

Medieval Manuscripts and Association Copies of Books: Stories They Tell

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HANNA, Ralph, and TURVILLE-PETRE, Thorlac (editors). *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers*. Rochester, NY: York Medieval Press, 2010. 4to. Hardbound, dust jacket. xi, 146pp. Illustrations. **\$95.00.**

TANSELLE, G. Thomas (introduction). *Other People's Books: Association Copies and the Stories They Tell*. Chicago: The Caxton Club, 2011. Small 4to. Hardbound. Viii, 214pp. Illustrations. Distributed by Oak Knoll Press. **\$75.00.**

Armchair medievalists, unite! Prepare to enter a world with a language all its own: Bifoliums and enjambments, manicules and historiated initials, escutcheons and heraldic achievements, antiphonals and graduals, missals and breviaries, cartularies and double virgules, feoffees and advowsons.... Having met my wife in Chaucer class, where we both fell under the seductive spell of all things medieval (and can still recite a bit of Chaucer in the original), and now as a dealer in historical documents and autographs, it's no wonder I gravitate toward something as far away from the cornfields of Illinois as you can get: Medieval manuscripts.

So even if you're a collector who has yet to delve into the arcane, expensive field of illuminated medieval manuscript leaves, if you appreciate the medieval fiction of Umberto Eco or Ellis Peters or just like the occasional Robin Hood flick, Hanna and Turville-Petre's *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts* is likely to entrance you with its otherworldly appeal. (By the way, Wollaton and the other family residences that housed this collection are in Nottinghamshire, a county near the center of England—practically in the back yard of Nottingham and Sherwood Forest, legendary home of—you guessed it, Robin Hood.)

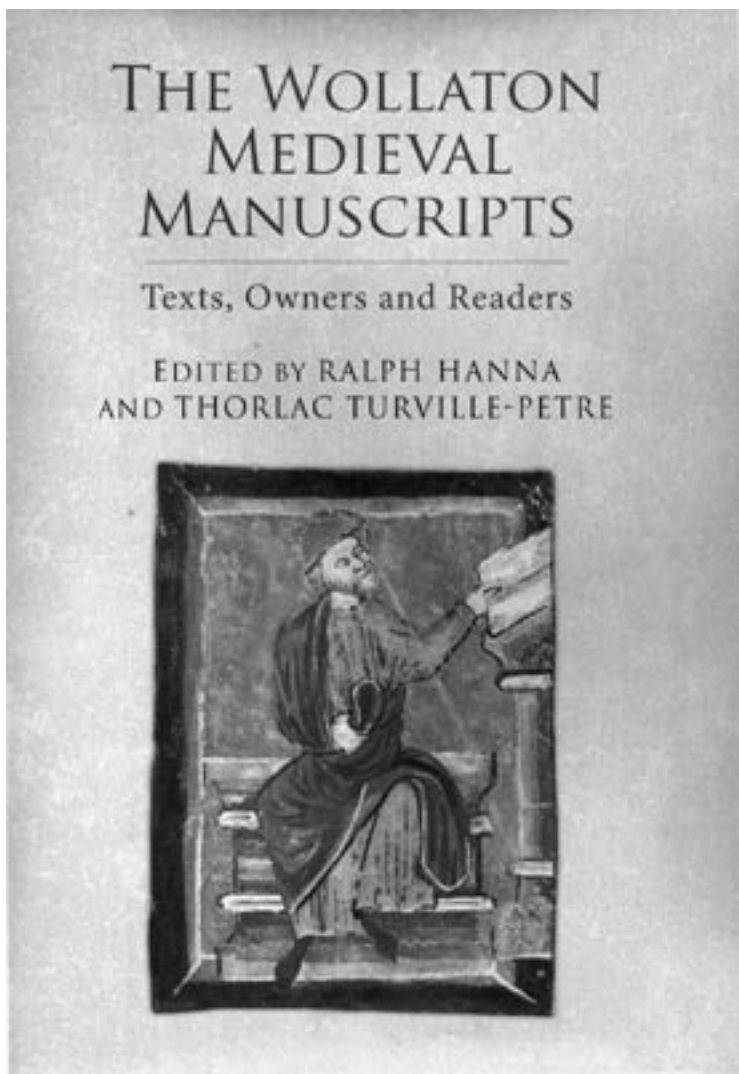
Imagine a private manuscript collection remaining untouched and within one family for half a millenium. Not bloody likely, you borrow a criticism and say? The stuff of Hollywood? Think again. *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts* profiles just such a collection. "So far as we can ascertain," write its editors, "the Wollaton manuscript collection has probably survived pretty much intact from the time of Francis Willoughby the Builder (1545-96). This would have followed a certain amount of expected depredation through the first 50 years of the English Reformation, in which books particularly concerned with the old religion and with medieval intellectual culture would probably have been discarded. Losses at this point we know largely inferentially, through the use of odd leaves and quires as scrap, in the main to bind the various Wollaton accounts." What sales took place were mostly in recent centuries, but these consisted mainly in early printed books, not the even earlier manuscript books and documents.

