Among Harvard's Libraries: Looking at books, learning from it, passing it along

Looking at Books, Learning from It, Passing It Along

Roger E. Stoddard

From my European acquisitions trip six years ago, subject of my talk and essay, I returned with three emblems of my journey:

> "Aux lecteurs 'fervents,' salut" by Gerard Blanchard, *typographe*, in a recent book on design that I found at Beaubourg.
>
> "Questa sera spegni la TV . . . Un libro e meglio" in Hoepli's bookshop window in Milan.
>
> "One fondly hopes that this piece, too short to be boring, will amuse by a philosophical tone well suited to the taste of the moment" by Marc Michel Rey in his introduction to one of Hemsterhuis's Letters in 1770.

As I composed my thoughts about my experiences abroad, I began to see the relevance to my line of work of some of the things I had been reading by or about the great natural scientist Louis Agassiz. In his eulogy, William James exposed Agassiz's method: "'Go to Nature; take the facts into your own hands; look, and see for yourself!'—these were the maxims which Agassiz preached wherever he went, and their effect on pedagogy was electric. The extreme rigor of his devotion to this concrete method of learning was the natural consequence of his own peculiar type of intellect, in which the capacity for abstraction and causal reasoning and tracing chains of consequences from hypotheses was so much less developed than the genius for acquaintance with vast volumes of detail, and for seizing upon analogies and relations of the more proximate and concrete kind."[1] The last word on the discipline of observation was set forth by Agassiz in his Lowell lectures: "The glance at the moon, or at Jupiter's satellites, which the chance visitor at an observatory is allowed to take through the gigantic telescope, reveals to him nothing of the intense concentrated watching by which the observer wins his higher reward. The nightly vision of the astronomer, revealing myriad worlds in the vague nebulous spaces of heaven, is not for him; he must take the great results of astronomy for granted, since no man capable of original research has the time to prepare for the uninitiated the attendant circumstances essential to his more difficult investigations, or to train their eyes to see what he sees."[2]

Here is a good example of what Agassiz could convey:

> The similarity of motion in Families is another subject well worth the consideration of the naturalist: the soaring of the Birds of Prey,—the heavy flapping of the wings in the Gallinaceous Birds,—the floating of the Swallows, with their short cuts and angular turns,—the hopping of the Sparrows,—the deliberate walk of the Hens and the strut of the Cocks,—the waddle of the Ducks and Geese,—the slow, heavy creeping of the Land-Turtle,—the graceful flight of the Sea-Turtle under the water,—the leaping and swimming of the Frog,—the swift run of the Lizard, like a flash of green or red light in the sunshine . . . In short, every Family of animals has its characteristic action and its peculiar voice; and yet so little is this endless variety of rhythm and cadence both of motion and sound in the organic world understood, that we lack words to express one half its richness and beauty.[3]

From the 28th of April, 1985, when I fled Visiting Committee weekend for London, until the 21st of May when I returned from Milan, I looked at books in fifty-three bookshops, libraries, museums, and private collections in London, Long Sutton and Bourne (Lincolnshire), Oxford, Blackheath, Sevenoaks, Paris, and Milan. I will tell you

Roger E. Stoddard is Curator of Rare Books in the Harvard College Library and Senior Lecturer on English in the Department of English and American Literature and Language, Harvard University.

This essay was prepared as a talk for the Athenæum Group and delivered at its Boston meeting two days after my return from Milan. Then it was offered as a brown-bag luncheon talk for Harvard librarians. After all the books and manuscripts arrived in Cambridge, I took slides and presented it as a slide lecture at the Columbia University School of Library Service, the John Carter Brown Library, the Grolier Club, the New York Harvard Club, the University of California at Davis, and finally, to a class in the Columbia Rare Book School.

[1] William James, *Louis Agassiz: Words Spoken by Professor William James at the Reception of the American Society of Naturalists by the President and Fellows of Harvard College, at Cambridge, on December 30, 1896* (Cambridge: Printed for the University, 1897), pp. 9-10.

[2] Louis Agassiz, *Methods of Study in Natural History* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1863), pp. 296-97.

[3] Idem, pp. 124-25.

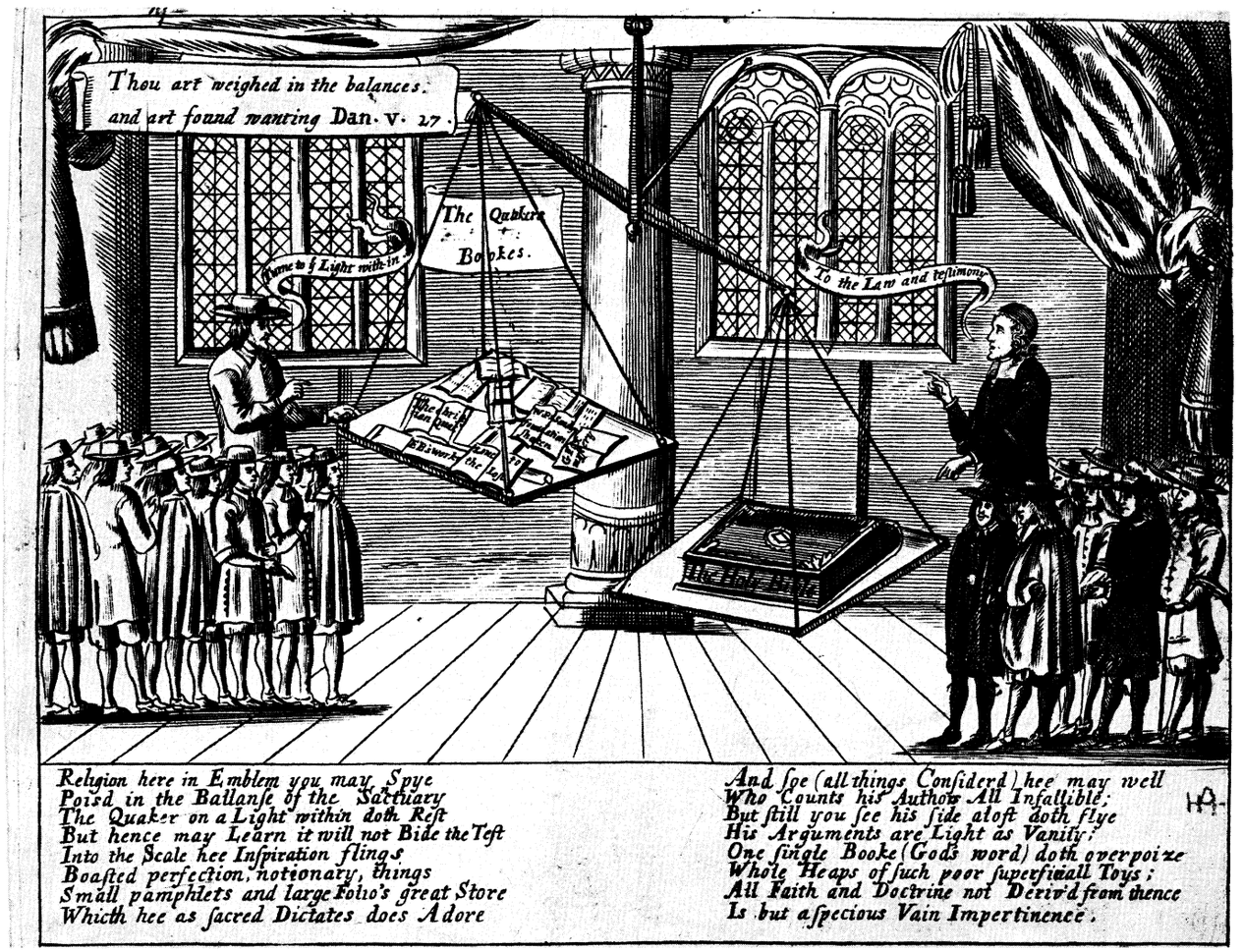
about that experience, but I will not bore you with a complete account, and I will conclude with some remarks about ourselves and our own libraries, demonstrating how far short of Agassiz's ideal I have fallen and how close you can come if you will try. The purpose of my trip was library acquisitions, but I looked at a few books for other reasons, as you will see.

