

## GUILD OF BOOK WORKERS JOURNAL

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# JOURNAL OF THE GUILD OF BOOK WORKERS

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The Guild of Book Workers  
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(Editor of this issue: Grady E. Jensen)

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Gerhard Gerlach, a towering figure in the field of hand bookbinding both in this country and abroad, died an untimely and unexpected death on August 29, 1968—his sixty-first birthday.

Though he had been working within the week prior to his death, he had not been in really good health for some months, perhaps years. Feeling unusually bad on the morning of Aug. 26 his doctor was called, the one to whom he had made numerous visits during his years of residence in Vermont. He, in a cursory examination, could find nothing specifically wrong but he did persuade Gerhard to go to the hospital for what he described as some routine tests. His family was given no clue as to the possible seriousness of his condition. They went to the hospital on his birthday in anticipation of celebrating the occasion only to learn that he had collapsed a half hour earlier, was in an oxygen tent and could have no visitors. He succumbed without ever knowing they were in the hospital. The posthumous medical report attributed his death to massive heart failure.

Gerhard was born in Schweidnitz, Silesia, Germany in 1907, the only child of Gustav and Hulda (Hoffman) Gerlach. He loved to reminisce about visits to his grandparent's farm, and the simple but happy Christmases that he experienced as a boy.

He decided after graduation from high school, or its German equivalent, to go into the field of hand bookbinding. His objective was the State Academy of Graphic Arts in Leipsiz. At that time a three-year apprenticeship in the field of one's major interest was a prerequisite for admission to the Academy, for all Germans, so Gerhard apprenticed himself to a bookbinder for whom he worked from 1923 to 1926. (Foreigners wishing to study at the Academy encountered different requirements; in the field of bookbinding they were required to have had some former training or experience, and obtain permission of the professor before being allowed to register for classes.)

After serving his apprenticeship Gerhard was admitted to the Academy in the Fall of 1926. He had the privilege of studying under the already famous Ignatz Weimeler who exercised in the whole book field as well as in the area of design and technique

in bookbinding a profound and lasting influence on the young and impressionable Gerhard. During his years at the Academy he was an outstanding pupil in the bookbinding classes. After seven years of study he received, in 1933, his diploma and certificate qualifying him as a master in the field of hand bookbinding.

During his years at the Academy he also took courses in related fields—lettering, calligraphy, typography, book illustration, the history of the book, etc. So in addition to becoming a skilled and proficient bookbinder, he also gained insight and knowledge into the other areas of endeavour that are required to produce a really fine book. As a result of these courses he always had great respect for typographers, printers, designers, illustrators, etc.; and through this training and experience he was able to develop his own philosophy as to the part that a binding should play in a beautifully produced book. He felt very strongly that the binding should complement the book, not over-shadow it. He also respected the original purpose of a book—namely, to be read—and all of his bindings reflect these feelings. Many of them are collector's items today, but none of them are so precious or so delicate that they cannot comfortably be handled by an interested reader. With his superb ability as a craftsman and an artist he was capable of producing almost any type of binding, and could easily have fallen into the modern trend of exaggerated and gimmicky bindings, but his philosophy and his integrity prevented him from doing this. He just smiled when such suggestions were made to him, and went right on practicing his profession as he saw fit.

He was one of a great number of European and English binders who migrated to this country in the 30s and 40s. He stands out in this group as one of the major contributors to the progress of hand bookbinding in America. Many factors govern the attitudes of foreigners who decide to settle here. First and, perhaps, foremost is the economic necessity of making a living; the old world tradition of not divulging "trade secrets"; and, if European, the inevitable difficulty of mastering the English language.

None of these barriers presented a problem to Gerhard; he came from a successful and affluent German background; he was educated in an enlightened era when there were no secrets—the

techniques were simple, it was their mastery that might cause trouble; and he was married to an American who could always serve as his spokesman, if need be.

In addition, he quickly affiliated himself with the book-binding interests here. He joined the Guild in 1939 and was generous with both his time and effort in any project that was undertaken. He was reluctant to accept an office in the organization, though he did serve as program chairman for one term in 1958-59.

He was competent with tools in general, and an enthusiastic gardener. He had a great interest in people, and was perhaps at his best in a gathering of his friends. He was jovial and witty, with a delightful sense of humor. Under this he had a deep sense of loyalty. This was exemplified, perhaps at its best, when in the extreme heat of mid-August—just two weeks before his death—he made the effort to drive from Vermont to New York to attend the 70th birthday party of Mr. Sunderhauf, a long time friend and fellow German, and the man to whom many of us owe a debt of gratitude for the very fine Krause equipment that we proudly possess.

He was an inspiring, and at times an exasperating teacher. His superb craftsmanship, his impeccable work habits, his meticulous attention to every detail, and his insistence on striving for perfection were an inspiration to his interested students. If a book, in the opinion of its owner, was worth re-binding or restoring in his opinion it was worth doing well. He could be very patient with a beginner's lack of skill; but had little patience with the student who asked, "isn't there an easier way?" He hated a cluttered working surface, carelessly cut protection sheets, lumpy paste and dirty bonefolders—all symbols in his mind of an indifferent craftsman. While his English was adequate most of the time, the more absorbed he got in his instructions, the more difficult he was to understand. He would at times spend what seemed an inordinate amount of time, to an impatient, eager and unschooled student, in his careful preparation for a job. Often when asked a simple question concerning some technique such as how to make up an endsheet signature—if the paper chosen by the student happened to be a marbled one, he very likely would take some minutes describing the process of

marbling before he got around to answering the question! The student that he was talking to might or might not be interested, but others were "chafing at the bit" for his attention.

In his fifth year at the Academy in Leipzig an attractive young American—Kathryn Edwards—who had been studying bookbinding for sometime in Paris came to the Academy to pursue her studies. He took one look at her and she at him, and they agreed that "this was it."

In the summer of 1933 she returned to the U. S. to explore the possibility of well-trained hand binders making a living in New York. She was a native of Wisconsin and though she had visited an aunt in New York on occasions, she was totally unfamiliar with the bookbinding picture. With little knowledge, but fired with enthusiasm, she set about the task of following up every possible lead that she gleaned from her visits to the obvious places.

Within a few months, and as an entering wedge, Kathryn began work in the fall of 1933 as a therapist, teaching bookbinding, in a sanatorium for mentally disturbed people in Greenwich, Conn. After working there for about two months she told the Director about a friend of hers, an accomplished German bookbinder, and asked if he, too, could teach there. This permission was granted, as was her request for a few weeks off around Christmas time. During this period she went to Germany to find out from Gerhard if he would like to come to America. In reminiscing recently she said that she had been so busy exploring the field and "singing his praises" that she had almost forgotten what he looked like; then laughingly said, when I reached Hamburg I was shocked to be greeted by a short, thin, palefaced young man who was carrying in his arms two dozen large red roses.

They returned to New York in January 1934 and proceeded to Greenwich to take up their work. At this time Gerhard knew little English, and when the Director discovered this she quite naturally objected to the arrangement.

Miss Helen Edwards, an aunt of Kathryn's, was at the time living in a hotel in New York. When she learned of their predicament, she said she had really always wanted an apartment; so she found one in Greenwich Village at the corner of 4th and 11th Sts.

Kathryn and Gerhard moved in with her; the living room in addition to its usual function served as a bindery, a dining room and a bedroom.