Scholars are aflutter about this particular grouping of medieval manuscripts for a number of reasons. Hanna and Turville-Petre note that

Because of their long history in private hands, the Willoughbys' manuscripts and early printed books have remained too little known. The collection is the largest surviving assembly gathered by a medieval gentry family... The library is of further interest because it is, in the main, the product of a single acquisitive burst, beginning about 1460 and pretty much completed, for manuscript books, at about the time of the Dissolution in 1540... the Willoughbys' books remain unique because of a very substantial core surviving more or less in situ, together with a huge collection of

family archives, at the University of Nottingham, just a few miles from their original home.

The editors give a thorough overview of the collection and its many owners prior to the half dozen in-depth studies of various aspects by specialists that comprise the bulk of *The Wollaton*



Medieval Manuscripts. Forensic document examination texts have gotten frequent attention in this column, but Hanna and Turville-Petre offer up some first-rate forensic-type research on the acquisition and ownership of these manuscripts over the centuries. There's fine sleuthing evident in reconstructing the provenance of the major manuscripts: Which Willoughby acquired which manuscript and how, the lines of ownership and so on. Ownership markings and heraldic shields that sometimes span centuries are traced.

Green may be a popular buzzword today, but 500 years ago the Brits were as green as Errol Flynn's tights when it came to books. "Once manuscripts had become obsolete... they could be used again (and in this way would be partially preserved) as protective covers for other books, or within bindings as flyleaves, pastedowns or spine-strengtheners. Rather a large number of these fragments have survived in the Wollaton Library Collection...." Those outside academia are generally not aware of the great importance book history scholars place on such recovered fragments. For instance, "At the end of the 11th century St Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, arranged for selected early chapters of Worcester Cathedral priory to be recopied and bound into a large old bible belonging to the cathedral.... Ten leaves from the magnificent 'Ceolfrith' bible of c. 700 were used to protect four large family cartularies of c. 1500. Together with its companion volume, the Codex Amiatinus, this is the oldest surviving copy of the Vulgate Bible. There can have been no family that had a smarter jacket for its collection of charters.... It was in this way that these supremely important relics survived."

Numerous such rare orphans are noted. "A leaf from a 15th-century missal covers accounts of 1596. Coal accounts of 1578 and of 1617-19 are wrapped respectively in a leaf from a late 15th-century gradual and one from an early 14th-century lectionary of saints' lives.... accounts of c. 1570 are wrapped in a bifolium of a 12th-century copy of a biblical commentary by Gregory the Great, and two late 12th-century bifolia from Peter Lombard's famous *Sentences* were used to cover accounts of 1548-61...." And so on.

Scholar Alixe Bovey tackles the Wollaton collection's Holy Grail: The enormous, heavily illustrated Wollaton Antiphonal, "a spectacular 15th-century service book... an exceptionally im-

portant survival....” It owes its survival to the fact that it lay in Wollaton Hall, not a parish church, in 1549—otherwise “when Edward VI’s Act of Uniformity outlawed the Catholic rite, it would almost certainly have been destroyed along with the thousands of other liturgical books that were lost in this period.”