I began my peregrinations with a full day at Bernard Quaritch's, where an energetic, young staff—led by Nicholas Poole-Wilson and Arthur Freeman—with a rich line of credit maintains a marvelous stock of science, economics, continental literature, and English literature—among other things. A Japanese stock, as they say. And what prices! Everything, whether French romantiques, Humanism, or a Spanish Vives on the education of women, seemed to be 150 percent of retail, sure defense against raids by specialist dealers on a dependable stock of rarities for collectors and librarians. I left a stack for quotation, wondering what we could afford among our desiderata. Early books are capital investments nowadays.

Next day at Pickering & Chatto, now owned by Sir William Rees-Mogg, I had the thrill of browsing the remnants of Dudley Massey's lifetime of squirreling away obscure rarities while he supported himself by selling other items. There was a Congreve, probably the last one lacking at Harvard, but it wanted its half-title, and the paper was browned: $2,500 for one of the three copies known on ordinary paper—in addition to the three fine-paper copies. More to my liking was Bromley's, that is Anthony Wilson's, *Catalogue of Engraved British Portraits* (1793), with Sir Christopher Sykes's bookplate by J. E. Millais, but owned previously by Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, who had used it as a catalog of his own portrait print collection. There, for instance, you find the description of the Marshall engraving of Thomas Scott, S.T.B. et Geograph., with Sykes's annotation "Gd." We purchased a copy of that very print from Dudley Massey's cache: Thomas Scott S.T.B., author of numerous pamphlets whose false imprints or lack of imprint have puzzled bibliographers. From the same lot we got an unrecorded German rendition of a Powder Plot broadside, the English original of which rests unique at Harvard; a later anti-Quaker broadside which proves that no number of Quaker books could ever outweigh a single copy of the Bible; a satire on some evangelicals who are doubtless identifiable to those well acquainted with the religious and social history of the day; and a wonderful satirical print showing that Sir Robert Walpole, though out of office, continued to pull the strings, as if behind a screen. Also from Dudley's things came a rare survival, a conger document for an early nineteenth-century edition of Goldsmith's *Animated Nature*. At the top is a draft advertisement and at the bottom a list of the shareholders and their parts. Overleaf are the expenses of the edition (note that the engraved plates were the most costly item by more than half), the payments of the copyright holders according to their shares, and the dates and costs of the advertisements.

Samuel Ward, The Papists Powder-Treason *(Germany? 1689?)*

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights of my first week I spent in the North Library of the British Library looking first at La Mettrie, the eighteenth-century materialist philosopher whose bibliography I am essaying, obtaining a photocopy of a cancellans leaf so I could compare it later with the cancelland



The Quakers Bookes
(London, ca. 1685?)

at the Bibliothèque Nationale; then beginning to look at the elegant philosophical works of the late eighteenth-century amateur Hemsterhuis. There, in the auction catalogue of Hemsterhuis's library, sold in shelf order, I found his red-ruled copies of his own books listed just before his copies of La Mettrie. His books, wide-margined and heavily-leaded, are illustrated with emblematic head- and tail-pieces, engraved after designs by the author who explains them in the text. Already I can see that copies occur on both fine and ordinary paper. More variations may emerge as I check out more copies—while filling out Harvard's collection. The first collected works printed posthumously but employing the original copperplates, came from André Jammes later in the trip.

At Maggs Brothers on Berkeley Square I saw for the first time full shelves of Colquhoun of Lus books from a recent sale, all as new in full eighteenth-century calf. Some sight. One came later on from Theodore Hofmann. But for us at Maggs's there were ephemeral pamphlets and broadsides of the seventeenth and eighteenth century: feigned visions, counterfeit revelation, false miracles, horrid impieties, lying dying-speeches of the Jesuits; a broadsheet describing an earthquake in Oxfordshire; another anti-Quaker broadside; the dying words of the last English printer to be executed for seditious libel.

Along with the ephemera in Maggs's basement was a disbound treatise on color by one of the members of the Sowerby family, which dominated the production of color-plate books in some of the sciences in the nineteenth century.

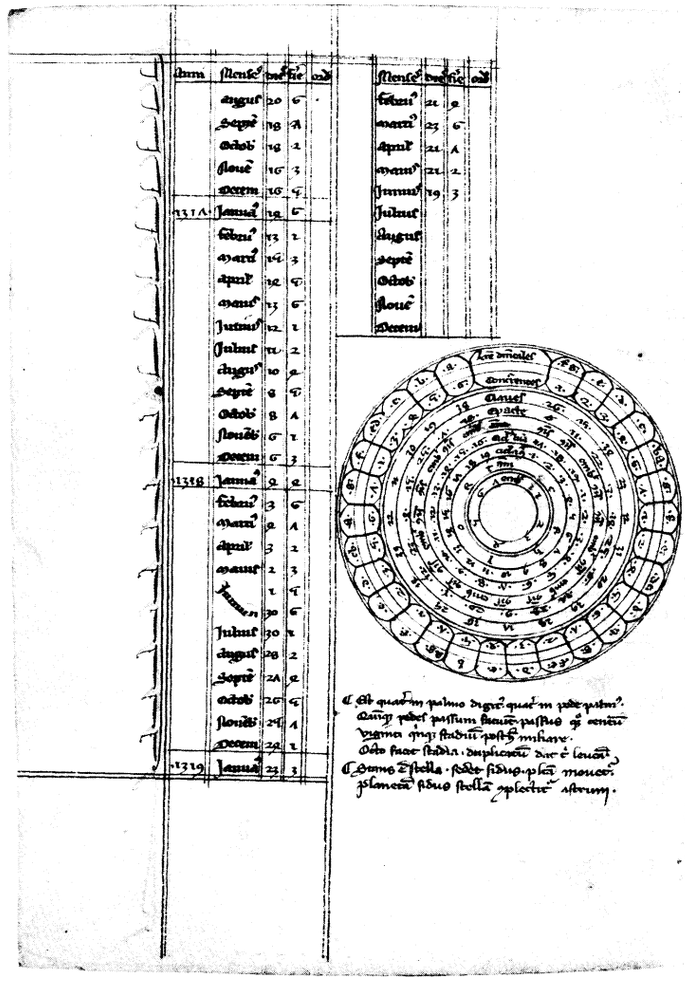
At Alan Thomas's I admired, as before, a thirteenth-century astronomical tract manuscript on vellum from North France. Later with Stanley Kahrl's help we purchased it—some four years since I had been looking at it