During the next five months they made many contacts that proved useful in the years to come. Among these, to mention a few, were: Melbert B. Cary, Jr., Frederick Warde, Valenti Angelo, Otto Fuhrmann of New York University (for whose students they gave a short course in bookbinding) and Dr. Helmut Lehmann-Haupt. The latter was then rare book librarian at Columbia University and was instrumental in persuading the Library School to offer a course in the "Fundamentals of Hand Bookbinding." The Gerlachs were to teach the course and it was to be offered in the Fall of 1934.

Gerhard had learned that there was a place in America for a well-trained bookbinder, so he and Kathryn Edwards were married in July 1934 in the Old First Church in Old Bennington, Vermont, and their wedding reception was held at "The Old Mill" in South Shaftsbury, Vermont, then the home of Miss Ann Edwards, another of Kathryn's aunts.

Gerhard came to this country on a visitor's visa. In order to live and work here it was necessary for him to return to Germany and re-enter under the quota system. After their marriage they went back to Germany and he applied for admission as an immigrant. In due course of time he became an American citizen. Since they had a commitment at Columbia in September they hoped that his papers would be processed quickly; there were however, inevitable delays so they did not get back to New York until late October.

The class at Columbia was postponed until the second semester of the 1934-35 academic year; and quite possibly was the first course of its kind ever offered in an American institution of higher learning.

Upon their return to New York foremost on their agenda was to find space for a workshop. Melvin Loos as a member of the Board of Directors of the Japan Paper Company (now Andrews/Nelson/Whitehead) suggested to George A. Nelson, president of the company, that suitable space in the building (the first home of the American Institute of Graphic Arts) occupied as a storage area be made available for a workshop. This was arranged with Mr. and Mrs. Gerlach and space on the 6th



floor was allotted to them. They occupied roughly half of the sixth floor which comprised an area 25 by 100 feet. Later they were able to persuade the company to rent them the entire sixth floor. They remained there for 20 years; and were fortunate in locating an apartment two blocks away.

They had two children. Gerhard was a proud father; he was heard to say at the time of the birth of their first child, Teddy or Gerhard, Jr., that he represented their best co-operative effort thus far. Teddy was killed in an automobile accident in December 1954 at the age of 17. Their second child, Kathryn, was born in 1944. She is now Mrs. James Link; she and her husband are both teaching in the public school system in Hartford, Vermont.

Gerhard's entire professional career was spent in this country, where he and Kathryn Edwards worked as a husband-wife team. They both would doubtless have succeeded had they worked separately; in working together, however, each respecting the strength of the other they reached the top. Any account of his binding accomplishments is really a story of their joint efforts.

The class at Columbia was a success from its inception. In the years that it was offered—1935-43 and 1945-62—almost a thousand students were enrolled in it. The period from 1945-62, is perhaps the only time in their career when they were not working together as teachers. When the class was resumed at the close of the war they had moved to Chappaqua and Kathryn did not return to Columbia. In addition to this class they had a number of private pupils in their shop.

In April 1945 they opened The Bookbinding Workshop with Hope G. Weil, a long time friend and binder. This partnership was of rather short duration. The Gerlachs, however, continued to use the name.

In 1955, faced with possible eviction from the building on 31st Street due to mergers, etc., they moved their shop to 101 King Street in Chappaqua. At this time Peggy Ullman who had worked with them since 1938 severed her connection. She lived in New Jersey, and commuting to Chappaqua would have been a little too much.

In November 1962, they moved to the "Old Mill" in South Shaftsbury, Vermont, which they had bought at the time of her

aunt's death, a few years earlier. They added a wing for a workshop, and were very comfortably situated in a charming house amid pleasant surroundings.

They produced a great amount of work in their 34 years as a team. They are represented in many university rare book collections, private collections, and their presentation volumes are in the hands of many dignitaries across the country and around the world. They realized early in their career that fine or special bindings alone would not support a shop, so they did small editions, cloth case bindings, restoration work of various kinds, and portfolios, protective cases, etc. He was quoted once a number of years ago as saying that their price range was from \$12.00 to \$2,000; and their jobs ranged from books with nothing but sentimental value to items worth \$50,000 or more.

They arranged a number of field trips for their students to see other hand craftsmen at work—notably to Frederic Goudy's work shop at Deep Dene in Marboro, New York, and to Harrison Elliott's shop at 109 E. 31st Street, where he demonstrated the making of paper by hand.

At the time of World War II they worked under the auspices of the American Red Cross with disabled veterans at the Halloran Hospital on Staten Island; and with a privately financed group at the estate of the Suydam Cuttings in Gladstone, New Jersey.

They participated in many demonstrations put on by the Guild; gave a demonstrated talk to the Friends of the Bennington Free Library in 1964; were hosts to the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences at the "Old Mill" in March 1968, again with demonstrations; and they were invited to demonstrate at the Tri-State Arts and Crafts Festival, entitled "The Lady Bird Craft Demonstration," held in Stowe, Vermont on June 9, 1967. This was a gala occasion, and the participating craftsmen all received certificates of appreciation signed by Mrs. Johnson and the governors of New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine.

The first exhibition of their work was an invitation show which they put together at the Japan Paper Co. in 1936 or 37. They had two "one-man" shows: the first at the Decorator's Club in New York, April 11-23 1938; and their work was the "Show of the Month" at the AIGA, November 7-30, 1956—the only binders so honored by the Institute.

With one or two exceptions their work was represented in every Guild exhibition from 1939 to date; and on invitation, in almost every major show held in this country during these years, and in a number abroad.

They and their work received publicity in a number of articles over the years, and a chronological list of these follow the end of this article. There are probably omissions but it is as complete as the information at hand permits.

Gerhard was the grandson of a prosperous and landed farmer in Silesia and saw as a young boy, as the result of Germany's defeat in the first World War, his Grandfather lose everything that he had worked a life-time to accumulate, through no fault of his own but as a victim of the economic crisis that followed the war. His father, a prosperous banker in Schweidnitz, suffered the same fate after World War II. When Russia occupied East Germany, Gerhard was in America and found himself cut off from his family. The first news he had, after a period of silence, was that both of his parents had died. His father had died of natural causes; but his mother had literally starved to death.

With these personal experiences it is no wonder that he seemingly had little interest in attempting to amass a fortune. He was happy in his work, lived comfortably and entertained graciously. His chief desire was to leave behind him some worthwhile contribution, in the field to which he had devoted his life, that could not be wiped out by political and economic changes.

This he accomplished perhaps, far better than he could have hoped. Examples of his work will remain extant as long as the best of modern materials survive; and he as a man will live on indefinitely in the memory and the work of all those whose lives he touched.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Gerlach, is carrying on their work at the Old Mill in South Shaftsbury, Vermont.

A checklist of articles by and about the Gerlachs, arranged in chronological order.

Gerlach, Gerhard. A review of Peter Franck's book "A Lost Link." *Print*, Vol. III, no. 1, Spring, 1942. p. 74.

Pommer, Richard. "Gerhard Gerlach, Bookbinder." *Craft Horizons*, Oct. 1952. pp. 23-25.