Its size alone is enough to make you gasp. “So large that its makers had to paste parchment strips to the tops of many of its folios to make them up to the appointed size, it is one of the most immense English manuscripts that survives from the period.” Bovey’s analysis of the construction, the illumination, and the passing down of this treasure from generation to generation are impressive. Thanks to modern scholarship, she’s even able to estimate the original cost of commissioning the creation of such a book—the cost of parchment, scribes, illuminators and others, though I wish these costs were translated into American dollar equivalents.

Margin comments naturally come under discussion in any analysis of early manuscripts, and the Wollatons are no exception. In his essay on the Wollaton manuscript of John Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* (“The Lover’s Confession”), a famed late 14th century love poem of great length, Derek Pearsall writes, “There are occasional marginal indications of subject-matter to mark favourite passages or help reads navigate their way round the poem, and there are equally occasional reactions by reads to the content of the poem, many of them focusing on the stories about women, some of a disappointingly stereotyped antifeminist cast....” There are also “some careful lower-margin pen-drawn pictures, in black ink, of leaves attached to letters... and animals: a ‘piglike rodent’ and a fat rabbit-like rodent... a long eel-like fish with scales and a fat little fish, both blowing bubbles... and a little fish with a long-tailed mouse... These serve a more than whimsical purpose, for they correspond in positioning, recto and verso, and are designed to obscure repairs to the parchment.”

Illuminated manuscripts are often thought of as cryptic, unapproachable artifacts of exquisite beauty. The human element—that they were created by all kinds of craftsmen and artisans for use by real people—seems barely a factor in the equation. Pearsall reminds us how this manuscript, like all of them, was the product of hard work and has its share of errors.

It “was planned as a grand manuscript of a familiar kind—46 lines per column, two columns per page, parchment not paper, a single scribe, catchwords in scrolls, somewhere in the region of 200 large folios, carefully pricked, framed and ruled, with meticulously planned *ordinatio* and programme of decoration and illustration. Unfortunately... the programme of illustration and decoration was never begun, a fate similar to that which befell several manuscripts in the 15th century... because the prospective patron or customer died or otherwise dematerialised. It is an expensive manuscript, probably took six months to a year out of a highly trained professional scribe’s life, and yet it is left abandoned....”

Rob Lutton’s chapter “Vice, Virtue and Contemplation: the Willoughbys’ Religious Books and Devotional Interests” is an insightful essay that “seeks to assess the significance of the Willoughby’s ownership of [classics of pastoral instruction] within the context of the family’s pious interests and influences as a whole, as evidence by their wills, monuments, and family accounts as well as by references to other religious books that they acquired before the Reformation.” What excites this reviewer are the extent of germane, provocative and illuminating conclusions a skilled scholar can deduce from a relatively modest number of volumes in the family library. One conclusion in particular which I find intriguing is Lutton’s belief that “the likelihood that [these manuscripts] came to the family through women points to the importance of female owners and readers of books among the late medieval English gentry.”

After the intense scholarly discussion of the Willoughbys’ literary and religious manuscripts and the light each sheds on generations of this upper crust family, the nuts and bolts of Dorothy Johnston’s chapter “Minding and Mending: Issues in Curating the Medieval Manuscripts” comes like a cooling rain. Not that conservation and restoration issues don’t bring complexities of their own—far from it. The Wollaton manuscripts presented staggering (and staggeringly expensive) challenges. Imagine the many physical ailments the average human being racks up in a typical lifespan—then multiply this half a dozen times to account for the average age of these manuscripts.

Large, unwieldy manuscripts such as the Wollaton Antiphonal presented just such problems. “The cost of repair was estimated at over £50,000,” notes Johnston.