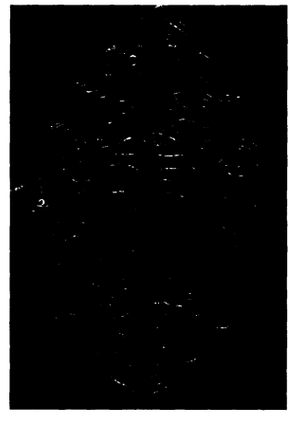
admiringly but hopelessly out of funds. At Marlborough Rare Books there were vellum-bound Fletcher of Saltoun copies of Italian books of the seventeenth and eighteenth century and translations into German or Italian of theoretical and practical art monographs. Also, a wonderful survival of an English book of 1612: a strip of paper perhaps one and a half inches wide was folded over the spine, stabbed through and stitched, as first offered for sale. But too expensive for us.

At the Wellcome Historical Medical Library I caught up with a few more of La Mettrie's cancels. When you find a cancel in the third copy you examine, you must backtrack and explain the differences between the revised page of text and the unrevised one. Oh, joy of bibliography!

Madame Ketty Arvanitidi is the widow of a collector of books on the Greek Church and its possible union with the Roman. This trip, as before, I left her flat with two sacks of books: sixteenth-century imprints from Antwerp, Zurich, Turin, and Rome with some more exotic ones from monasteries to the East.

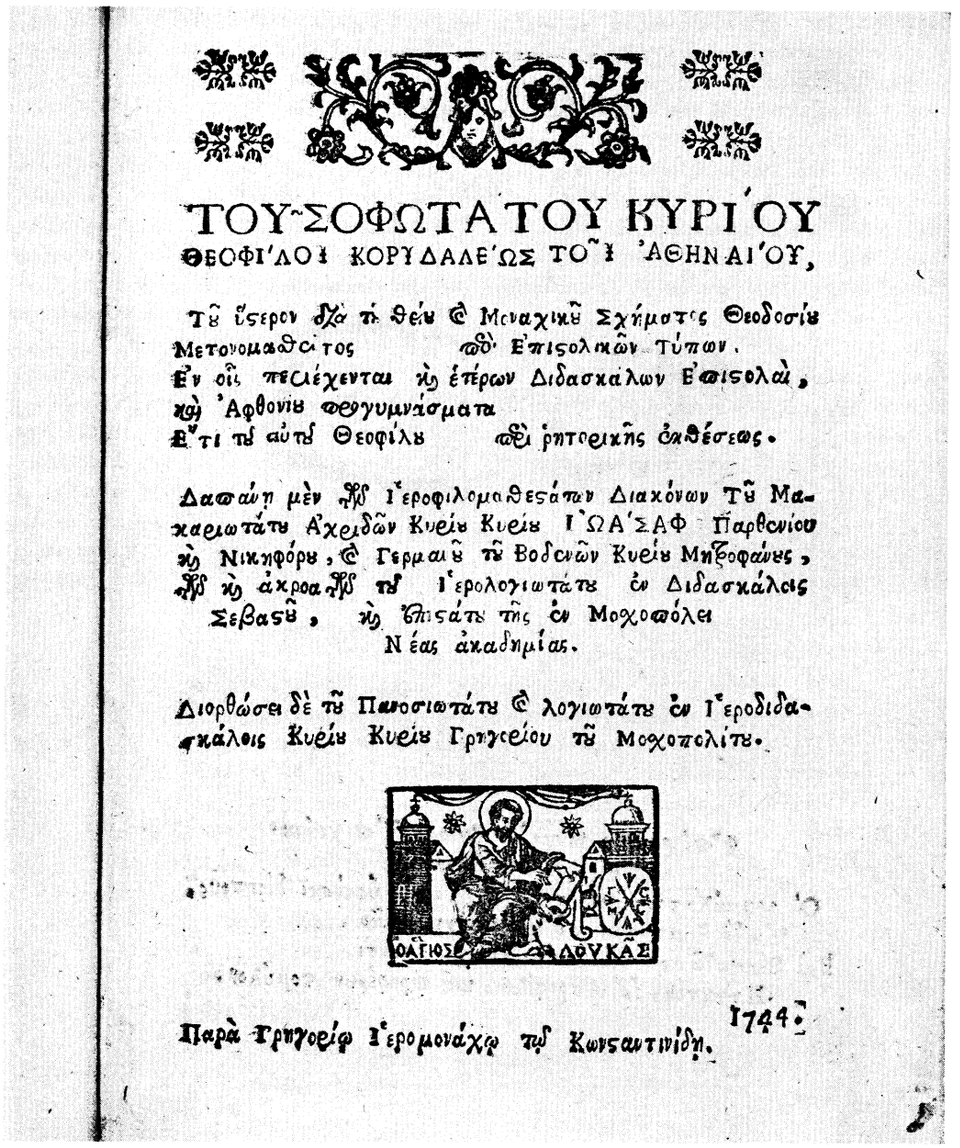
Shown here, for instance, in what is probably a Romanian binding, gilt with a crucifixion on the front cover and stamped in silver on the back—you can find Christ and count the twelve apostles—is an imprint of 1698 from Jassy in Romania, only the 105th book to be printed in that country. Also illustrated is an imprint of 1744 from Albania—Moskopoulos now Voskopje—St. Luke on the title-page and worn blocks in the text from sources that could be traced. Another purchase is a Viennese imprint of 1805, a guide to the conduct of life by one of the Mavrokordatoi. Arvanitidi thought so much of it that he had Poseidon's trident and the





Above: Crucifixion stamp gilt on the front cover of the Romanian binding.

Left: Page from the 13th century French Astronomical MS.



ΤΟΥ ΣΟΦΩΤΑΤΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ
ΘΕΟΦΙΛΟΥ ΚΟΡΥΔΑΛΕΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΑΘΗΝΑΙΟΥ,

Τῦ ἴσερον ἀλλὰ τὸ θεῖν Ὁ Μοναχικῦ Σχήματος Θεοδοσίυ
Μετονομασθέντος ὡδὶ Ἐπιστολικῶν Τύπων.
Ἐν οἷς περιέχονται καὶ ἑτέρων Διδασκάλων Ἐπιστολαὶ,
καὶ Ἀθωνίυ Φουγυμνάσματα
Ἔτι τε αὐτε Θεοφίλυ ὡδὶ ῥητορικῆς καθέσεως.

