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Audubon's *The Birds of America*: A Sesquicentennial Appreciation

BY DAVID TATHAM

In 1896, James J. Belden (1825–1904) presented to Syracuse University the munificent gift of a complete set of the 435 engravings that constitute John James Audubon’s *The Birds of America*, along with its accompanying five volumes of *Ornithological Biography*. Belden, a native of nearby Fabius, was a banker who had served as mayor of Syracuse in 1877–78 and as United States congressman from 1887 to 1895. He had been a trustee of Syracuse University since 1872. His gift followed by less than a decade the University’s acquisition of the incomparable library of Leopold von Ranke (1887) and the remarkable (and still inadequately studied) Wolff-Leavenworth Collection of prints relating to the history of science (1889). Belden’s gift of Audubon’s great work marked the culmination of the University’s first sustained effort to assemble a library of national distinction.

Audubon had published the engraved prints of his *Birds of America* in groups of five beginning in 1827. The eighty-seventh and final group went out to subscribers in 1838. He had produced the prints in Great Britain, the first few in Edinburgh and the remainder in London. In these cities he had access to presses and papers necessary to his venture but unavailable in the smaller and still provincial graphic arts communities of the United States. During the eleven years of production he repeatedly crossed the Atlantic with portfolios of watercolor drawings he had made in the field. While in Great Britain he closely oversaw their engraving and hand coloring, exhorted his production team to do their best, and then returned to America to record further species.

Each print in the series is Double Elephant Folio in format, or about twenty-six by thirty-eight inches. Audubon required sheets of this size to show such birds as the Wild Turkey and the Bald Eagle life size. The 435 prints portray 1065 birds of 489 species. Each print
carries an engraved legend identifying the bird, the artist, and the printer, but no other text. Audubon’s essays on the birds came in the five volumes of his *Ornithological Biography*, published between 1831 and 1839 in octavo format. These essays hold a significant place not only in the literature of natural history but also in American Romanticism. Indeed, Audubon’s historical importance is tripartite, resting on his contributions to science and literature as well as art. He quickened the intellectual currents of the 1830s that found in American nature the great Romantic subject of the age.

By any standard, American or European, the costs involved in producing *The Birds of America* were daunting. Audubon scoured the United States, Great Britain, and parts of Europe for subscribers willing to pay two guineas or ten dollars for each installment of prints. He secured 279 of them, but over the dozen years required to complete the project, death, declining fortunes, and other circumstances substantially reduced the subscription list. In the event, Audubon issued only about 200 complete sets of the engravings. Of these, just over 130 survive intact, 90 of them in the United States.

The Syracuse University set of *The Birds of America* is one of the very few put together by Audubon after he had supplied his subscribers. He (or one of his two sons, who were his indispensible associates in this enterprise) sold the set in 1853 to Dr. Haller Nutt of Longwood, near Natchez, Mississippi. Longwood was, and remains, one of the great antebellum plantation houses. There Dr. Nutt had gathered a natural history library that ranked among the most important in the Old South. With the dissolution of this library in the 1890s, the Nutt set of *The Birds of America* and its companion volumes of *Ornithological Biography* found their way to the antiquarian department of Brentano’s book shop in New York, where Belden purchased them in 1896 and soon after presented them to his university.

Audubon’s achievements have been so widely and justly praised from his lifetime to the present that it is sometimes forgotten that the idea for an encyclopedic illustrated study of North American avian life was not original with him. A good start on such a project had been made by the English naturalist Mark Catesby with the publication in London, beginning in 1727, of his *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. Catesby depicted 102 species of American birds (with other flora and fauna) on 100 engraved plates.
North American birds remained a subject of keen interest to European naturalists throughout the eighteenth century, since the New World offered many species unknown to the Old. But only in the first decade of the nineteenth century was an attempt made to record these birds comprehensively. This task was undertaken by Alexander Wilson, a Scottish weaver, poet, and social reformer, who emigrated to Philadelphia and with the encouragement of the botanist John Bartram and the artist-naturalist Charles Willson Peale, became a naturalist.