...there was the sheer size of the volume: 412 leaves measuring approximately 590 X 410 mm. Although a 19th-century rebinding gave the volume an appearance of structural integrity, the sewing no longer adequately supported the massive text block. A number of leaves were completely detached and the heavily glued spine limited safe opening and added to the risk of further pigment loss. In general the parchment leaves throughout the volume lacked strength and many were too fragile to handle, with extensive mould staining. Many leaves required parchment repair, commonly at the tail and fore-edges. Some leaves, particularly towards the end, were distorted and cockled. The most obvious pigment damage was of long standing and in the areas of rubrication, which had run and offset, losing textual definition and staining entire leaves pink. Although many of the historiated initials still seemed to be stunningly fresh, expert opinion recommended further investigation and warned that pigment consolidation would be needed throughout the volume. The first eight leaves were particularly delicate. They had already been extensively repaired with paper, with the most damaged border areas being cut away....

Johnston guides the reader through exhaustive repairs that stretched out for years—many thousands of hours of specialized expertise at a cost of many thousands of pounds.

Hardcore medievalists will appreciate this book’s Part II—The Catalogue, a detailed item by item physical description of every Wollaton manuscript. Think of this as a bibliographical autopsy—full collations, painstaking history of earlier repairs, all the gory details.

Last but not least comes, of course, dessert: Illustrations. Glorious illustrations, most in full color. Here can be seen some of the condition issues discussed: cockled (wrinkled) vellum leaves, leaves with missing sections and missing outer edges restored, flaking and occasionally defaced illustrations, dampstaining. This book would have to have been printed in what’s known as elephant folio size (and at a budget-busting price) to illustrate their largest items at actual size. The Wollaton Antiphonal is

the star of this show, though there are others here to take your breath away. Whenever any manuscript leaf or portion isn't shown at actual size, the editors have resorted to a clever solution: They tell you in the caption what percentage of actual size it is—whether 93% or 48% or 67% or what have you. At least then your imagination can enlarge it to the appropriate size. Easy, clever solution—so why don't more books with reduced document illustrations do this?

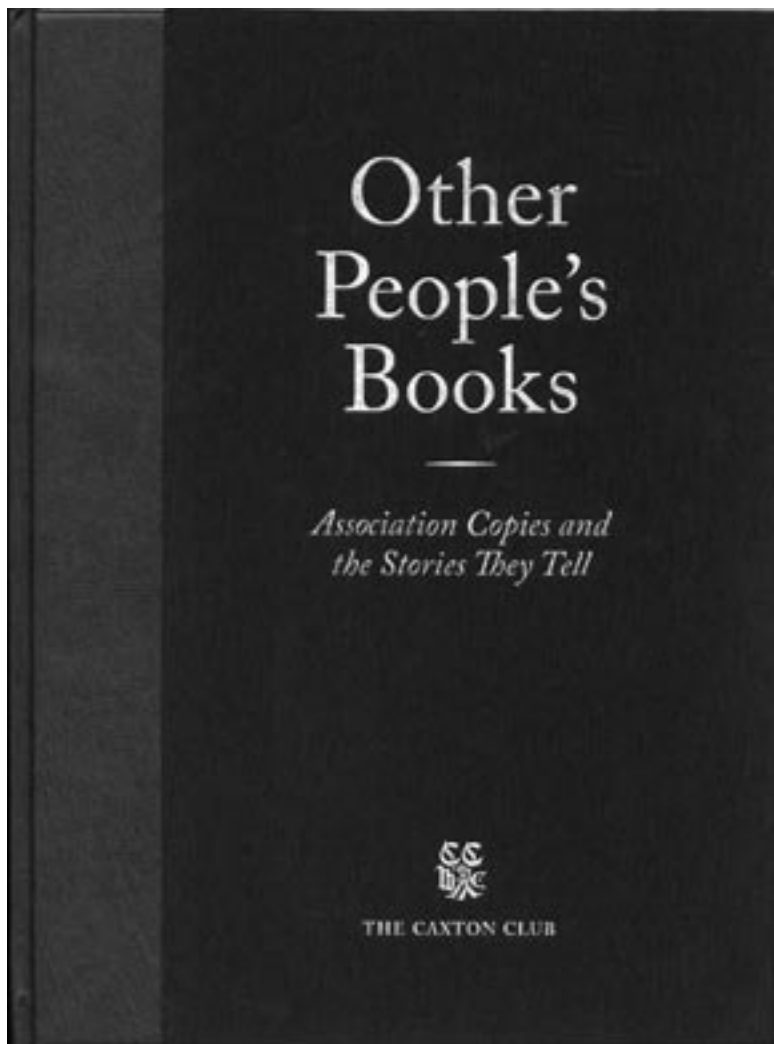
The specialist lingo cited at the beginning of this review may seem daunting to novitiates, but there's really not that much and it's not nearly as inaccessible as it may seem at first. *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts* makes for enjoyable and instructive reading to anyone wanting to immerse themselves in the world of English medieval manuscripts.

