriguing bound collection of "retree" pages from the vellum Chaucer (C.43.h.17) that was in Walker's possession, which I have examined and plan to discuss more thoroughly in another study.

With this retree Chaucer, as with the volume of writing books, the latter a *sammelband*, or collection of books printed separately but later placed together according to a recognizable logic on the part of the collector (similar to what Morris himself did when he put together the Kelmscott *Order of Chivalry* volume, for which see Cowan 2015, 163), we see Morris and his circle showing an interest in books beyond the moment of their design and impression, with an eye to those books' later histories, including, significantly, their reassembly and rebinding. One particular bibliographical curiosity that Morris owned is a bound set of "what have been called, for want of a better term [presumably by Cockerell in his valuation of the library, see Kelvin, *Letters* 4.407], proof impressions of the illustrations for [Bernhard] Richel's 1476 German edition of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*" printed in Basel (Needham 1976, 105). These woodcuts, four per page and 257 in all according to Cockerell, are bound with a manuscript of a different text, Johanne's Utino's *Compilatio librorum historialum totus Bibliae*. The bound volume is now Morgan Library PML 224, and one imagines that Morris found it intriguing as a work bringing together print and manuscript. It is characteristic of Morris's interest in the details of artistic production that he obtained a book like this, one that revealed so much of the preparatory work for the printing of his favourite medieval books. Sydney Cockerell's catalogue of incunabula and the lists of woodcuts that he was requested by Morris to make (see, for instance, Needham 1976, 38), diligent as they are in their counting of cuts, are incomplete and at any rate would not contain all the bibliographical information that we now think of as possible to include, and yet his catalogues and Morris's intention to print them at the Kelmscott Press reveal that Morris and his circle had at least a tentative desire to participate in and contribute to bibliographical scholarship. Space constraints and the privileging of design characteristically tended to trump this concern, however, as when, for instance, Morris quietly demurred when E. Gordon Duff requested to print a bibliography of editions of the *Golden Legend* (Cowan 2015, 168).

A similar respect for bibliographical interest and fidelity accounts for the fact that so many of Morris's contemporary books are listed as "uncut" in the Sotheby's catalogue. The catalogue's use of the term is not evidence of Morris's not having read those books (that is, the cataloguer likely does not mean they are "unopened" according to the definition given in John Carter and

Nicolas Baker's *ABC for Book Collectors*, 226), but rather of Morris's disdain for the trimming of edges: the untrimmed edges of books are, as Carter and Baker say in their definition of "uncut" (223–24), of very valuable bibliographical interest. These edges, and the choice to cut them down to size or not, are also a very important aspect of the history of bookbinding, which, as the introduction to the Sotheby catalogue suggests, was something that Morris was drawn to, even if it was not among the many skills in which he had direct practical experience. Bookbinding, that recontextualizing art, will be a productive area of future study with regard to the history of the books that Morris owned, having for instance parallels with his thinking with regard to the protection of ancient buildings. Like re-roofing a medieval barn, Morris was willing to send his books to binders he trusted would not (among other sacrileges) alter his beloved expanse of margin at the tail of the page, nor damage the decorations by over-trimming. Prominent among the binders he used was the firm of J. and J. Leighton: in addition to the Leighton-bound Virgil manuscript in the Huntington Library, there are at least four early printed books in the Morgan's collection that belonged to Morris and were bound by Leighton. Several of these adopted as endpapers the same "Flower"-watermarked paper by Joseph Batchelor that was used for the Press, and one of them (a slim Savonarola pamphlet printed by Thierry Martens at Antwerp in 1502) even in the limp vellum with ties that is such a familiar binding for Kelmscott books. The Doves Bindery was also contracted to bind books for Morris, a task which was particularly often carried out by Douglas Cockerell; the picture of the Kelmscott House library on page 99 of the Needham catalogue shows "a large folio French Bible, newly bound with pigskin spine by Douglas Cockerell; its two companion volumes, in older plain vellum, are next to it." In the event, the manuscript Bible's two companion bindings were not completed in Morris's time but rather by Marguerite Duprez Lahey, who was bookbinder for the Morgan Library for many years in the first half of the twentieth century (the set is now M.109–111). Paralleling the completion of the *Aeneid* manuscript by Graily Hewitt, or the continuation of the Firm's design work by John Henry Dearle, this miscellaneous bound, three-volume book attests to the collaborative and diachronic impulse that was at the heart of Morris's creative practice, and to the many successor hands that set to work on items that Morris and his predecessors made or collected.