Δαπανήμὲν ὡς Ἱεροφιλομαθεσάτων Διακόνων Τῦ Μα-
καριωτάτυ Ἀρχιεπισκόπων Κυρίυ Κυρίυ ΙΩΑΣΑΦ Παρθενίου
καὶ Νικηφόρυ, Ὁ Γερμανῦ τῦ Βοδενῶν Κυρίυ Μητροφάνες,
ὡς καὶ ἀκροατῶς τε Ἱερολογιωτάτυ ἐν Διδασκάλοις
Σεβασῦ, καὶ ὑπατε τῆς ἐν Μοχοπόλει
Νέας ἀκαδημίας.

Διορθώσει δὲ τῦ Παναγιωτάτυ Ὁ λογιωτάτυ ἐν Ἱεροδιδα-
σκάλοις Κυρίυ Κυρίυ Γρηγορίου τῦ Μοχοπολίτυ.

ΟΛΓΙΟΣ ΔΟΥΚΑΣ

Παρὰ Γρηγορίῳ Ἱερομονάχῳ τῶ Κωνσταντινίδη. 1744.

Theophilus Korydalleus, Tou Sophotatou Kuriou *(Voskopje, 1744).*

dolphins from his bookplate gilt and painted on the covers.

Albi Rosenthal's stock at Oxford is in transition from the firm's specialty of Portuguese books—last time I bought a vast number of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century books and pamphlets at five to twenty pounds apiece—and his daughter Julia's new interest in French books. Among other things, we tried on general principles a stack of comet tracts which turned out to contain *De tribus cometis* (Rome 1619). Back at the library the searching report showed that we had only a Bologna reprint of 1655. That of course is the place and date of the first collected edition of Galileo. Sure enough, the little pamphlet is by Orazio Grassi, one of Galileo's detractors, the one lampooned in *Il Saggiatore*, and it is important enough to be collected in the Galileo works of 1655 and to rate a full entry in the Galilean bibliography of Cinti together with a reproduction of its title-page.

That noble Catalan of Oxford, John Gili, offered the usual Lyell and Heredia copies of Spanish books. One of the most interesting finds this time was a study of Provençal and its influence on Lingua Toscana, printed at Rome in 1724 by one of the de Rossi with the device of the Roman Arcadian academy on the title-page.

Whether its frontispiece is friendly or unfriendly, apt or inept, I can hardly say, for thrust into a handsome tall old library, with its Corinthian capitals over the columns which separate the cases, is an ugly squat modern secretary, half filled with huge fat works of the moderns: Tasso, Varchi, Bembo, etc. Above is an expression from the *Paradiso*, "Con questa moderna favella"—in this modern language—taken from one of the books in which Dante questions his great great grandfather Cacciaguida about his own family and Florentine families of the good old twelfth century. But Dante says that his ancestor addressed him "con voce più dolce e soave"—in a voice sweeter and gentler (that is, either Latin or Old Florentine dialect)—"ma *non* con questa moderna favella"—but *not* in this modern speech.

A list of Provençal and Catalan authors, arranged by Christian names, goes so far as to analyze the contents of manuscripts at the Vatican and Laurentian libraries. Concluding my Oxford Sunday and my first week abroad, Diana Parikian showed me Italian books, mostly obscure ones with illustrations, including a tiny emblem book, another de Rossi imprint, honoring the ninetieth birthday of Pope Clement XI in 1702. The emblems are tucked into little floral pockets.

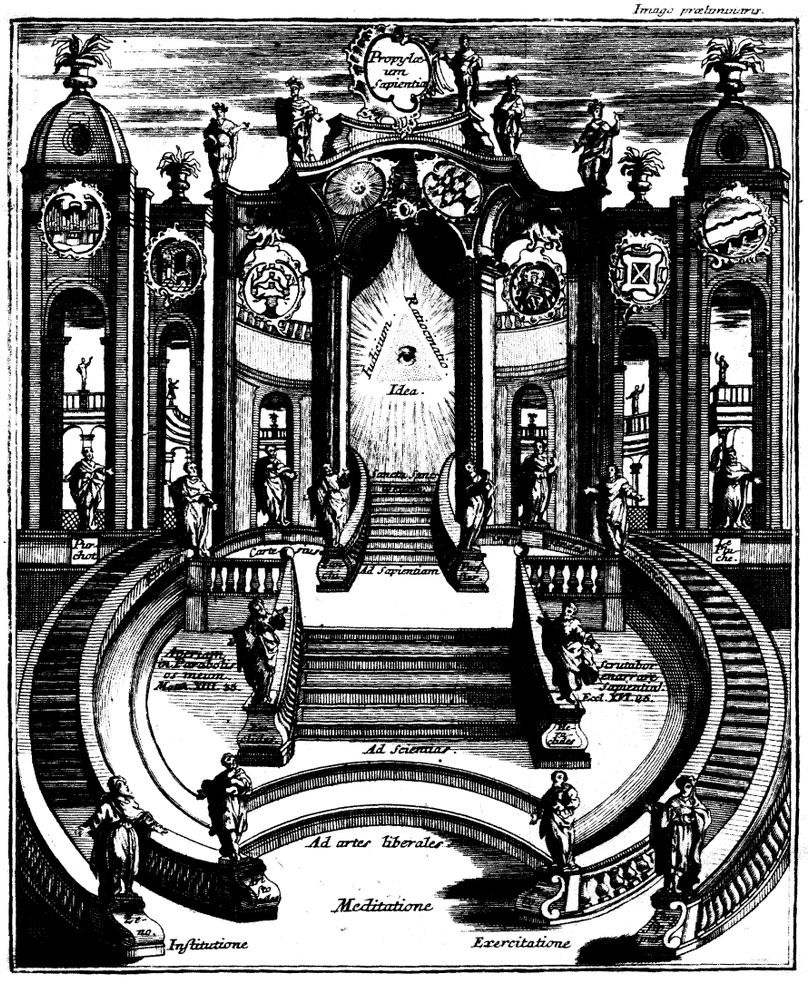
At Andrew Stuart's in Bourne I put aside a stack of grubby Italian, German, and French

Frontispiece in Antonio Bastero, La Crusca Provenzale *(Rome, 1724).*

translations of English books: European Britannica. They looked as if they had been rummaged out of Dutch stocks, exactly what they say Stuart does, on a bicycle. Typical of them is a French translation of Thomas White's *Perfect Christian*, printed at Quevilly (which I take to be a suburb of Rouen) in 1674 by Jacques Lucas, Sign of the Globes, who has adopted Plantin's "Labor" and compasses in his device. Lucas declares that Labor joins both sides, showing us how it is possible to link both a terrestrial and a celestial globe, joining heaven and earth. Alexander Rogoyski at Long Sutton offered his usual attractive stock of Continental books on many subjects, all inexpensive and useful and well described. On its face one appears to be a technical treatise, but when you begin to look at it you see that it is really about, as my assistant puts it, "coneheads on the moon." Well, when they start talking about squaring the circle, you know the book isn't serious, right?