Association Copies of Books

Association copies of books either excite you beyond measure—goosebumps, heart palpitations, a dozen other symptoms—or they leave you stone cold—scratching your chin, wondering what all the fuss is about. Count me among the former. If you're among the latter, close this journal right now, for there's no hope for you.

If, on the other hand, you're asking "What's an association copy?" read on. Association copies, to simplify a debated issue, are copies of books owned by the author and/or annotated by the author, or a copy that belonged to a person closely connected to the author or to the book. A book simply signed or inscribed by its author—say, in a routine bookstore signing—is not an association copy. A presentation copy, on the other hand, is a copy specially inscribed by an author to a friend or to someone closely connected to the book—this is a subcategory of association copies.

Other People's Books: Association Copies and the Stories They Tell is the latest in a long list of worthwhile books about books (sometimes with autograph angles to them) published by the Caxton Club of Chicago, a distinguished organization of collectors, librarians, editors, publishers, dealers—anyone with a serious bookish bent. Kim Coventry, in her preface, calls association copies "a sorely under-published subject," and G. Thomas Tanselle, in a typically Tansellian (that is, entertaining and



instructive) introduction, explores the history of the concept. For him, the console table once owned by Katharine Hepburn in his home is the launching point. “Some of my guests... show an increased interest in the table and begin examining the scars and nicks that reflect the hard treatment Hepburn gave it. Other visitors simply say ‘Interesting,’ or make some other noncommit-

tal remark, barely concealing their belief that it is silly to care about a table's previous ownership...."

Tanselle shows how the phrase came into use in the later 19th century. By the time that Chicago's Caxton Club published *Catalogue of an Exhibit of Books Interesting through their Associations* in 1896, the phrase was on its way to becoming well-known both in America (where it originated) and in England. He goes through the various standard definitions that infiltrate the rare book literature: John T. Winterich's 1927 *Primer on Book Collecting*, Iolo A. Williams' 1927 *Elements of Book-Collecting*, Holbrook Jackson's 1931 *Anatomy of Bibliomania* and above all John Carter's often-quoted 1952 *ABC for Book-Collectors*.

Believe it or not, association copies are a hot button topic (one step down from a burning issue) in the book collecting world. Hot because some question their value is anything more than monetary, whether they add anything meaningful to the historical record or to scholarship. Detractors attribute their appeal and their value to sentimentality. But Tanselle effectively and eloquently dismantles this belief, refuting the notion that some have "an irrational attraction for them, based on feeling rather than reason." He remarks, "To begin with, all artifacts are deserving of the greatest respect and interest because their physical survival... brings the past into the present: we can see and touch what people in the past saw and touched... There is no more direct window on the past than the one that physical objects provide." You won't find a more thoughtful exploration of the meaning of association copies anywhere. "The narratives that we can extrapolate from the details present in association copies form only a part of the history of those copies," he writes, "and if the possessors of such copies write down their own associations, either inside or outside of the books, they are contributing to the fuller story of the role those objects have played in the lives of human beings." Amen!