Though long overshadowed by Audubon's accomplishments, Wilson's achievements as a naturalist and writer were considerable. He was an important model for his younger and more audacious competitor. Wilson's *American Ornithology* appeared in nine volumes between 1808 and 1814, the last volume issued posthumously and the project left incomplete. He crowded more than 200 birds into 76 engraved plates, portraying them with scant naturalism. His limitations as an artist almost certainly motivated Audubon to excel him grandly in this respect with depictions of birds in flight, in combat, and nearly always in active relation to their environment. Wilson had financed his *Ornithology* through subscriptions, and Audubon needed to persuade some of his own subscribers that his venture would not merely repeat his predecessor's work. The two men knew each other. They met first when Wilson sought to add Audubon, then a relatively unknown young man, to his subscription list. Audubon declined, saying that he intended to publish a competing work. This was but one of the many rebuffs Wilson encountered in his struggle to bring his *Ornithology* to print. Even now, his text is too little noticed as an early example of American nature taken as a Romantic subject. Bad luck dogged him. Later editions of his work were expunged of their most interesting passages in a misguided attempt to make his text seem more scientifically objective. The George Arents Research Library owns a set of the original Wilson as well as part of Catesby's *Natural History*.

Catesby, Wilson, and Audubon viewed themselves as men of science for whom art was a tool rather than an end in itself. Their interest in American birds, and their readers' interest as well, extended beyond the boundaries of science, however. Birds, perhaps more than any other form of life, were perceived to be sources of ever-changing beauty to both the eye and the ear. In their free flight
they were nature's symbols of liberty, and these two words—nature and liberty—carried powerful meanings in the century that spanned Catesby and Audubon. And what more fitting home for such symbols than a continent still (in the 1820s) largely pristine in its natural setting, one in which had been founded a new Republic on the idea of liberty. Further, in an age that saw nature as the greatest of teachers, birds presented instructive and cautionary parallels for humans in the nurturing of their young, in their industry, valor, vanity, gluttony, and the like.

Most such associations in the engravings by Audubon's contemporaries register only faintly on present-day viewers. Audubon's art, on the other hand, has retained its powers to engage minds and feelings. His engravings still transmit the excited sense of wonder that he first brought to the task. This is the basis for a demand for his work that far exceeds the supply. Nearly all of the original watercolors for his Birds of America have been owned by the New-York Historical Society since the nineteenth century. Most of his other original works have also gravitated to museum collections. Only his engravings come regularly to sale, and this supply is fed by the dismantling of sets. The steadily increasing prices realized at auction for single engravings from The Birds of America has made precious objects of them. The intrinsic worth of an intact set is not monetary, however, but historical, intellectual, educational, and aesthetic.

The Syracuse University set has one special distinction—its state of preservation. Despite decades in Mississippi humidity and more than half a century in less than ideal circumstances in the University's Carnegie Library, the Syracuse set reached the mid-1980s in good condition. Still, it suffered from problems inherent in the papers, inks, pigments, pastes, and other materials used to make the plates. In 1984–85, Cathleen Baker, now Professor of Paper Conservation at the State University of New York College at Buffalo, thoroughly examined and conserved the set. She also traced its history, plate by plate, from printing in Great Britain through every stage of its itinerary in the United States. She established Haller Nutt as the original owner. Her study, cast in part as a thesis for the M.A. in Fine Arts, was awarded the Graduate School Prize in 1985.1 If the

Syracuse set is not now the best documented and best conserved of all those still in existence, it has few peers.

In recent years the Syracuse *Birds of America* has served students in such fields as art history, printmaking, papermaking, rare books, bibliography, museum studies, the history of science, American Romanticism, and art conservation. We may confidently assume that in the coming century and a half it will serve many other fields as well.
John James Audubon achieved lasting fame for his paintings of America's birds and animals, reproduced in The Birds of America, and, to a lesser degree, in the later Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America. But he was also a gifted and prolific writer. In the five-volume Ornithological Biography (the companion to the great folio), his vivid descriptive essays on the birds are interspersed with sketches of his experiences and adventures on several frontiers. In addition, he kept detailed journals of his travels, beginning with his voyage by flatboat down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in 1820–21, and extending through his journeys to England and Scotland and his specimen-seeking excursions to the Florida Keys, to Nova Scotia and Labrador, to the Republic of Texas, and finally, in 1843, to the upper Missouri River for specimens of quadrupeds. Most of these journals have been edited and published, often overedited and mutilated. The chief family offender was Maria Audubon, who tried to make her grandfather respectable by Victorian standards. Trivial but indicative is her changing of Audubon's "naked rock" to "bare rock" (1826 Journal 42; Audubon and His Journals 1: 97).

Fortunately some of the original manuscripts survived, to be published in our time as faithful reproductions of Audubon's often erratic but lively and picturesque style. (It is probably just as well that he never mastered the formal use of the English of his own time.)

Of all Audubon's writings, I am here most concerned with the 1820–21 journal of his voyage down the Ohio and Mississippi (which has been preserved intact), the English and Scottish journal of 1826 (also in its original form), and the descriptive sketches of early pioneer life in the Ornithological Biography. These early journal sources dramatically reveal, at first hand, Audubon's long struggle through many failures and obstacles to win the success and recognition he craved and also enduring status as a distinctively American artist.