- \_\_\_\_ "Boxes replace bindings for books"; a collection of limited editions encased by Gerhard Gerlach. *Craft Horizons*, Oct. 1953.
- \_\_\_\_ "Library Notes." *Bulletin of the General Theological Seminary*, N. Y., Nov. 1956. p. 29. Describes and pictures the Gerlach's work on the rebinding of the famous 2 vol. Ruppel Bible, Basel, 1468.
- Goble, Margaret. "Hand bookbinding is carried on in old world atmosphere." *New Castle Tribune*, Chappaqua, N. Y., June 2, 1955.
- Parks, Alvina. "Chappaqua couple win new bookbinding honor." *New Castle Tribune*, Chappaqua, N. Y. Jan. 30, 1958. Reports their invitation from the ACC to exhibit at the Brussels Fair in June, 1958; and comments on an award they won in Nov. 1957 at the Westchester Arts and Crafts Guild Show at the County Center in White Plains. *Holiday Magazine*, Dec. 1958 in its column "Crafts Bazaar" carried a color photograph of their "Hamlet" binding.
- Barden, Jim C. "Chappaqua couple's bookbinding artistry gives new luster to priceless volumes." *Reporter Dispatch*, White Plains, N. Y., Aug. 21, 1959.
- Kean, Summer. "Rare old books bound, repaired in historic Shaftsbury mill." *Bennington Banner*, Jan. 10, 1964.
- The Bennington Banner*, Feb. 3, 1964. Reported a demonstrated talk by the Gerlachs to the Friends of the Bennington Free Library on Jan. 29.
- Grimm, Emil. "A venerable craft is carried into the future." *Vermont Life*, Spring 1965.
- The Bennington Banner*, March 1, 1965. Reports on the spring issue of *Vermont Life* in which Emil Grimm's article about the Gerlachs appeared.
- Messerschmidt, Cornelius. "Besuch bei Gerhard Gerlach in Amerika." *Allgemeiner Anzeiger für Buchbindereien*, Stuttgart, Germany, Feb., 1968, p. 88. A picture of the Gerlachs appeared on the cover.
- The Bennington Banner*, March 23, 1968, and April 6, 1968. Carried first an invitation from the Gerlachs to the members of the Vermont Academy of Arts and Sciences to visit

their Workshop at the Old Mill on Sat., March 30; the latter issue reported on the event.

*The Bennington Banner*, Aug. 30, 1968. Reported in some detail the Gerlachs' work, and Gerhard's death.

## LIBRARY / Mary E. Greenfield

The Guild Library, I am very happy to say, was used more in 1968 than at any time since its formation. This was due in part to the visit to see the Edith Diehl collection, but members have been asking for many books from our catalogued collection throughout the year.

The Library has received the following gifts:

From Dr. Stephen E. Farnum:

Yabrova, R. R., *et al. Collection of Materials on the Preservation of Library Resources*, Nos. 2 and 3. Jerusalem: Israel Program for Scientific Translations, 1964. 258 pp. OTS 64-11053.

Petrova-Zavgorodnyaya, *et. al. New Methods for the Restoration and Preservation of Books*. Jerusalem: Israel Program for Scientific Translations, 1964. 130 pp. OTS 64-11054.

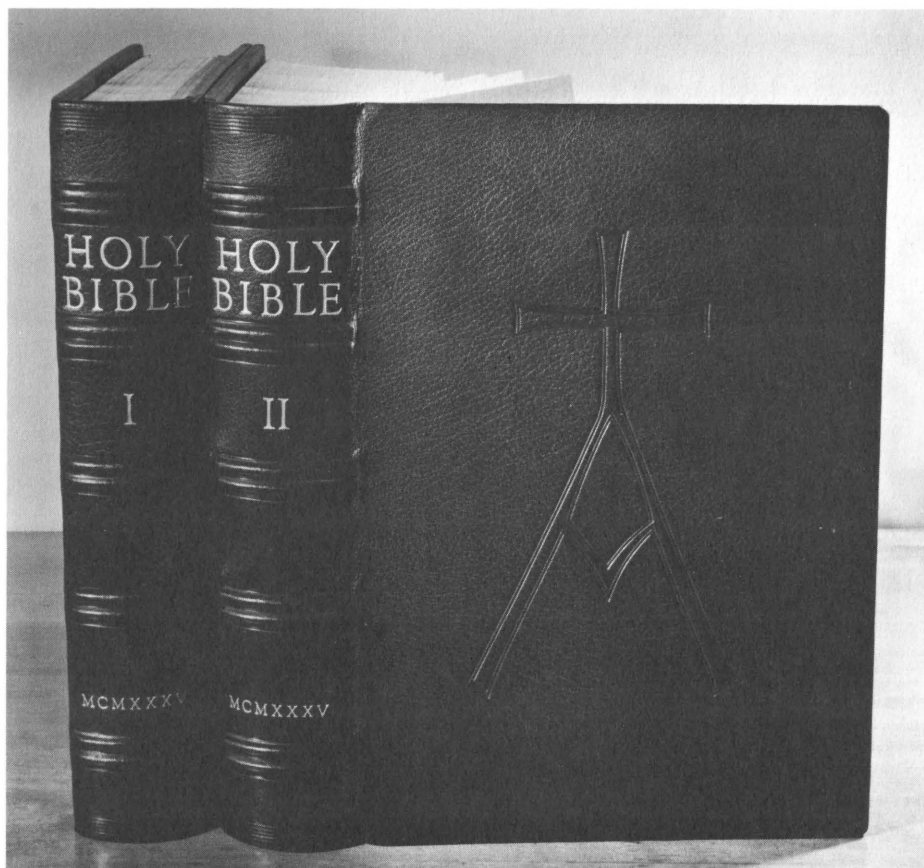
From Leonard B. Schlosser:

\_\_\_\_\_. *An Exhibition of Books on Papermaking*. Catalogue of a selection of books from the collection of Leonard B. Schlosser, The Free Library of Philadelphia, April 15-June 15, 1968. 23 pp.

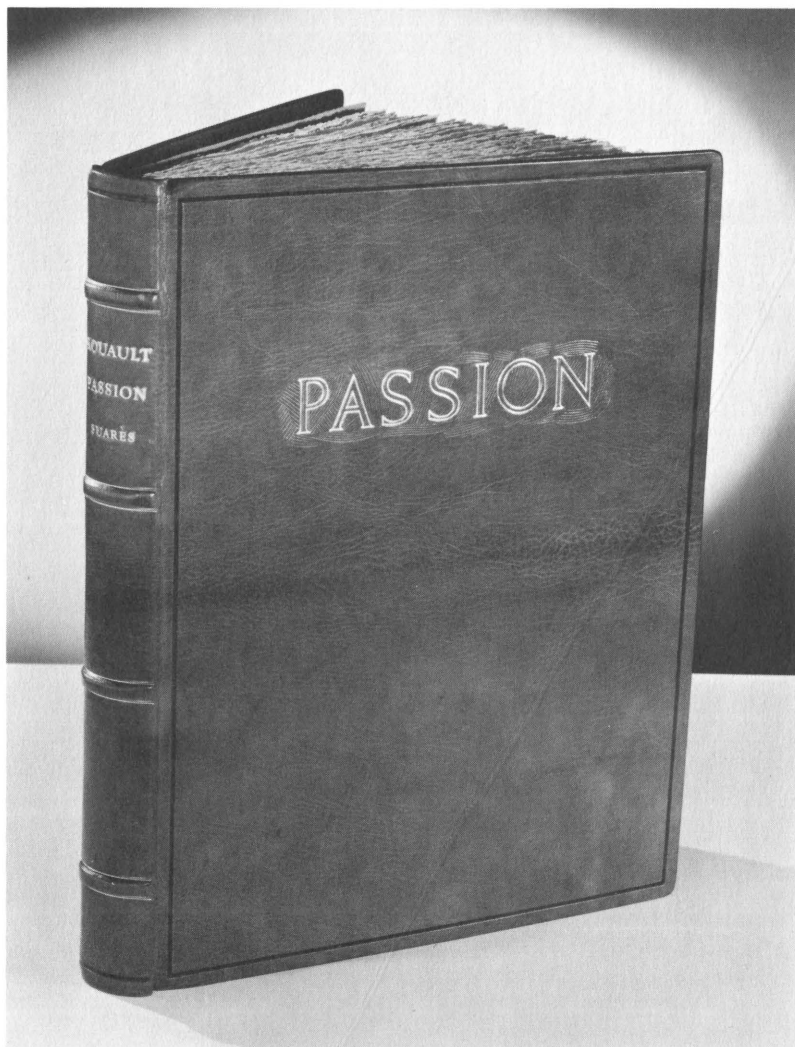
From Polly Lada-Mocarski:

Garvey, Eleanor, and Wick, Peter. *The Arts of the French Book, 1900-1965*. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1967. 120 pp. Numerous illus. Catalogue of an exhibition at the Dallas Public Library, March 28-May 6, 1967 and the Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, May 22-June 26, 1967.

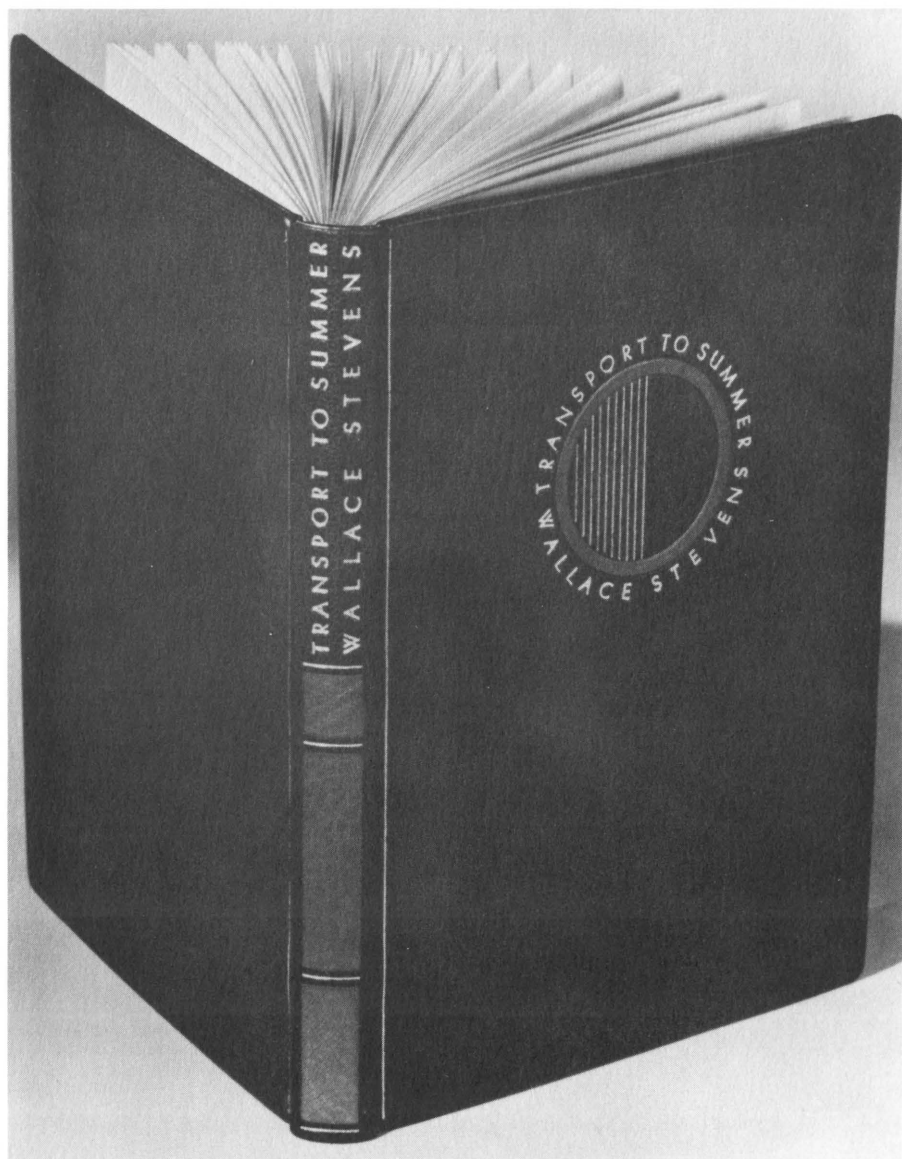
A small illustrated catalogue of Hungarian books which I cannot list correctly as I do not read Hungarian.



The Oxford Lecturn Bible, designed by Bruce Rogers, sewn on double raised bands, bound in black Levant, title stamped in gold on spine, Alpha and Omega tooled in blind on front and back covers. 14 X 18 inches

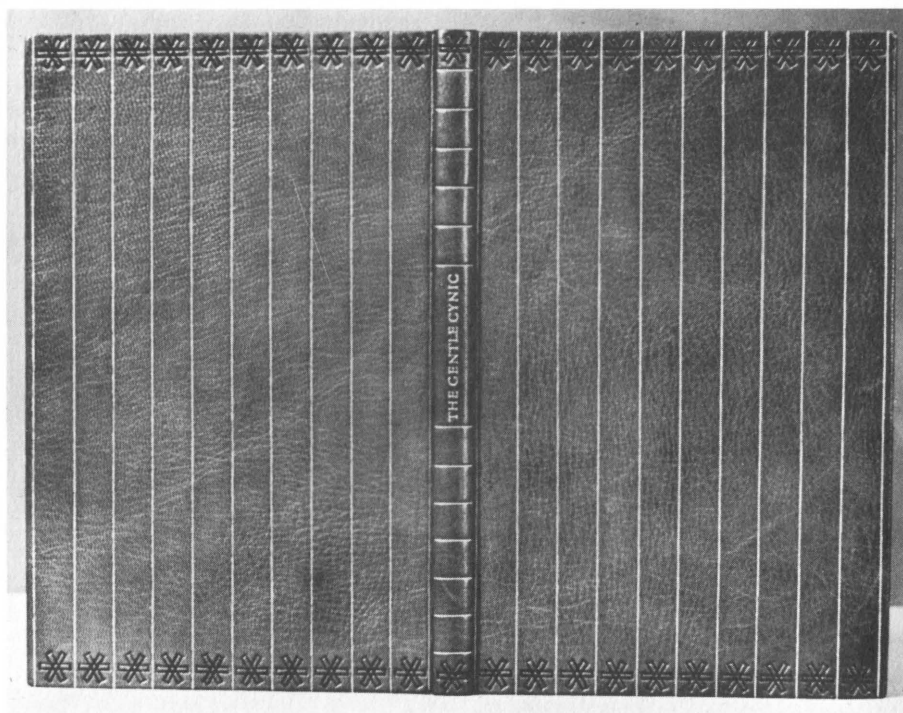


Passion, bound in red Levant, title designed and tooled  
with gouges by hand. Title stamped in gold on spine.  
14 X 18 inches



Transport to Summer – Wallace Stevens, bound in green Oasis goat, all tooling in gold, red onlay on spine and in circle of design on front cover. 8 X 10





The Gentle Cynic, bound in dark orange Oasis goat, lines in gold, title in gold, design between lines blind tooled with gouges. 5-1/2 X 8

From Jean Burnham:

Morris, Henry. *Omnibus. Instructions for amateur papermakers with notes and observations on private presses, book printing and some people who are involved in these activities.* n.p. The Bird & Bull Press, 1967. 121 pp. Illus. Samples of handmade papers.