It is clear from the examples recounted here that Morris scholarship today stands to gain a great deal from an awareness of the history of Morris's book collecting. For scholars of the Firm and of the Press, we now know that books such as his eighteenth-century works on dyeing, his copies of old herbals, and even his medieval manuscripts served as technical and design inspirations and in some cases as copytexts; there is still plenty of room to explore just how these books were used and what kinds of knowledge he gained from them. Similarly, we find in his collection a number of catalogues drawn from the South Kensington Museum, where he must have found plenty of examples of handicraft and antique material culture to inform his art and his theories; indeed, his close relationship with the South Kensington Museum has rarely been explored since Barbara Morris's discussion of the matter in 1975. Art historians can find a rich body of Morris's source material in the coloured illustrated antiquarian works of Henry Shaw on medieval dress and art, published by William Pickering in the 1830s and after, which are fascinating examples of Victorian printing in their own right. For scholars of Morris's social theories, we are beginning to understand the remarkably catholic reach of the mass of historical material that Morris compiled, and how it led him to histories of material culture, of food and drink, of dress and architecture, of popular religion and ethnography, that in turn informed his socialism and his theories of art and society. This kind of material can be found throughout his collection in rare books and reading copies alike, but the varied output of the Early English Text Society is one particularly useful place to start. For

literary scholars, and as is only natural with such a richly allusive author, intertextuality and *quellenforschungen* have long been important scholarly avenues for understanding his work in the fields of narrative, verse, ornament, craftsmanship, and the book arts alike. From his use of Malory and Froissart in the *Guenevere* volume of 1858 (discussed by, among others, Margaret Lourie and David Staines), through the sagas and mythological tales of the *Earthly Paradise* period 1868–70 (charted by Florence Boos and Oscar Maurer), to his allusions to Dickens in *News From Nowhere* and his printing of selections from Shakespeare, Tennyson, and Shelley at the Kelmscott Press, Morris showed a willingness to engage with the canonical greats on their own terms, and the critics have followed him through the literary traces of that engagement. However, he also built up his own canon, a more wide-reaching and inclusive one, exemplified in the great diversity of his reading interests. Library and book historians too will find in Morris, in addition to the bibliographical interest of the complicated relationships between the books he knew and the books he made, a richly documented account of a collector's taste and practices. Finally, the many examples of Morris's own sharing and gifting of often very rare books give us a picture of a community where the rare book was a demystified object, and where a social space was created in which it could be experienced. Morris's book collecting takes us far beyond his engagement with the best-known books, as we discover, first, the way in which his knowledge of so many diverse and *non*-canonical works and authors lends a richness and a sincerity to his passionate assertions about the quality of the social and artistic life of the men and women of the past and, second, his far more than text-deep engagement with the book as a material artifact of those past creative and social lives.

Notes

- 1 See, for instance, Needham 1976, Peterson 1992, Landon 1993, and Cowan 2008, as well as, with regard to Morris's earlier experience of medieval books in relation to his calligraphic practice, Whitla 2001.
- 2 In a similar way, the American man of letters Charles Eliot Norton, who was a long-time friend and acquaintance of Morris's, bought in 1908 in New York the Italian humanist manuscript of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in Latin, now MS Lat 266 in the Houghton Library, that had been sold at the Sotheby's sale (lot 71).
- 3 To give just a few examples, Landon's "Books" section of the catalogue of the 1993 Canadian exhibition *The Earthly Paradise* displays several incunables that belonged to Morris and have ended up in Canadian university collections: German and Italian imprints, four in all, at Dalhousie, as well as Jenson's Latin Pliny of 1476 at McGill. And others are surely on the move, in North American collections and elsewhere. Since the time of that exhibition, for instance, Morris's copy of Ægidius Romanus's *De Regimine Principum* (Gunther Zainer, 1476) was donated in 2003 to the Graham Library at Trinity College, at the University of Toronto.