One might say of Audubon's work what Whitman said two decades later of his own Leaves of Grass: "Camerado, who touches this
book touches a man.” I shall try to do justice to the man, while recognizing that it is often hard to distinguish between the actual person and the literary persona created by the writer.

In his original draft of the preface to his *Ornithological Biography* (hereafter cited as *Biography*), Audubon wrote, “I received breath and light in the New World, and my Parents say, under the dark foliage of an Orange Tree, with a load of Golden Fruit and blossoms upon which fed that airly Silph the Hum Bird, whilst I received the tender cares of a Mother ever since kind to me” (Dwight 26). In actuality, Audubon was born in Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) in 1785, the natural son of a French naval officer, planter, trader (and slave trader) and his Breton French mistress, who died soon after his birth. Taken to France as a young child, he was adopted at the age of nine by his father and his father’s wife, who spoiled him during his father’s long absences. Talented in drawing, fencing, music, and dancing, he resisted all his father’s efforts to insure his formal education (including the learning of English). In his very early years, he went by several names, including Rabine or Rabin (his natural mother’s), before settling finally on the Americanized John James Audubon. Burdened as he was by the secret of his illegitimacy, it is not surprising that his origins became shrouded in myths and legends, largely self-generated (like that of an idyllic Louisiana birth and early childhood). His identification with the lost Dauphin was, however, a posthumous fabrication. While still very young, he developed an absorbing interest in birds and a compulsion to draw and paint them. As an artist he was largely self-taught. He had not been a student of David in Paris, despite the story he invented. At the age of eighteen, he was sent to America, chiefly to avoid conscription into Napoleon’s army.¹

Audubon arrived in America in 1803, during Jefferson’s first administration, early in the period of rapid westward expansion that followed the opening of the Northwest Territory and shortly before the setting out of the Lewis and Clark expedition and the almost coincidental Louisiana Purchase.

¹. Among documented biographies useful for information about Audubon’s origins and the events of his life are those of Herrick, who first uncovered the facts of Audubon’s birth and adoption in French records; Ford, who pursued further research into French and American sources; and Adams.
While living on a Pennsylvania farm owned by his father, he fell in love with, and subsequently married, Lucy Bakewell, the daughter of an English neighbor.\(^2\)

In 1808, at the age of twenty-three, inspired by dreams of success as a frontier businessman, Audubon traveled west across the Alleghenies by stagecoach and down the Ohio River to Louisville, to open a store in a partnership funded by his father, and soon after brought his bride there. Their first son, Victor, was born in 1809 (the year of Lincoln's birth in a backwoods Kentucky cabin). The business was later moved to the frontier river hamlet of Henderson, where, after changes in partnership, it was expanded by the establishment of a steam mill and by other ill-fated enterprises through which Audubon and many of his friends and neighbors lost a great deal of money. The mill in particular became a drain. Though Audubon actively promoted these schemes, much of the actual work was done by others while he was off hunting, fishing, and socializing—and continuing to collect and draw new specimens of the birdlife of the Ohio Valley.

A decade after moving west, Audubon was briefly jailed for debt and entered bankruptcy in 1819, having lost all his worldly goods and the respect and good will of his neighbors, among whom he had been very popular.

A pariah in need of support for his family, Audubon for the first time began to draw portraits in pencil and black chalk, which for a while, at five dollars a head (living or dead), provided a meager income. (His avocation was becoming a vocation.) In 1820, he moved upstream to the thriving town of Cincinnati, Ohio, where he became a taxidermist in Dr. Daniel Drake's Western Museum and also taught drawing classes. Encouraged by Drake, who pointed out in a public lecture that Audubon had recorded new species of birds unknown to Alexander Wilson, the prominent Philadelphia ornithologist (Adams 193–95), Audubon, at the lowest point of his life, decided upon his great project: to publish a comprehensive volume of life-size paintings of the birds of America, not only in their natural settings but caught in the midst of their characteristic activities. His first deliberate move toward this goal was to travel downriver along

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2. For fuller information about Lucy, a talented musician, swimmer, horsewoman, teacher, editor, and resourceful partner to Audubon in all his efforts, see DeLatte.
the great Ohio-Mississippi flyway—a richer resource than the Atlantic coastal flyway partially explored by Wilson.³

On 12 October 1820, at age thirty-five, Audubon opened the journal account of his voyage: “I left Cincinnati this afternoon at half past 4 o’clock, on Board of Mr. Jacob Aumack’s flat Boat—bound to New Orleans—. . . . I kissed My Beloved Wife & Children with an expectation of being absent for Seven Months—” (The separation was to be for fourteen months.)