James Burmester, who had recently joined Paul Grinke in London, had a fascinating lot of provincial English printing, literature, science, and popular books. One, in a falsely-grained leather binding is my favorite. It is an Italian translation of William Collins's *Odes* printed at Piacenza in 1814, dedicated to the English soldier Robert Wilson, whose copy, the dedication copy, it is.

E. P. Goldschmidt always has wonderful copies of illustrated books, but it is sometimes difficult to find books there for Harvard. This time there was a Russian Parmacopoeia, a seventeenth-century attack on Inquisition censorship, and an eighteenth-century illustrated dialectic from Freiburg im Bresgau, 1771. I wonder if the title-page vignette could stand for Johann Andrea Satron, the publisher. Anything is possible in a Baroque book like this, including wonderful plates like this rendering of the Gateway to Wisdom. As you see, we progress by meditation to the liberal



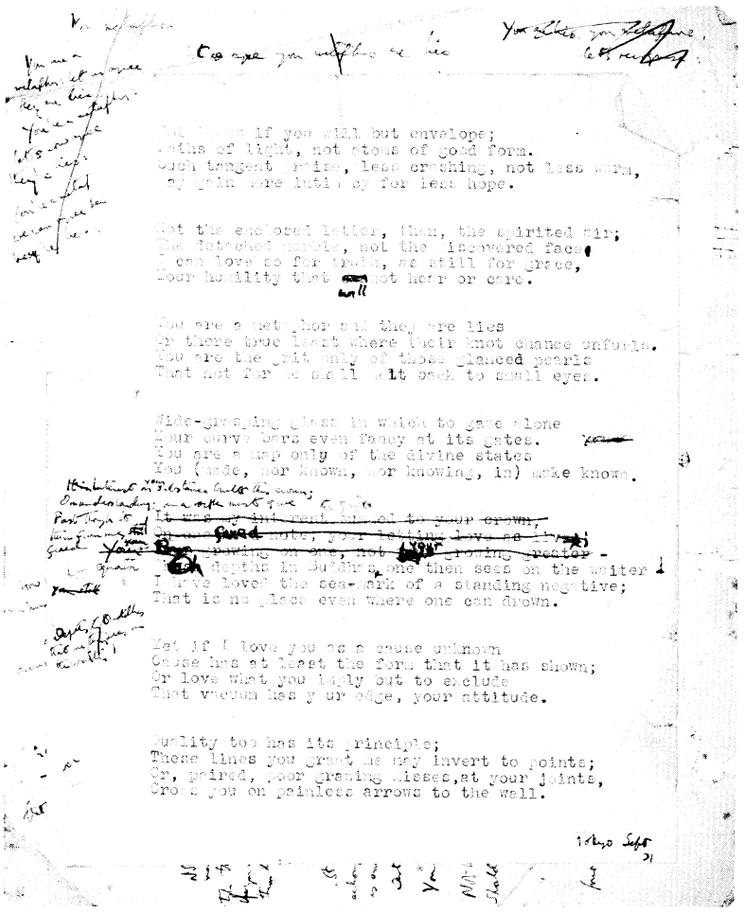
Engraved illustration in J.B. Hornstein, Dialectica Analogicis Imaginibus Illustrata *(Freiburg im Breisgau, 1771).*

arts, sciences, wisdom, and finally to the holy of holies in which Idea, Judgment, and Reason are revealed—all amidst balconies, towers, and emblems that would baffle Escher.

In England my last bookshop visits were with Stuart Bennett and Theodore Hofmann, American expatriates from California. Things from Bennett include a broadside poem of 1683, inscribed at the foot "Knowledge is No Burden"—doubtless a writing teacher's catch: a sermon of Harvard's Tutor Flynt printed in Boston in 1729 by Samuel Gerrish who has inscribed it to Isaac Watts, whose Logic was used at Harvard College and who sent to its library copies of his books as they were published; a Dublin-printed astronomy of 1732 with engravings printed in sepia; a country book printed on thick paper, Bible poems to be memorized, Norwich 1711; and an anonymous book: *Inscribed to the Memory of John Keats, the Author of Endymion.* By its heavily patterned binder's cloth we can date it to the 1830s but whether it is British or American is hard to say. Could that be Philadelphia? No, Wakefield, England, 1838, with poems to Shelley as well as to George Washington, so far as we can tell quite unknown. Finally, a regency binding in smooth calf from Boston, not ours but the other one in Lincolnshire.

Theodore Hofmann, one of the great experts, offered me the second revised edition of Dodsley's Collection of Poems—just the sort of thing he discovers so usefully for collectors and libraries. Also, he conveyed the only real perception that any of the English booksellers could give me this visit: there is no designated second edition for many eighteenth-century English books. They skip from an undesignated first edition to third, fourth, etc. Such books were often issued in both large and small paper which the publishers counted as two editions instead of one. He is busily filling out the British Library holdings of these books, with either small or large paper, many of the possibles coming from the Colquhoun of Lus collection.

I spent part of my last evening in England with the widow of Sir William Empson, whose papers we hoped to purchase: counting notebooks, letter files, checking annotated books. She played for me the BBC tape of Empson reading that excruciatingly difficult poem "Bacchus," each strophe beginning on a high pitch:



Variant drafts of "Letter V" *from the notebooks and papers of William Empson.*

> The laughing god born of a startling answer
> (Cymbal of clash in the divided glancer
> Forcing from heaven's the force of earth's desire)

descending and descending,

> All living blood, and whatever blood makes wine.[4]

and finally the notes delivered flat like a BBC announcer

> A mythological chemical operation to distil drink is going on for the first four verses . . . .[5]

I barely retained my composure.

With Ted Hofmann's help we later concluded the deal. Here are some samples: "Not locus if you will but envelope." Messy, but wonderful.

4 William Empson, *Collected poems* (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1949), p. 42.

5 Idem p. 104.

Benjamin Roubaud, Grand Chemin de la Posterité *(Paris, 1842?)*

Across the channel I ranged through three bookshops in my first afternoon in Paris: the poor remnant of Marc Loliée's stock—he is dead six years now—the lively modern stock of his son Bernard, and the quite miscellaneous stock of Robert D. Valette. Thanks to the enterprise of Louis Bothuel, Mme. Marc Loliée's young manager, there were a few new things to be found. One was an astrology text by Chrisogone with its title-page border so well suited to the new film "Labyrinth," printed in Venice by the da Sabbio in 1528. It concludes with a paper instrument to help you find your house, for which the privilege from the Venetian senate is printed underneath. Louis also had a letter by the Belgian artist Ensor, written to Gelderode, partly unpublished, and illustrated with an unpublished drawing. At young Loliée's there was a *grand papier* George Sand which you can barely see through its chemise. It is printed on that crinkled paper stock which goes back at least to the days of Byron.