References and Further Reading

- Braesel, Michaela. "The Influence of Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts on the Pre-Raphaelites and the Early Poetry of William Morris." *Journal of the William Morris Society* 15:4 (Summer 2004): 41–54.
- Bühler, Curt F. "The Kelmscott Edition of the Psalmi Penitentiales and Morgan Manuscript 99." *Modern Language Notes* 60:1 (January 1945): 16–22.
- A Catalogue of the Library of Finely Bound Books Removed from Warriford Park, Southampton, the Property of the Late H. Charles Woods, Esq. Sold by Order of the Executors ...; Also Selected Books from Kelmscott Manor, Sold by Order of Messrs. Lloyds Bank, Ltd., Acting as the Executors of the Late Miss V. Lobb, Including Books Formerly the Property of William Morris and the Late Miss May Morris ... on Thursday, July 6th, 1939, and Following Day.* London: Hodgson & Company, 1939.
- Catalogue of a Portion of the Valuable Collection of Manuscripts, Early Printed Books, &c. of the Late William Morris, of Kelmscott House, Hammersmith Which Will be Sold by Auction ... On Monday, the 5th of December, 1898, and Five Following Days.* London: Dryden Press, 1898.

- Dreyfus, John. "A Reconstruction of the Lecture Given by Emery Walker on 15 November 1888." *Matrix* 11 (Winter 1991): 27–52.
- Carter, John and Nicolas Barker. *ABC for Book Collectors*, 8th ed. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2006.
- Cowan, Yuri. "Collaboration, Translation, and Reception: Editing Caxton for the Kelmscott Press." *To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss: William Morris's Radicalism and the Embodiment of Dreams*. Ed. Michelle Weinroth and Paul Leduc Browne. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2015, 149–71.
- . *William Morris and Medieval Material Culture*. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2008.
- De Ricci, Seymour. *English Collectors of Books & Manuscripts (1530–1930) and Their Marks of Ownership*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930, repr. 1969, 171–73.
- Diedrick, James. *Mathilde Blind: Late-Victorian Culture and the Woman of Letters*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2016.
- Forman, H. Buxton. *The Books of William Morris*. [1897]. New York, NY: Burt Franklin, 1969.
- James, Montague R., A. W. Pollard, S. J. Aldrich, E. G. Duff, and R. G. C. Proctor. *Catalogue of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books from the Libraries of William Morris, Richard Bennett, Bertram, Fourth Earl of Ashburnham, and Other Sources, Now Forming Portion of the Library of J. Pierpont Morgan*, 4 vols. London: Chiswick Press, 1906–1907.
- Kelvin, Norman. "Bernard Quaritch and William Morris." *Book Collector* 46 (1997): 118–33.
- Kidd, Peter. *Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts c.1300–c.1500 from the Collection of T. R. Buchanan in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford. Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2000. <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/wmss/online/medieval/buchanan/buchanan.html>. Accessed 5 December 2016.
- Landon, Richard. "Books." *The Earthly Paradise: Arts and Crafts by William Morris and his Circle from Canadian Collections*. Ed. Katharine A. Lochnan, Douglas E. Schoenherr, and Carole Silver. Toronto: Key Porter Books for the Art Gallery of Ontario, 1993, 249–76.
- . "Was William Morris Really a Pre-Raphaelite?" *A Long Way from the Armstrong Beer Parlour. A Life in Rare Books*. Ed. Marie Elena Korey. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2014, 323–38.
- LaPorte, Charles. "Morris's Compromises: On Victorian Editorial Theory and the Kelmscott Chaucer." *Writing on the Image: Reading William Morris*. Ed. David Latham. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 209–19.
- Lasner, Mark Samuels. *William Morris: The Collector as Creator*. New York, NY: Grolier Club, 1996.
- Linenthal, Richard A. "Sydney Cockerell: Bookseller in All But Name." *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 13:4 (2007): 363–86.
- Macfarlane, Ross. "William Morris at the Wellcome Library." *Wellcome Library*, 27 April 2009. <http://blog.wellcomelibrary.org/2009/04/william-morris-at-the-wellcome-library/>. Accessed 5 December 2016.
- Maurer, Oscar. "The Sources of William Morris' 'The Wanderers.'" *University of Texas Studies in English* 29 (1950): 22–30.
- . "William Morris and *Gesta Romanorum*." *Studies in Language, Literature and Culture of the Middle Ages and Later*. Ed. E. Bagby Atwood and A. Archibald Hill. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969, 369–81.
- McGann, Jerome. "A Thing to Mind: The Materialist Aesthetic of William Morris." *Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993, 45–75.
- . *The Textual Condition*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Miller, Elizabeth Carolyn. "Collections and Collectivity: William Morris in the Rare Book Room." *Journal of William Morris Studies* 17:2 (2007): 73–88.
- Morison, Stanley. *Four Centuries of Fine Printing*, 4th ed. New York, NY: Barnes & Noble, 1960.
- Morris, Barbara. "William Morris and the South Kensington Museum." *Victorian Poetry* 13:3/4 (1975): 158–175. Print.
- Morris, William. *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Art of the Book*. Ed. William S. Peterson. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982.
- . "On the Artistic Qualities of the Woodcut Books of Ulm and Augsburg in the Fifteenth Century." *Bibliographica* 4 (1893): 437–55.
- Munby, A. N. L. *Connoisseurs and Medieval Miniatures 1750–1850*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Needham, Paul, ed. *William Morris and the Art of the Book*. New York, NY: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1976.
- . "William Morris, Book Collector." *William Morris and the Art of the Book*. Ed. Paul Needham. New York, NY: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1976, 21–47.
- . "William Morris's 'Ancient Books' at Sale," *Under the Hammer: Book Auctions Since the Seventeenth Century*. Ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote. London: Oak Knoll Press, 2001, 173–208.