From Deborah Evetts:

Goldsmith, Arthur, Jr. *Cataloging the Private Book Collection.* n.p., 1961. 14 pp.

From Grady E. Jensen:

54 catalogues from European book dealers which I will list in a little more detail in the next issue of the Journal.

The two translations from the Russian, OTS 64-11053 and OTS 64-11054, are available from the Office of Technical Services, U. S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D. C. 20230.

The Library of Congress has published a book on papermaking: *Papermaking: Art and Craft*. It is available from the Information Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C. 20540. \$3.00 in advance, check payable to the "Library of Congress."

## MEMBERSHIP / Jerilyn G. Davis

We welcome the following members who have joined the Guild since June 26, 1968, the date Vol. VI, No. 3 of the *Journal* went to press: Miss Madeleine Braun, Mrs. St. George Burke, Mr. C. Allan Carpenter, Jr., Miss Jean LaNette Chapman, Mr. Gérard Charrière, Mr. Harold F. Coates, Mr. Harry B. Green, Mr. Charles Eyre Greene, Mr. Murray Lebwohl, Mrs. Richard Lewisohn, Miss Carmen Montllor, Mr. Roger L. Moore, Mrs. Robert Noel-Bentley, Mrs. Janet Lowe Palmer, Mr. Eugene P. Pattberg, Mrs. Dickson W. Pierce, Mrs. Stephen Press, Mr. John F. Reed, Capt. James F. Reed, Mr. Irving L. Rosen, Mr. Ivan J. Ruzicka, Mr. William Tapia, Mrs. Peter Tomory, Mrs. Leon C. Weiss, and Mr. William B. Williams.

The New York State Library is now represented in the Guild by Mr. Darrell Welch; the former representative was Mrs. Mildred Ledden.

*Resignations:* Mr. Dana Atchley, Mrs. Lester R. Cahn, Mrs. John Desmarais, Mr. John Marshall Field, Mrs. Gary V. Kruman, Miss Elizabeth Parrish, Mr. Eugene Pharr, and Miss Grace Margaret Webster.

*Death:* We sincerely regret the death of Mr. Gerhard Gerlach on August 29, 1968.

As of January 15, 1969 total Guild membership was 193 members representing 29 states, the District of Columbia, and 6 foreign countries.

PROGRAMS / Mary C. Schlosser

#### THIS YEAR'S PROGRAMS

October 12, 1968 / An Informal Meeting to See the Edith Diehl Collection, recently acquired by the Guild Library, at the home of Mrs. Arthur Greenfield, Guild Librarian, in Woodbridge, Conn.

November 16, 1968 / A Day in Philadelphia (Double Program): A Visit to the Free Library of Philadelphia, and a Visit with Hand Papermaker, Henry Morris, for a demonstration.

February 17, 1969 / An Illustrated Talk by the Noted English Binder and Restorer, Peter Waters.

May / June, 1969 / Annual Meeting.

#### A VISIT TO THE GUILD'S LIBRARY / Elizabeth Ann Swaim

Library Committee Chairman Mary Greenfield's comfortable home in the picturesque wilds of Woodbridge, Connecticut, provided the site for the Guild's first meeting of 1968-69 on Saturday,

October 12th. The avowed purpose of the informal gathering was for members to have a chance to inspect the three hundred volumes of the newly-acquired Edith Diehl collection of books on binding and related subjects, and this inspection was performed with relish by the thirty members and their guests—with a number of books checked out for closer attention in less distracting surroundings.

The secondary, but just as important, purpose of the meeting was to renew old acquaintances and make new ones and to exchange professional gossip and news of summer activities. Socializing was stimulated by an excellent buffet lunch of fried chicken, rolls, a variety of fresh vegetables, apples, beer, and coffee, eaten either indoors with the cat or outdoors on the grass with two visiting dogs (one of which Thurber would have delighted in). All in all, we enjoyed a very pleasant Columbus Day excursion and our thanks go to Mrs. Greenfield for her gracious hospitality.

It was a pleasure to see several members whom geography does not permit to attend meetings regularly—Mrs. Mary Bachman from Colorado (studying with Mrs. Young for a month), Mrs. Lenore Dickinson from Cambridge, and Mr. and Mrs. Freitag from Lexington, Massachusetts, who brought as guests Mr. and Mrs. Ivan Ruzicka, recently arrived in this country from Czechoslovakia where Mr. Ruzicka worked as a binder and his wife as a paper marbler. Others present included: Mrs. Burg, Mrs. Coryn, Miss Davis, Mrs. Edelman, Mr. Wayne Eley, Dr. and Mrs. Farnum, Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Mr. and Mrs. Greenwald and family, Mrs. Haas, Miss Hull, Miss Manola, Mr. and Mrs. Noel-Bentley, Mr. Oliver, Mrs. Pennybacker, Mr. Popenoe, Mrs. Russell, Mr. and Mrs. Schlosser, Miss Swaim, Mrs. Tomory, and Mrs. Young.

## A DAY IN PHILADELPHIA / Mary C. Schlosser

Arriving from many directions and several states, by plane, train and car, members and their guests gathered in the main hall of the Free Library of Philadelphia on Saturday morning, Novem-

ber 16th, at eleven o'clock. The exhibition, *Ladies in My Library*, a selection of items from the collection of Mr. Norman H. Strouse, was on display as we entered, and an attractive and informative twenty-seven page catalog was available to guide us among the "ladies". The exhibition ranged from autographs and letters of lady writers such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning through women as humanitarians (Florence Nightingale and Clara Barton), as book collectors (including late Guild Member Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt who formed the outstanding Hunt Botanical Library in Pittsburgh), women as the recipients of notable books, women in Robert Louis Stevenson's life, wives of the presidents, women as printers, as librarians, and as booksellers.

The section which was possibly of most interest to us was that of women bookbinders, and included 40 items beginning with work by Sarah T. Prideaux, the first English professional woman bookbinder who attempted to open this craft as a trade for women, and ending with work from the hand of Mr. Strouse's wife and "favorite binder," fellow Guild member Charlotte A. Strouse. Other binders included Alice Pattison, May Morris, and Katharine Adams, all of England, and the Americans, Edith Diehl, Florence Walter, and Guild members Louise James and Charlotte Ullman. Such an item as the May Morris embroidered binding over a morocco binding by Cobden-Sanderson on her father's book, *Love is Enough*, of 1873, with all its associations of a period and a collaboration of great names, holds a special fascination for us. Or the *Portfolio Record* of Katharine Adams' bindings from 1898 to c.1935 which she assembled with photographs and original working designs, gives us an insight into the methods of another generation.