Later, on Ascension Day afternoon, young Loliée offered me from his private collection—"I don't like to sell my MSS," he said—a 200-page manuscript of Georges Bataille. Actually it is a tract manuscript, made up of individual texts like "Dirty" and "Sky Blue." Valette had a colored copy of that wonderful folding caricature of authors and other French celebrities of the Romantic period of which an uncolored copy hangs in the Balzac house. Here astride his Siren Pegasus you see Hugo in the lead—"Ugly is Beautiful"—with Gautier just behind, Lamartine in the clouds, the elder Dumas with a pack of titles on his back, Balzac just behind his left foot, the playwright Scribe, chugging along at fifty horsepower with a tenderfull of collaborators—all of them travelling the High Road to Posterity. Valette also had a wonderful collection of engraved folio-size advertisements of the eighteenth century, including one for a toyshop at the Sign of the Monkeys.

André Jammes offered a book with a frontispiece after Verlaine, Haller's advice on forming a library (1771), the Portuguese edition of Osorio's Letter to Elizabeth of England inviting her to return to the Catholic faith, and a copy, as new, of the plates to illustrate *La Nouvelle Heloise*, 1761. Not only is the *Epistola* a splendid example of European Britannica, but it also shows the continuing use of Geoffrey Tory woodcut borders which Anne Anninger has traced from their arrival at Lisbon in the 1520s through the hands of many Portuguese printers over the years. More than anyone else, perhaps, André is responsible for the serious acceptance of photographs in museums such as the Getty, and I tried to get him to speak for us at Houghton for the fall. When I told him of Hugh Amory's plan to make an exhibition with me on Authority in books (crosses, crowns, imprimaturs, mimicry, forgery, etc.), André said, "Why not include Liberty?" Good idea.

Jean Hugues combines an art gallery and bookshop with the publication of painter's books, so he could show me wonderful Matta,

Miro, and Michaux books—things for Graphic Arts Curator Eleanor Garvey to consider. In a limp vellum wrapper is a modern classic, *Affat* (1940), one of the sixty-four copies, its text by Ilya Zdanevich from Tiflis (the Forty-First Degree), who came to Paris calling himself Iliazd. Who would dare to illustrate such a text? Who would know what it is all about? (See the illustration overleaf). Hugues also showed me bindings by two active French artisans: Jean de Gonet and Monique Matthieu. Where cord crosses hinge Gonet makes a knuckle joint out of metal, fiber, screen, plastic, and he has devised a supple, articulated binding of vertical plates mounted on a flexible material. A new structure. Matthieu has created what I came to call rélieure cracké, for she arranges fissures between her onlays of sombre autumn colors. Both binders are superb craftsmen, unlike so many of the designer bookbinders whose work is publicized these days. Also at Hugues was a book I had never seen before, the *Meidosems* of Henri Michaux. Regular perhaps in its published form with the plates cropped close; rather more exciting in the Hughes-Harvard copy with its extra suites printed in yellow, green, and red.

That evening I spent with Henri Schiller, the industrialist who began to collect bookbindings under the tutelage of Georges Heilbrun. He knows more about his field than any other collector I have met: where the books and manuscripts are, all the classic types. The secret of collecting is in knowing when *not* to buy, he says—good advice for bookbindings. Schiller opens his cases for you, laden with pure, unsophisticated books from the seventeenth-century back to the earliest Arabic and western gilt bindings: touch it, take it, open it, he says. What a host.

Christian Galantaris, once an active dealer in nineteenth-century books, is now expert in the book auctions, so he cannot work on his stock and I can have a good look at petits romantiques, a multi-volume Eugène Sue novel in printed wrappers, stacks of books at affordable prices.

At Garnier-Arnoul I bought collections of popular plays, 1780-1820, formed by the playwrights themselves. Among them were quantities of minor theatrical works written by Gersin, bound at his order for a family member in five volumes, decorated on the spine with lyres and with the masks of comedy and tragedy. Also from him I bought for my friend Carlo Alberto Chiesa a Commedia dell'Arte mask, just to remind C.A.C. of a common interest of ours.

Coulet et Faure, the first-edition dealers, were disappointing; but afterward I spent a pleasant evening with Monique Matthieu of the rélieures crackés, her husband the poet André Frenaud (whom we must start to collect), and a book curator from the Louvre, at a dinner arranged by J. E. Gautrot. Twenty years a clerk at Blaizot, Gautrot was to open a shop on rue de Seine in October, and we all had a good look at his growing stock—including Matthieu bindings of course.

At l'Arsenal I took in the show of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Belgian bookbindings arranged by the Bibliotheca Wittockiana, Brussels. Included was a beautiful modern binding of August Kulche, sprayed with silver, reminding one of Odilon Redon's orientalia; pastiche bindings by Hagué; and truly imaginative publisher's bindings—cartonnages d'éditeur—by J. Casterman et fils, ca. 1850, one of them in silver and blue paper, another a rococo binding of gold on white. The rest were French bindings made in Belgium. Too bad the show didn't begin with those emblematic plaque bindings of the 1530s or with truly early bindings so one could disentangle Belgian from French.

Claude Blaizot's stock is in transition from nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French literature to contemporary printing, binding, and illustration. For generations Blaizots have expertised auctions and published text editions, bibliographies, and livres d'artiste. M. Blaizot took me down to the basement stock which Gautrot had shown me five years before; then I had found a Zola I had hunted for years and a Valéry I never hoped to find. Not so good this time.

Later in the same afternoon I called on Maurice Bazy, who has packed Maggs's old Paris bookcases solid with nineteenth-century French books. For us there were an early Jules Verne, published before the *voyages imaginaires*, and many a plaquette associated with one of our collected authors. And talk of books: how can a reader understand Balzac without seeing how the author cast out his lines in those marginous, widely-leaded, multi-volume octavos; the Belgian contrefaçons and even today's Pléiade give the wrong impression. The duodecimos of Molière show that he was considered only an amuser, while the noble quartos of Corneille demonstrate the serious esteem in which he was held.

From Bazy's crowded shop to Pierre Berès's expansive home across from the Rodin Museum, talk switched to that day's sale at Monaco. Berès had picked a bargain, an unknown French devotional book of 1683, a 12mo in vellum wrappers, gilt with the arms of the author's wife, illustrated with ten engravings, seven of them incorporating the family arms. A very elegant production. After supper one could look at French literary manuscripts, royal bindings, a stunning Poliphilus while Berès explained his theory of how that strange book came to be printed by Aldus.