- Osley, A. S. "The Kelmscott Manor Volume of Writing-Books." *Antiquarian Journal* 64:2 (1984): 351–60.
- Peterson, William S. *A Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1984.
- . *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1991.
- . "The Library of Emery Walker." *Matrix* 12 (Winter 1992): 3–14.
- Peterson, William S. and Sylvia Holton Peterson. *The Kelmscott Chaucer: A Census*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2011.
- . *The Library of William Morris: A Catalogue*. <https://williammorrislibrary.wordpress.com/>.
- Phimister, Evelyn J. "John Ruskin, William Morris, and the Illuminated Manuscript." *Journal of the William Morris Society* 14:1 (Autumn 2000): 30–36.
- Smith, Roger. "Bonnard's *Costume Historique*: A Pre-Raphaelite Source-Book." *Costume* 7 (1973): 28–37.
- Steele, Robert, ed. *Medieval Lore from Bartolomeus Anglicus*. By Bartolomeus Anglicus. Trans. John of Trevisa. [1893]. London: Chatto and Windus, 1924.
- . "Obituary. William Morris." *The Academy* 1275 (10 October 1896): 261–62.
- Stoneman, William P. "'Variously Employed': The Pre-Fitzwilliam Career of Sydney Carlyle Cockerel." *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 13:4 (2007): 345–62.
- Treuherz, Julian. "The Pre-Raphaelites and Mediaeval Illuminated Manuscripts." *Pre-Raphaelite Papers*. Ed. Leslie Parris. London: Tate Gallery, 1984, 153–69.
- Utz, Richard. "Enthusiast or Philologist? Professional Discourse and the Medievalism of Frederick James Furnivall." *Studies in Medievalism* 11 (2001): 189–212.
- Whitla, William. "'Sympathetic Translation' and the 'Scribe's Capacity': Morris's Calligraphy and the Icelandic Sagas." *The Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 10 (Fall 2001): 27–108.
- Yamaguchi, Eriko. "Rossetti's Use of Bonnard's *Costumes Historiques*: A Further Examination, with an Appendix on Other Pre-Raphaelite Artists." *Journal of Pre-Raphaelite Studies* 9 (Fall 2000): 5–36.