“I took with me Joseph Mason a Young Man of about 18 years of age of good familly and naturally an aimiable Youth, he is intended to be a Companion, & a Friend; . . . Leaving Home with a Determined Mind to fulfill our Object= Without any Money My Talents are to be My Support and My enthusiasm my Guide in My Dificulties, the whole of which I am ready to exert to keep, and to surmount” (Journal 1820–21 3).

Joe Mason, actually a thirteen- or fourteen-year-old drawing pupil at the time, was the first of a number of assistants; his payment was to be Audubon’s continued instruction. Mason was to produce, without recognition, some of the finest renderings of the plants and natural settings in Audubon’s earlier plates.

Audubon’s mood at the beginning and through much of his downriver journey oscillated between fear and hope. Still suffering from alienation and rejection, he was stricken by the sight of Henderson a few days after setting out: “We . . . passed Henderson about sun raise, I Looked on the Mill perhaps for the Last Time, and with thoughts that made my Blood almost Cold bid it an eternal farewell—” (12–13).

Two weeks later, at the junction of the Ohio and Mississippi, Audubon contrasts his poverty with his affluence on earlier river trading trips. He goes on to describe the meeting of the waters: “The Beautifull & Transparent Watter of the Ohio when first entering the Mississippi is taken in small Drafts and Looks the More aquable to the Eye as it goes down surrounded by the Muddy Current, it keeps off as much as possible by running down on the Kentucky side for several miles but reduced to a narrow strip & is lost” (30). (His close obser-

³. For further information on the publication of Wilson’s life work, American Ornithology (9 vols., Philadelphia, 1808–14), see Snyder, 19–25.
vation here curiously anticipates that of Mark Twain in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, published sixty years later.)

Though Audubon continued to suffer depressions, he was usually shaken out of them by the beauty of his surroundings, the richness of the wildlife, and the enthusiasm of productive work. The pages of the journals are filled with observations of birds and animals, including great flocks of migrating birds. Near New Madrid on the Mississippi, the center of the great 1811 earthquake, on 23 November he shot a White-Headed or Bald Eagle with a rifle at 150 yards, arranged it on wires, and began his “drawing” (actually mixed-media painting), which he completed in four days. (He prided himself on the fact that he was naturally a fast as well as thorough worker.) As with other specimens, he recorded its weight (8½ pounds) and measurements (37–40). Not long afterwards a fellow passenger winged another eagle, which was brought aboard alive. After describing the “Noble Fellow” as he “Looked at his Ennemies with a Contemptible Eye,” Audubon remarked, “I am glad to find that its Eyes were Corresponding with My Drawing—[he felt that he had caught the life] . . . the femelle hovered over us and shrieked for some time, exhibiting the true sorrow of the Constant Mate” (61).

In addition to the birds Audubon shot for his work, he was responsible, as the boat’s hunter, for the killing of game to feed the crew and passengers. While still on the Ohio, he wrote, “. . . after a Long Walk return to Dinner with only 7 Partridges and 1 Pheasant. . . . I finished my Drawing of the Common Crow and after Dinner Went a Shore with the Company—Killed 5 pheasants 14 Partridges 1 Squirrel and 3 Turkeys. . . .” Sometimes the fare was plentiful, as when he caught a sixty-four-pound catfish in the Missis-

4. The *Ornithological Biography* carries a striking description of the eagle he drew here (1: 160–69); actually he revised the painting (for Plate No. 31) eight years later, in London. In his journal entry for 10 February 1828, Audubon wrote: “This morning I took one of my drawings from my portfolio and began to copy it, and intend to finish it in better style. It is the White-Headed Eagle which I drew on the Mississippi some years ago, feeding on a Wild Goose; now I shall make it breakfast on a catfish, the drawing of which is also with me, with the marks of the talons of another Eagle, which I disturbed on the banks of that same river, driving him from his prey. I worked from seven this morning till dusk” (*Audubon and His Journals* 1: 282–83).
sippi. Sometimes it was skimpier: "The Tell Tales [sandpipers] we eat to Day were very fat but very fishy—I eat the purple Grakle it tasted well" (10, 21).

It was not until he reached Natchez on the more settled lower Mississippi that he had a regular meal, at a hotel, and reported "the awkwardness I felt . . . having not used a fork and Scarcely even a Plate since I left Louisville, I involuntarily took Meet and Vegetable with My fingers several times; on Board the flat Boats We seldom eat together and very often the hungry Cooked, this I perform when in need by Plucking & Cleaning a Duck, or a Partridge and throwing it on the Hot embers; few Men have eat a Teal with better appetite than I have dressed in this manner—" (94–95).