Next day at the Bibliothèque Nationale I resolved my problems with La Mettrie's cancels

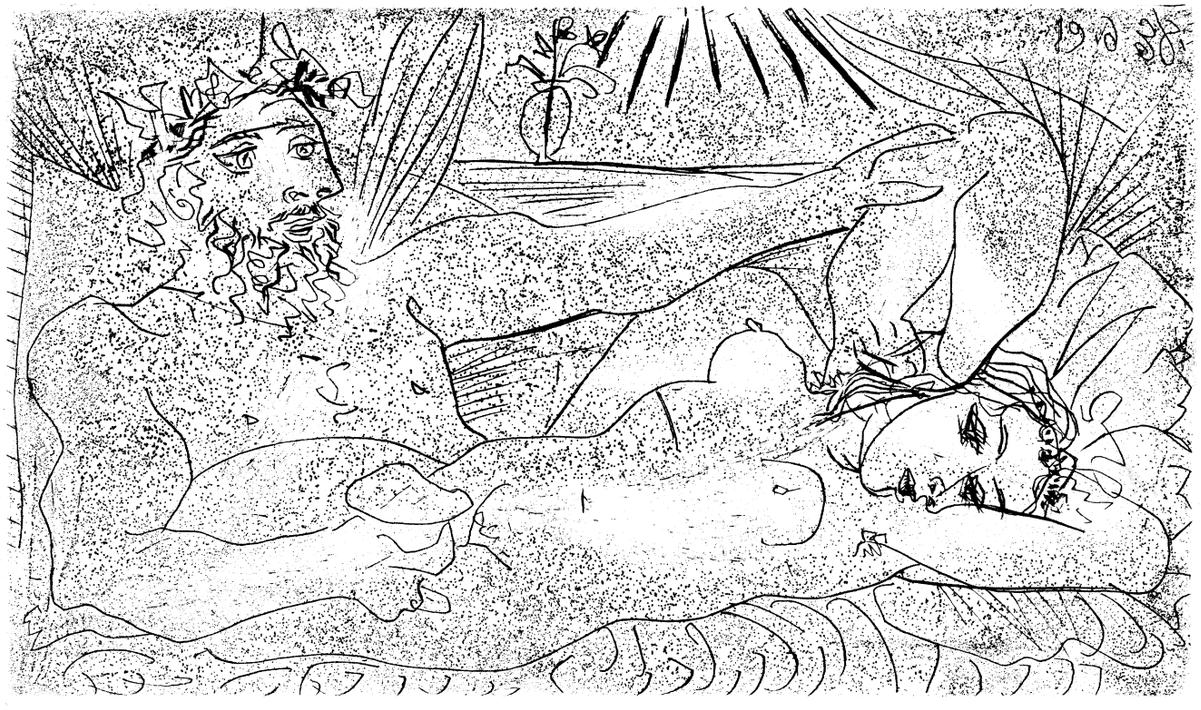
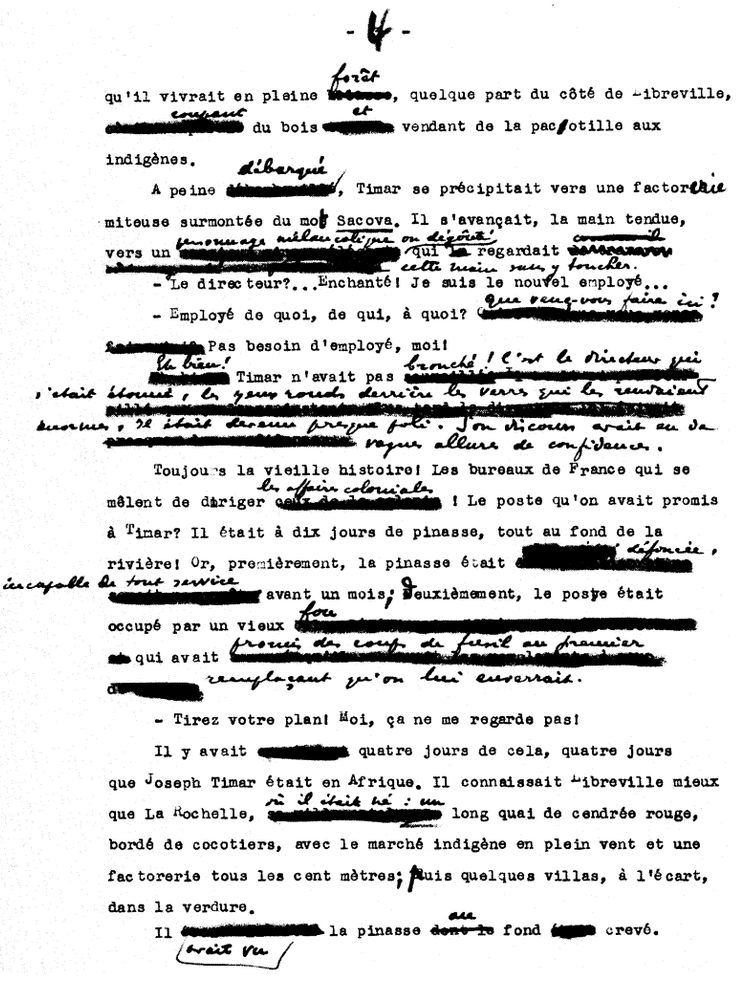


Illustration by Pablo Picasso in Affat *(1940) by Iliazd.*



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qu'il vivrait en pleine forêt, quelque part du côté de Libreville, campant et du bois vendant de la pacotille aux indigènes.

A peine débarqué, Timar se précipitait vers une factorerie miteuse surmontée du mot Sacova. Il s'avançait, la main tendue, vers un personnage nègre colossal qui le regardait [illegible] cette main sans y toucher.

- Le directeur?...Enchanté! Je suis le nouvel employé...

- Employé de quoi, de qui, à quoi? Que venez-vous faire ici?

Pas besoin d'employé, moi!

Le blanc! Timar n'avait pas [illegible] Bronché! C'est le directeur qui était blanc, le gros rond, derrière le verre qui les renvoyait [illegible] il était devenu presque fou. Son discours avait eu de vagues allures de confidence.

Toujours la vieille histoire! Les bureaux de France qui se mêlent de diriger les affaires coloniales! Le poste qu'on avait promis à Timar? Il était à dix jours de pinasse, tout au fond de la rivière! Or, premièrement, la pinasse était [illegible] défoncée, incapable de tout service avant un mois; deuxièmement, le poste était occupé par un vieux fou qui avait [illegible] remplaçant qu'on lui enverrait.

- Tirez votre plan! Moi, ça ne me regarde pas!

Il y avait [illegible] quatre jours de cela, quatre jours que Joseph Timar était en Afrique. Il connaissait Libreville mieux que La Rochelle, où il était né : un long quai de cendrée rouge, bordé de cocotiers, avec le marché indigène en plein vent et une factorerie tous les cent mètres; puis quelques villas, à l'écart, dans la verdure.

Il [illegible] la pinasse au fond crevé.

avait vu

Page from the MS. of Le Coup de Lune *by Geroge Simenon.*

while checking some troublesome books published by Ronald Davis, an Englishman who made fashionable among the French aristocrats the collecting of modern first editions during the time of Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier. (I am making a list of his imprints.) Also I looked at some Hemsterhuis, and some of the books of J.-C. Brunet, the great bibliographer. At the end of that bibliographical day I met Berès at his shop. While he introduced me to the editor of the Diderot edition he is publishing I formulated the expression: La bibliographie matérielle, c'est la folie anglaise et le malaise américain! Anyhow, while Monsieur Editor viewed an unknown Diderot manuscript that was to come up for auction soon, I looked up a number of the other manuscripts. Consulting by phone with Manuscripts Curator Rodney Dennis that Friday night, I telephoned bids to Berès from Milan on the Monday, and a cable two days after my return announced success. We had bought a 234-page working manuscript of Paul Adam (1891); 2½ working drafts of *The Elephant* from *Histoires Naturelles* of Jules Renard—the text that equally inspired Ravel and Toulouse-Lautrec (the accompanying drawing is by Renard and not Lautrec)—and a 202-page typed manuscript inscribed with red and blue layers of revisions, of the 1933 novel, *Le Coup de Lune*, by Simenon. You see he *did* revise his texts.