Another group of books of special interest included bindings by Cobden-Sanderson and the Dove's Bindery done for his wife Anne and other feminine friends.

When we had completed a thorough perusal of this exhibition, we proceeded upwards to the Rare Book Room where we were welcomed by Miss Ellen Shaffer, Rare Book Librarian, and her associate Mr. Howell Heaney. In addition to a charming exhibition in progress of the work of Beatrix Potter, there especially laid out for us on a large table was a history of bookbinding in small, selected from the holdings of the Rare Book Room, and

we were able to examine, discuss and inquire about these volumes at leisure.

The earliest item shown was a Sumerian clay envelope of the Third Dynasty of Ur from about 2350 B. C. Among the several examples of blind-stamped and panel-stamped bindings from the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, it was interesting to note a *Book of Hours* from Bruges bound to order in 1465 by the Flemish Anthonius da Gavere for an Englishman named John Browne whose name and that of his wife appear inside the small clasps. It seems as marvelous to be able to know whose book it was and who executed the work as it is to admire the craftsmanship and condition. Flemish, Italian, Polish, German, and English work from this period were all represented, and of course the list would be incomplete without a "Grolier" binding, this one the work of "The Cupid's Bow Binder."

The seventeenth century was represented handsomely by some armorial volumes, including a large interesting book of hand drawn and colored charts (1683), containing copies of Spanish originals by William Hack, which had been presented to Charles II by Captain Bartholomew Sharp. At some later time the royal arms had been covered with gold-tooled leather patches, which the Free Library had had removed after the book came into its ownership. The patches were also on display and it was possible to see how cleverly they had hidden the original arms. In contrast to these richly decorated covers made for the rich and royal, the Boston binding of 1677 by John Ratcliff, on Hubbard's Narrative, though an exceptional treasure for its rarity, seemed workaday indeed.

Sophisticated examples from the eighteenth century included a specimen of the always intriguing work of Edwards of Halifax, with its transparent vellum covers permitting the underlying portraits and vignettes to show through, in this case on Blackstone's *Commentaries*, published at Oxford, 1768-1769.

By way of contrast, a Japanese brocade binding on *The Story of Bunsho* from Kyoto, about 1660, with its great flexibility and a Turkish early eighteenth century flap binding heavily decorated with an all-over floral pattern (a history of the reigns of four Turkish sultans, Turkey, 1721) reminded us of activities in other parts of the world, while two mystery bindings challenged

our knowledge—one a tortoise-shell binding studded with tiny silver nails, place and date unknown, on a Hebrew manuscript of *The Old Testament* of 1496 and the other executed in London between July, 1925, and February, 1928. The last was particularly mystifying as it was on Tennyson's *Ulysses*, with text and headings written by Graily Hewitt, decorative initials by I. D. Henstock, and a painting of Oenone by J. Ayling, obviously a combined artistic effort to which the binder had handsomely contributed, using rich colored onlays and gold tooling, but unsigned.

When the saturation point on books was reached, sherry was served in the Rare Book Department's gracious panelled Elkins Room, warm with oriental rugs, soft couches and the hospitality of our hosts.

In order to keep on schedule for our three o'clock rendezvous with papermaker Henry Morris, we were fortunate to be able to have a Dutch treat luncheon in a private room next to the Free Library's cafeteria. Lunch lasted from one o'clock to about two, just enough for a breathing spell before embarking on the forty-five minute drive to North Hills. Members graciously worked out arrangements to share transportation and we were soon all admiring the Schuylkill River as we drove along the East River Drive. A record attendance for an out-of-New York trip filled Mr. and Mrs. Morris' house and basement to overflowing, but our hosts had thoughtfully provided a groaning table of cheeses, cookies, punch, coffee, and other delights to occupy us as we waited our turn to dip the mold and make each our own sheet of paper.

Mr. Morris, it should be noted, is one of the very few people in this country who makes paper by hand with the intention of printing on it—in other words, to be used in the graphic arts, rather than as an end in itself, or as an original art work which is the approach of such a papermaker as Douglass Howell. Mr. Morris is primarily interested in beautiful paper for beautiful books as is natural for one who is a printer by profession, as well as moonlighting as a private press owner. Since 1958 he has produced seven volumes at his Bird & Bull Press, printed on his own paper and *Five on Paper* (1963) in an edition of 169 copies was bound by him in full leather as well. (He has since decided,

however, to leave binding for the bookbinders!) Paper for his next effort is already in progress, and bits and snatches were to be seen in the basement during our visit.

Three groups of about fifteen each went below to see the papermaking process. After hearing some explanation from Mr. Morris as to the working of his miniature beater, where water and rags circulate together until the rags are cut and torn into small enough fibers to be placed in a large vat where the mold is dipped, and as to how much pressure must be used in his large metal standing press to squeeze out the excess water (the answer seems to be a lot!), as well as various other details, each visitor was invited to take the small mold (a wooden frame with very close-wired screen, big enough to make a sheet about the size of an ordinary 3 x 5 file card), dip it in a waiting vat of "stuff" (as the hydrated fibers are called when ready to be used), and make his own paper. After the mold is dipped, it is shaken gently back and forth to speed the drainage of water and help distribute the fibers evenly over the surface; then the deckle (a little frame on the top which prevents all the fibers from draining off with the water) is removed, and the wet paper is gently pressed onto a felt with a rocking motion. Another felt is placed on top, another sheet is dipped and set in place, and so on, until enough sheets are made to put into the press. It is quite amazing to see how much water comes out of the sheets in the press, but it certainly makes one understand why paper mills must be located near large water supplies. After pressing, the sheets are set aside to dry. Suitably enough, the watermark (made from extremely thin wire laid over and attached to the base screen) in the mold we were using read boldly: **SAVE RAGS.**

Each of us was able to depart with a damp souvenir of his own manufacture, and a deep appreciation for the hospitality of the Morrises.

Present for this exhausting day of activities were over forty members and guests, including the following: Mr. Andrews, Miss Blatt, Miss Braun, Mrs. Burg, Mrs. Burnham, Mr. Gérard Charrière, Mrs. Coryn, Miss Davis, Mrs. Edelman, Miss Evetts, Mrs. Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Granger, Mrs. Greenwald, Mrs. Haas, Mr. and Mrs. Harrow and guest, Mrs. Lipton, Miss Hull, Mr. and



Mrs. Isaac, Miss Manola, Mr. Maser, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver, Mrs. Pennybacker, Mr. Popenoe, Mr. and Mrs. Press, Mr. and Mrs. Schlosser, Mr. and Mrs. Selch, Miss Swaim, Mr. and Mrs. Tayler, Mr. Tucker and guests, Mrs. Palmer, Mr. and Mrs. Weidner, and Mrs. Young.

## PUBLICITY AND NEWS NOTES / Grady E. Jensen

On page 11 of Volume VI, Number 1 of the *Journal* (Fall, 1967) reference was made to the "Terry Bender Rare Book Room" at the Stanford University Library. Robert S. Fraser, Cataloguer of Rare Books at the Princeton University Library, brought to our attention the fact that the correct name of the Stanford facility is the "Albert Bender Rare Book Room."

GBW member Mrs. Nancy P. Russell was appointed Bookbinder-Restorer to the Metropolitan Museum of Art last fall. She refers tongue-in-check to her job as "intuitive stress engineering." Mrs. Russell stresses the fact that the library is a *working* library rather than a collection of rare books and bindings. The library is used heavily, by scholars, students, employees and members of the Metropolitan, and Mrs. Russell's responsibility is to keep this working library in usable condition.