Other People's Books presents 52 choice association copies—essays by 28 private collectors and 24 archivists and librarians profiling special items in their collections—organized chronologically by the year of the book under discussion. The time span is large, 515 years, ranging from Eusebius of Caesarea's *De evangelica praeparatione* of 1470 to Alain Elkann's *Piazza Carignano* of 1985.

Not surprisingly, many of the choicest treasures profiled in *Other People's Books* lie in institutional collections. Many are quite scholarly in nature—extraordinary copies of seminal titles that John Q. Public wouldn't be familiar with, written by significant authors that John Q. would be unlikely to know. The very first essay is a good case in point. Johns Hopkins University rare book and manuscript curator Earle Havens writes about their copy of Peter Martyr's 1553 *De Orbe Nouo Decades* ("Decades of the New World")—"the first major history of the Americas... the official chronicler of the Spanish imperial enterprise in the New World...." Theirs belonged to no less than its first translator, the influential Englishman Richard Eden (c. 1520-76), whose 1555 translation "secured Eden's reputation not only as a translator but also as a promoter of New World imperialism at a time when the western hemisphere was still truly 'new' to Europeans." It is signed by him and bears extensive inked margin notes on almost every page. Remarkably, Havens is able to thoroughly document almost every owner of this copy from that time until 1942, when it was bequeathed to Johns Hopkins University.

It's difficult to convey the eclectic nature of the books in *Other People's Books* other than to pick a few favorites at random. So if you'll step this way....

In the be-still-my-beating-heart variety, Samuel Streit of Brown University Library presents that institution's first edition of F. Scott Fitzgerald's masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*—an expensive and desirable high spot in any literature collection. Did I tell you this copy is handsomely inscribed "For T.S. Eliot / Greatest of Living Poets / from his entheusiastic [sic] / worshipper / F. Scott Fitzgerald" and dated?

Collector Paul T. Ruxin relates in "A Serendipitous Acquisition" how "an old dictionary" by Samuel Johnson was offered him in 2006. (He comments wryly, "Such moments happen to collectors, but usually while they are asleep. I was wide awake.") The volumes had "Hill Boothby The Gift of the author" and "H. Boothby The Gift of the author" penned in them in an unusual handwriting. To make a complex but riveting sleuthing story short, Ruxin and a crackerjack Johnson expert he employed determined that Hill Boothby was a "pious and learned lady, unmarried" whom Johnson wooed after the death of his wife.

Boothby died, though, to Johnson's prolonged grief. Ruxin found proof positive of Johnson having given her a set of the first edition of his much-acclaimed *Dictionary of the English Language*, but although he was able to track the history of this set, to his immense disappointment he was never able to locate examples of Boothby's handwriting to verify that she herself had inscribed the volumes. He bought the books nonetheless, consoling himself that "perhaps Johnson had simply asked his London publisher to have a copy delivered to Boothby... [and] the inscription was in fact penned by the publisher's clerk."

Ruxin did find exceptionally compelling if circumstantial evidence that Boothby inscribed the books herself, though. Not only do two separate accounts record her "especially admired" handwriting, but, he conjectures: "Would a publisher's clerk have made a notation in such an elaborate manner? Had the inscriptions been those of a clerk, would they not have more likely began, 'To Miss...'? And why would a clerk have written 'Hill Boothby' in one volume and 'H. Boothby' in the other?" Wishful thinking on Ruxin's part? I'm on his side.

It's always a thrill to see a *true* first edition—that is, the British edition—of Herman Melville's *The Whale*, published in the United States as *Moby Dick*. If you want a signed copies in any way, shape, or form—any edition, any condition—be prepared to wait... and wait... and wait..... Alice Schreyer of the University of Chicago offers up *not only* this treasure, and *not only* signed by Melville—but wonderfully *inscribed to one of his fellow sailors aboard the Acushnet!* "Henry Hubbard / from his old Shipmate / and Watchmate / On board the good ship / Acushnet / (Alas, wrecked at last / on the Nor'West)...." Not only that but this shipmate pencils notes on the bottom of one page that provides the actual names for two of Melville's characters.