That Wednesday I worked the stock of Lucien Scheler, science and literature, and left Italian, German, and French books for quotation, begging Lucien to help us find Éluard's second book (two years before he had sold us the first and third). His young successor Bernard Clavreuil had for us an Arabic grammar from the Cairo branch of Napoleon's national printing house, and an unfindable little technical manual by Dr. Louis Destouches, a.k.a. Céline.

At Jean Viardot's there was humanism, including an early edition of Melanchthon's *Loci communes,* with extensive contemporary manuscript notes, and a reprint of the standard Renaissance guide to Muscovy by Herberstein.

This particular copy passed from the great French collector Étienne Baluze into the hands of one of the Duperrons and then into a seminary for missionaries to foreign parts. Its woodcut map is revised. Also at Viardot was a rare Nifo (Venice 1504), explaining to physicians and others the right day for action. It has one of those registers that is based on the first word on the recto of each bifolium: *omnes sunt duerniones.*

Felix Polonski, our Russian agent, had Pasternak's second book for me, this one from Centrifuge press, and he had located a comparably good copy of the first, which I ordered on the spot. Also, he had two fascinating ABC books: the one by ballet designer Alexandre Benoit, pre-revolutionary, is influenced by Crane, Caldecott, and Greenaway; the other, revolutionary, is ammunition in the Soviet campaign against illiteracy, but it is a rare edition, mentioning Trotsky.

On the way back from supper that Wednesday night I found the Galantaris's toiling away at 10:00, so I knocked on their window and got their list of the books they had put aside for me.

On Thursday, Ascension, I called again on Jean Hugues to see more illustrated books, on the widow of the great bookseller Georges Heilbrun to pay respects, and on "le colonel Sicklès," to keep in touch. Sickles, an American expatriot, is the great collector of nineteenth-century French literature. One learns from his copies. His proudest new possession is a copy of the Younger Dumas's *La Dame aux Camelias* from the czar's collection at Tsarskoe Selo—not in the usual Russian red or green plaque-stamped fake morocco, but in a half French binding and in perfect condition. Sickles berated me for the way in which I had used Berès as agent to purchase the manuscript of *Mort à Credit* by Céline at his auction sale two years before.

Thiery Bodin, in whose shop I began work Friday morning, expertises autograph sales. Like Galantaris, he must neglect his stock, so it was full of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century philosophical, musical, scientific, and literary manuscripts. Albert Roussel's first symphony, a Morand manuscript on big placards—just like the Elder Dumas's. We did well with him. For me there were two letters of J.-C. Brunet: a late one about a collector—"such books are only rare in the cabinets of collectors who refuse them"—and an early one to an Elsevier bibliographer who was quarreling with Brunet's statements in the Manuel. Later that morning in Rousseau-Girard's basement I could find nothing but a few tracts by Chateaubriand. I used to have such good luck there, but poor Rousseau-Girard is hospitalized with Alzheimer's and Madame is heroically getting the catalogs out all by herself. Upstairs there was an early Petersburg Euler, 1730s, that I did not recall, which we turned out to have, and some Italian and German translations of eighteenth-century scientific works by English or French scholars. Among them was *Vegetable Statics* as rendered into Italian and printed at Naples in 1756.

Sunday I flew to Milan for just one bookseller, Carlo Alberto Chiesa, in whose stock I spent all day Monday. "Don't you ever get tired of looking at books, Roger?" he begged at seven o'clock. "The richest stock of all," I told him. Three volumes, "Pezzetti Varii in Rima," contained over one hundred eighteenth- and seventeenth-century popular books from many cities, mostly in verse. Therein, sold on the Rialto in 1766, is *The Life of the Empress Flavia* and, printed for distribution at Venice and Bassano to say nothing of other places in 1687 by the Remondini (manufacturers of paper as well as dealers in books), is a reminder of the great victory over the Turks. Serving to remind us that wormy woodblocks were used just as often in Italy as they were in France or Germany or England is the *Fall of Naples,* with a very ancient cut of a scholar. Beside these were three Venetian chapbook editions in Modern Greek. One shows Aesop hunching his back over his book of fables in an unrecorded Venetian edition by Nicholas Glukis, and another is one of two popular books also printed by Glukis about a folk hero who seems to be called Mpertoldinos but who turns out to be an import to Greek culture, Bertoldo. As you see from his hairy flanks, he is none too swift a character; indeed he is covered with flies as he journeys to call on the king. Perhaps Chiesa's greatest book is the dissertation of Vico, the true beginning of the *Scienza Nuova*, 1709, a copy inscribed to one Biagio Garofalo. But another one isn't so bad either: the prospectus for the Italian lending library to be operated by Mozart's librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, subscribed to by all the literati and cognoscenti of New York, including Professor Anthon and Clement Clarke Moore. A treat to see, a joy to buy.

We projected a Houghton exhibition made of beautiful books no larger than Tory's *Champfleury*: Aldus's *de Aetna*; some Lyonnese books of literature 1540-1560; Holbein's

Woodcut illustrations in the Modern Greek Bertoldo (Venice, 1818).

Dance of Death; a Mardersteig post-war book; some of the German fine printing between the wars. I titled it at once: Small Enough to Handle, Big Enough to Read. Watch for future developments. We were still talking about books on the way to the airport Tuesday morning, Carlo Alberto promising to wear his Punchinello mask while drinking the California wine I had brought him.

There, I've passed it along—but Looking . . . Learning. Agassiz would not be pleased with me and my friends in hot pursuit of articles densely packed with intellectual or artistic beauty. No disinterestedness there. No "myriad worlds in the vague nebulous spaces of heaven." Not all bad, but back in the library, things settle down and a narrow point of view can broaden and round out.

How *do* you really look at books so as to learn from the encounter? Perhaps you refrain from identifying the text so that you concentrate on size and shape, covers and paper, types and arrangement, picture and ornament. What did people make the book look like to begin with, and what did they do with it afterward? *Then* identify the text, *then* take notes and make comparisons. Librarians and collectors may be the most disinterested viewers in their own libraries, for their approach is not narrowed by specific reference and research needs. And they are insiders. H.-J. Martin, Monsieur Book History, confided to André Jammes that if he were not a librarian he would never have been able to make the enormous number of comparisons among books and genres on which his work is based. *You have the Martin advantage.* I encourage you to use it, and pass it along in exhibitions, bibliographical notes, lists, articles, talks, conversations—any way you can. Perhaps you will speak, as Agassiz did, on motion in Families, about the sweeping and choppy courses of handwriting, the stance of printing types, the colors and shapes of text blocks, the stiff or supple structure of bookbindings, the configurations of annotations, the play of picture and text. Please, come along with me: just Look at Books, Learn from It, Pass It Along.