The August 12, 1968 issue of *The Tucson Daily Citizen* carried an extensive story on the bad luck of GBW member Jon Webb who, with his wife, operates the Loujon Press. Previous News Notes have mentioned the Webbs and their well-known press and bindery which, sadly, was nearly destroyed last August by torrential rains and floods.

The magazine section of the Sunday, August 25, 1968 issue of *The Pittsburgh Press* included an article, with several photographs on GBW member Thomas W. Patterson. The article was entitled "The Bookbinder: Patience And Artistry," and discussed Mr. Patterson's work as head of the binding department Hunt Botanical Library at Carnegie-Mellon University.

The July 1, 1968 issue of *Publishers' Weekly* included an article on "Henri Friedlaender: New Approach To Type," with an illustration of Mr. Friedlaender's calligraphy.

GBW member Elizabeth A. Swaim reports that she was one of 14 persons who went on a graphic arts tour of Europe last summer. Among the high points of the tour were visits to type foundries in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Paris and Salfords; the Plantin-Moretus, Gutenberg and Klingspor Museums; the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, the Bibliotheque Nationale, and St. Bride's Library; and graphic arts schools in Stuttgart, Munich and Paris.

The June, 1968 edition of *Auction*, published by the Parke-Bernet Galleries, included an article by Anthony Fair, entitled "English Bookbinding Today," with illustrations.

Mrs. Mary E. Greenfield, GBW Library Chairman, is teaching two classes in bookbinding for the Creative Arts Center of New Haven.

Mrs. Mary S. Coryn, GBW Secretary Treasurer, is teaching three classes in bookbinding in the Riverside Church Arts and Crafts Program.

The Los Angeles Times of December 1, 1968 in its *Home Magazine* carried an article about Mrs. Margaret Lecky entitled "Santa with Portfolio." It included a picture of Mrs. Lecky, four color photographs of her bindings and step-by-step instructions, with illustrations, for making a portfolio.

## THE PATH OF CZECH BOOKBINDING / Ivan J. Ruzicka

Czech bookbinding is practically unknown in the world. There are several reasons for this. The Czech countries—Bohemia and Moravia—playing key political roles in Europe, were relatively poor countries. A high book culture presumed, on the contrary, a rich background and hinterland, mainly in the existence of rich and powerful bibliophiles and generous patrons of art. Certainly it is possible to find in Czech history rich monasteries and convents as well as a small group of enthusiastic bibliophiles. Nevertheless these were too small in comparison with the conditions in other European countries, primarily Italy, Germany and France. And if even the work of the German, Jacob Krause, one of the greatest bookbinders in the

Renaissance is still little known and esteemed outside Germany—it is no wonder that Czech bookbinding is known even less in the USA and in the whole world.

The first Czech book, The Chronicle of Troy (which is dated 1468) appeared only 13 years after Gutenberg finished the printing of his 42 line Bible (1455)—and even before the first English book printed by William Caxton (1475-1476). One of the most famous books in the world, Codex Gigas (called so for its giant size 49 x 89.3cm) from the first third of the XIII century, was written in the Benedictine monastery, Podlažice in Bohemia. (By the way until the XVIIth century this book was considered as one of the seven wonders of the world.) But this book is admired by the visitors to the Museum in Stockholm. The Codex Gigas was brought as war booty to Sweden in 1647 on the insistence of Queen Kristine. I do not present this detail by chance but intentionally as an illustration of another reason for the niveau of Czech bookbinding. It is a cruel fact that Bohemia several times has had to pay for her desire for truth and selfdestination by losing her sovereignty. The incendiary ideas of the reformer Jan Hus brought to Bohemia the crusades which during their expeditions destroyed immense amounts of church properties.

Two hundred years later, in 1621, Bohemia had hardly recovered from this disaster and artistic handicrafts again flourished in the country when this small unhappy European country was for the second time deprived of her sovereignty. The Hapsburgs made Bohemia a part of their empire.

In 1918 again after another three centuries, the Czechoslovak state was established. There passed only 20 years of hope—and Czechoslovakia became a plunder of Hitler.

It has to be understood that these political and economic changes could hardly help the development of book culture. Nevertheless, in Bohemia a good and solid bookbinding came into being. Temperance and simplicity—these basic and most striking features—were impressed upon Czech bookbinding only by those century-long financial depressions.

\* \* \*

Names of Czech bookbinders are first mentioned in the city chronicles in the year 1372. At that time in Prague there were about 13 bookbinders. They were members of the Guild of Painters and Illuminators. It would make no sense to list the names of ancient Czech bookbinders in this short article. And because we cannot for technical reasons add documentary pictures of bookbindings, it will be useful at least to mention several interesting details concerning the technology of bookbinding.

For example, among the stamps used for tooling Czech bindings in the Renaissance a stamp for Jan Hus was made along with those of Luther, Melancton and Erasmus of Rotterdam. Also unknown is the fact that gauffered gilt edges on Czech bindings from the XVIth and XVIIth centuries belong among the most beautiful ones ever executed.

One of the curiosities of bookbinding is the so-called twin binding, two books of the same size bound so that the backbone of one book is followed by the fore edge of the other one. They are opened and read from opposite sides. The French expression for these bindings is "relieure jumelle", in German "Zwillingsbaende". One of these rare bindings was made in Bohemia in 1542.

Czech binders used all contemporary materials: leather, vellum and all kinds of textiles. Bindings were decorated with precious stones as well as gold or blind tooling, etc.

Generalizations are always risky and imprecise. On the other hand they enable one to point out the most characteristic features. If we were to give a general characterization of bookbinding styles we dare say that the Danish binding is nordic severe, the German one abrupt and prefers cold colors, the French one extravagant and the English one pure reminding one of the columns in Greek temples. In this sense we could classify the Czech binding as modest and sober. Both are necessary prices for century-long economic pressures.

If the so called Grolier bindings are considered as the unmatched peak of the architecture of book tooling, the Czech Renaissance vellum bindings with extremely beautiful supralibros could be considered as the peak of simple, maximally well-bound books from a technical point of view.

\* \* \*

The greatest decline of handbinding occurred in the XIXth century. The manufacture of paper from wood pulp started and cheap, bad paper came on the market. Printing machines were faster and faster and the machines finally marched into the bookbindery. Stitching machines started to throw up thousands of books at a speed with which hand gilders could not cope. This was the last step in the final fall of handtooling. Gilding presses decorated the whole boards with bronze and color foils. The bastard-like décor was a disgusting mixture of all classical styles and patterns. New enterprises were established (mainly in Leipzig) which made prefabricated ready-to-use bookboards. Factories infested small and large bookbinderies all over Europe with the "ready to use" or "instant" products. The defeat of good taste and craftsmanship was completed. This pseudostyle has been called the Leipzig binding.

The first and most passionate protest against this disaster was declared by William Morris in 1890. In Bohemia—despite the good handwork of two or three shops—the decline of handicraft went on until 1908 when in Prague a new bookbindery was founded by Ludvík Bradáč.