If your heart still isn't racing enough, Mark Dimunation of the Library of Congress will finish you off. He tells the fascinating story of Walt Whitman and Henry David Thoreau's one and only meeting, which took place in Brooklyn in November 1856, arranged by Louisa May Alcott's father, Bronson. A stiff, awkward meeting it was, followed by a more comfortable walk. Whitman gave Thoreau a copy of his just-released second edition of *Leaves of Grass*. Thoreau later pencilled "H.D. Thoreau from Walt Whitman" in it. Thoreau gave Whitman a first edition of his

Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers. Whitman later signed this copy, twice, and pencilled in it a brief recollection of their meeting and noted a flaw in this copy. How fortuitous that these two special copies should end up at the same institution. “For years these two books stood in separate Whitman collections in the library’s vaults,” remarks Dimunation, “literally facing each other in mute celebration of an historic meeting until their true association was discovered....”

“Sealed with His Own Blood” is Mormon church historian Richard E. Turley Jr.’s account of the LDS Church’s first European edition of Joseph Smith’s *Book of Mormon*. While Smith and his older brother Hyrum were in jail in Carthage, Illinois, on 17 June 1844, an angry anti-Mormon mob stormed the jail, took the Smith brothers from the jail, killing them and wounding their colleague John Taylor. Writes Turley, “Before leaving, Hyrum opened his copy of the Book of Mormon to a passage that had particular meaning at that moment and marked it by turning down the leaf on the page. The passage began: And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity.” The LDS Church now owns this poignant artifact. “The copy of the Book of Mormon that Hyrum Smith marked that day was... passed down as a prized possession. Subsequent owners added their names to the front pastedown. The last page of the index, subsequent end sheets, and two tipped-in sheets contain numerous autographs of many church dignitaries, including five who served as church president. On Christmas Day 1898, Hyrum Smith’s son Joseph F. Smith... added a note of provenance to the book, certifying that it was the very copy his father marked before leaving Carthage.” Smith’s copy it unquestionably was, but could Taylor have invented the corner-folding tale to romanticize this copy?

Haven’t drooled quite enough? Consider, then, an 1839 edition of *The Poetical Works of Alexander Pope*, which Thomas A. Horrocks of Harvard University’s Houghton Library addresses. At some point, an obscure Illinois legislator gave this routine copy to his even more obscure future brother-in-law: Abraham Lincoln. On its front flyleaf, the recipient penned “A. Lincoln—Presented by his friend, N.W. Edwards,” and he also signed the front cover. Horrocks examines Lincoln’s known books, which were modest in number but which Lincoln knew inside enough

until he was able to recite passages from most of them. “Lincoln cited Pope in conversation, letters, and speeches,” and he cites specific instances of Lincoln quoting Pope; Horrock notes that Lincoln marked a Pope passage in a poetry anthology he owned. “We do not know if Lincoln referred to Houghton’s copy of Pope’s works for any of the letters and speeches in which he cited the poet. Houghton’s copy bears no markings of any sort and does not appear to have been used heavily....” In 1861, President-elect Lincoln gave this copy to his friend and law partner William H. Herndon—who in 1867 presented it to the noted Boston editor, publisher and book collector James T. Fields, inscribing the front pastedown and noting the book’s history. Although an accompanying letter from Fields records how much he “treasured [a book] having been owned and read by one of the noblest and most sorely tried of men,” Horrocks notes that “Fields’s public view of Lincoln expressed in these words did not match his private sentiments,” so apparently a love of Pope was the only point of agreement between Lincoln and Fields.