Bradáč was the most contradictory person in modern Czech bookbinding. His opponents and critics point out that Bradáč himself was a second class bookbinder, that he could not write expert publications properly, and that he badly estimated various styles or technical methods and procedures. Nevertheless, Bradáč was the first and only person who by his stubborn ardour, activity and propagation of handbinding revived or even resuscitated this handicraft in Bohemia. He bound books, gave lectures, wrote the first Czech textbooks and manuals on bookbinding, arranged exhibitions and gathered around himself Czech graphic artists and writers.

Fellow-combatant of Bradáč (who gained his experience under Henri Blanchetière in Paris and under Paul Adam in Dusseldorf) was Antonín Malík, educated in the workshop of Sangorski and Sutcliff in London. Malík brought to Bohemia the touch of the best English bindings. After these two binders came Antonín Tvrđý, who had helped in educating the middle aged generation in the new-found traditions.

The thirties, forties, and fifties are associated with these

names: Otto Blažek (he worked in the atelier of Legrain)—master of the Czech all leather binding and teacher of the youngest generation; the Jirouts (both studied under Rene Kieffer); and finally Josef Vyskočil, unmatched binder in vellum, calligrapher, (he both calligraphed and bound *L'Épitaphe* by Villon, *The Raven* by Poe, etc.) and perhaps the greatest living European restorer.

Besides these the following men work on artistic bindings: Jaroslav Doležal (he created a long series of Bibles); distinctively Jaroslav Olšák in his use of drawings with india ink on vellum. From the youngest generation should be mentioned Ladislav Ružička (pupil of Blažek) and the restorer Mrs. Mirka Symonová (pupil of Vyskočil). In this list are—alas!—mentioned nearly all first class bookbinding masters in Bohemia.

The State Graphic School which educated bookbinders in a special class (and for two years restorers, too) discontinued this department several years ago. The Prague school, whose course of study lasts for three years, gives education only to apprentices from half mechanized shops and establishments, although the pupils do receive a short training in the quarter leather binding. Fine procedures and special training (hand tooling, inlaying, etc.) are not taught at this school.

Interest in handwork and fine binding has declined. In the workshops (they are run either by cooperative corporations or are a part of a big industrial establishment) 99% of the bindings are all cloth or quarter cloth case bindings with machine made titles. And because practically all Czech books are published bound (in average good commercial bindings) and because prices of these books are perhaps the lowest in the world, no wonder the perspective of handbinding in Czechoslovakia seems so gloomy to the writer of these lines. The classical fine binding is practiced—besides by the above mentioned binders—only by restorers in state libraries. But these institutions are completely devoid of apprentices. Why?

To be a restorer is not an occupation but a profession or even better—a mission. It demands of the restorer a complete knowledge of the handicraft, of history of technology of the book and an universal cultural education including the knowledge of at least one other foreign language and Latin too. The

profession of restorer demands that the worker not compare unceasingly the consumed time with achieved price. These are the qualities which a young man does not have—and cannot have in his teens. The salaries in industrial binderies cause good and honest bookbinders to take these better paid jobs. They are of course leaving handwork to become only operators of machines. If we add to these facts also the disconsolate situation in supplies of good materials (leather, vellum, rag paper, cloth, gold leaf, reliable and harmless adhesives)—we face the picture of Czechoslovak bookbinding.

One who would consider this picture as too dark and valid only for Czechoslovakia, should also take a look at the world—mainly at the USA. He will realize that the trend to machine binding slowly but inexorably throttles handbinding anywhere.

An importunate question is forced upon the observer: who will—50 years or at the utmost 100 years from now—devote himself at least to the restoring of old books? The modern machines and the modern chemistry cannot solve this problem themselves—without the participation and leading role of human labor and skill. I am convinced all bookbinders and librarians should reflect upon this memento. Not only in Czechoslovakia.

(The author of this article studied under Josef Vyskočil.)

## TWO INTERESTING OPPORTUNITIES DURING THE SUMMER:

### CENTRO DEL BEL LIBRO ASCONA

In 1969 we celebrate the third anniversary of the “Scuola d’Arte per Legatori Artistici”. In the first two years it was visited by 50 students from seven European countries and abroad. To date, as instructors we had with us: Hugo Peller, Solothurn; Ole Olsen, Kopenhagen; Prof. Raymond Mondange, Paris; Rudolf Graf, Grafiker, Zurich; Felix Stemmler, Architekt, Zurich; Emilio Brugalla, Barcelona; Prof. Kurt Londenberger, Hamburg; Dr. George Schauer, Frankfurt; Gunter Gerhard Lange, Stutt-

gart; Dr. H. A. Halbey, Offenbach a. M.; Germaine de Coster/Helene Dumas, Paris; Karl Hofstetter, Immensee. This great number is proof of the great variety of programs in the theoretical and practical studies available in "Scuola d'Arte per Legatori Artistici".

The News, that the school could also be combined with vacations on Lake Maggiore, was happily accepted by all. The personal, practically furnished quarters offer all participants an advantageous stay with their families. Mr. Martin Jaegle, certified master bookbinder, the director of the school, is at all times available to all students.

For 1969, too, our school was able to hire well known artists. In June, a restoration course will be conducted by Dr. Ilse Schunke and Willy Thamm. Even outside their homeland, both artists are well known as excellent instructors. In the "Galleria" the following artists of bookbinding will exhibit their creations: Georges Leroux, Paris; Dr. Ilse Schunke, Dresden; Ivor Robinson, Oxford; Rolf Steffen, Darmstadt.

In September, "Centro del bel libro", in partnership with the Schweizerischen Bibliophilen-Gesellschaft will hold a unique showing of the "Reliure Originale, Paris", in the Helmhaus in Zurich.

You may select your own program from the many courses offered, when you have time for a visit to "Centro del bel libro" in Ascona.



## SCHEDULE OF SEMINARS AND WORK WEEKS IN RESTORATION

June 2 to July 12, 1969 in Ascona

### Program

June 2-7. First week. General introduction with slides.

Technical fundamentals of binding, with  
slides and visual material in the  
Legatoria.

History of leather bindings of the Gothic,  
Renaissance and Baroque periods, with  
practical work for students.

Visits to libraries with Dr. Ilse Schunke.

June 9-21. 2nd & 3rd weeks. Course in restoration with Willy  
Thamm. Introductory lecture and basic  
instruction.

June 23-28. 4th week. Same program as first week.

June 30-July 12. 5th and 6th weeks. Same program as 2nd and  
3rd week.

The course is for three weeks and is offered twice. It may  
also be taken on a weekly basis.

There are a limited number of openings, so to avoid dis-  
appointment it is suggested—if interested—that you register  
early.

For further information about the course or procedure  
for registering write to: "Centro del bel libro", 6612 Ascona,  
Switzerland or J. Stemmle & Co., 8005 Zurich, Hardturmstrasse  
253, Switzerland.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

January 28, 1969

Dear Mrs. Young:

I would very much appreciate your including in the next issue of your journal the following conference announcement:

"The Deterioration and Preservation of Library Materials" is the topic for the 34th Annual Conference of the Graduate Library School, University of Chicago, to be held August 4-6, 1969, in the Center for Continuing Education on the University campus. The general director of the program is Professor Howard W. Winger of the Graduate Library School, and the speakers have been selected from the fields of conservation, industry, paper chemistry, photography, publishing, and librarianship. The printed program, including application blanks for registration and lodging, will be sent on request to:

Graduate Library School  
University of Chicago  
1116 East 59th Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Yours very truly,

Don R. Swanson  
Dean, Graduate Library School