Some association copies show their ownership through bookplates or other nondescript markings—not quite the cachet of ownership signatures and annotations, but intriguing nonetheless. Collector Per Ralamb tells the thrilling story of acquiring a 1669 Elzevier edition of Hugo Grotius’s *De veritate religionis christianae* (“On the Truth of the Christian Religion”). Researching two old armorial bookplate inside the book, Ralamb determined that this book had come from the library of Sir Isaac Newton. Newton’s next door neighbor had bought his books upon Newton’s death in 1727, who then gave them to his son (Charles Huggins, one of the bookplates); upon his death in 1750, James Musgrave (the other bookplate) purchased his books, penning a shelf mark that could conclusively link the book to a published account of Newton’s library. “Is this really going to be that easy, I thought?” writes a bemused and shocked Ralamb. “Could this be a book that Newton once owned?” Proof again that some booksellers don’t do their homework, neglecting provenance issues, and that *great* finds are still out there waiting to be made, despite popular opinion to the contrary.

Other bookplate association copies include the University of Illinois at Chicago’s copy of Murray F. Tuley’s 1873 *Laws and Ordinances Governing the City of Chicago* (Clarence Darrow’s copy)

and collector Jon Lellenberg's 1901 first English edition of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (bookman and Sherlock Holmes scholar extraordinaire Vincent Starrett's copy).

By the way, it's worth noting that not every book profiled in *Other People's Books* is a museum-worthy rarity beyond the reach of any but the most affluent collectors. Some entries discuss association copies that aren't outrageously valuable but are priceless to their owners. David Spadafora's copy of Ernest Campbell Mossner's *The Life of David Hume* (historian Peter Gay's copy) and his copy of Gay's National Book Award winner *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (historian Franklin L. Baumer's copy) are part of his "working collection" and "have special meaning to me...." It turns out "Gay was a teacher of mine in graduate school at Yale University, and he was a reader of doctoral dissertation" and gifted him this copy, with his ownership signature and margin notes. Baumer "was also a teacher of mine in graduate school, but he was something much more—my mentor and dissertation adviser." The book given him by Baumer's widow "contained a page of penciled notes in Baumer's small and careful hand, evaluating the book"—turns out "it was the one that had led Yale to make an offer to Gay, who left Columbia University for New Haven in 1969." A delightful pair, though it certainly requires Spadafora's explanation to appreciate the significance.

Another book not terribly valuable thrilled this reviewer. Americana collectors and dealers such as myself genuflect before the name Wright Howes, author of the 1954 classic *U.S.iana: A descriptive check-list of 11,450 printed sources relating to those parts of Continental North America now comprising the United States*—an invaluable reference volume I've consulted almost daily for twenty-plus years. This hardcore blue-collar Chicago bookseller palled around with, of all people, the wealthy businessman and collector Everett Graff, whose fabulous collection is the subject of another venerable bibliography, the 1968 *Catalogue of the Everett D. Graff Collection of Western Americana*—another volume I've consulted regularly for two decades. In retirement, as president of Chicago's reknowned Newberry Library, Graff made possible the publication of his friend's opus. What should Chicago collector and all-around good egg John Blew have but the very copy of *U.S.iana* that Howes presented to his patron Graff, with a wonderful understated inscription "To Everett Graff who was

a silent partner in this undertaking.” Blew titles his essay “Silent Partner,” noting that “I acquired my inscribed copy of the 1954 first edition from the Evanston, Illinois, antiquarian bookseller Hamill and Barker. Its proprietor, the late Terry Tanner, was to me what Wright Howes was to Everett Graff: my mentor and eventually my good friend; I miss his company every day.... my own silent partner.” A touching tribute to the much-respected, much-missed Chicago bibliophile who died in 2002 at too young an age.

Now remember, I’ve just profiled about a dozen of the 52 essays that make *Other People’s Books* a bibliographic page-turner. They vary from three to a half dozen pages, each illustrated with one or more fine quality color images—perfect for dipping into at random. The writing quality naturally varies—to be expected, with such a wide array of collectors and librarians describing favorite books—but book people tend to be articulate and enthusiastic. It’s a well-made and beautifully laid-out volume, too, complete with sewn-in grey silk page marker. *Other People’s Books* is a special book about special books.