The sightings of migrating birds continued into the winter. On the day after Christmas, he reported: "We saw to day probably Millions of those Irish Geese or Cormorants, flying Southwest—they flew in Single Lines for several Hours extremely high—" (88).

Even after reaching New Orleans on 7 January, Audubon continued to go out along the river to see birds. On one occasion he witnessed "the Passage of Millions of Golden Plovers" driven south by a winter storm and killed by the thousands by hunters who had come out from the city (134). But this destruction was nothing in comparison with the slaughter of passenger pigeons Audubon graphically described in the Biography, with the conclusion, however, that "nothing but the gradual diminution of our forests can accomplish their decrease, as they not unfrequently quadruple their numbers yearly, and always at least double it" (1: 325). In the midst of the teeming birdlife of an unspoiled land, Audubon could not have imagined the possibility of the recorded death of the last surviving passenger pigeon in the Cincinnati zoo on 1 September 1914.

Meanwhile, in grimy lodgings, Audubon resumed his career as a portrait painter, with enough success to be able to raise his usual fee from $5 to $25. On 29 January, he sent $270 to Lucy, together with a crate of Queensware as a gift (120–21). (All her former household goods had been sold to pay creditors.)

In the heart of the city, he was intrigued by a mocking bird, "always in the Same Spot and Same Position, and [I] have been particularly pleased at hearing him Imitate the Watchman's Cry of All's Well that Issues from the fort about 3 Squares Distant, and so well,
has he sometimes performed I Would have been mistaken if he had not repeated too often in the Space of a 10 minutes” (132).

(Audubon’s later depiction of mocking birds attacked by a rattlesnake was his most dramatic and controversial painting [Plate No. 21], since it drew the charge that rattlesnakes could not climb trees. He was later proved right.)

He admired mockingbirds for their courage in fighting off their enemies and also for their virtuosity as singers, later comparing them with the European nightingale in the edited text of the Biography: “I have frequently heard both species in confinement and in the wild state, and without prejudice, have no hesitation in pronouncing the notes of the European Philomel equal to those of a soubrette of taste, which could she study under a Mozart, might perhaps in time become very interesting in her way. But to compare her essays to the finished talent of the Mocking Bird, is, in my opinion, quite absurd” (1: 113).

On 17 February he listed twenty drawings “Sent My Beloved Wife.” Among these were the Bald Eagle and the Common Crow. Eight were designated as “Not Described by Willson” (124–25). Just after
the end of his first year away, he reported, on 26 October, that he had "finished 62 Drawings of Birds & Plants"; they represented not quite a seventh of the 435 engraved plates of the completed folio (199).

In December of 1821, Audubon was joined by Lucy and their sons, Victor and John (223). The family lived for some time on a hand-to-mouth basis. Audubon continued his painting and occasionally taught, while Lucy worked where she could as a governess until she finally secured a permanent job as a teacher in a plantation school near Bayou Sarah. Her new home remained their permanent base for a number of years, although Audubon continued to move about seeking birds and any extra work that might help to ease their expenses.

In 1824 he undertook an ambitious journey upriver and east to try to consult with naturalists and publishers about possible arrangements for publishing his work. In Philadelphia, he exhibited his pictures at the Academy of Arts and Sciences and won considerable praise, especially from the visiting Charles Bonaparte (a nephew of Napoleon), who was himself working on an ornithological volume. But in the eyes of the public who came to view, his long hair and rough clothes marked him as a backwoodsman. He also found enemies among partisans of Alexander Wilson who had personal interests in the continuing sales of Wilson’s work, a Philadelphia publication.

Proceeding to New York with letters of introduction, Audubon was more successful. He was invited to show his pictures at the New York Lyceum of Natural Science and to give a paper on the migration of cliff swallows, which had been thought to hibernate during the winter months. The society elected him to membership and printed his paper. But he found no support for his idea of publishing the ambitious folio.

Giving up his plan of visiting Boston, he backtracked to Bayou Sarah, where he arrived physically and psychically exhausted. After rest, recuperation, and long consultation with Lucy, it was decided that he would continue adding to and perfecting his paintings, meanwhile earning what he could in lessons in fencing and dancing. (The latter proved especially popular throughout the countryside, with Audubon demonstrating steps as he led cotillions to the music of his own violin.) For her part, Lucy would continue her teaching. Together, they would pool their savings toward a trip to England, since
it seemed clear that no American publisher would undertake the book. By the spring of 1826, they had saved $1700, and in May, Audubon, at the age of forty-one, sailed from New Orleans on the Delos on a two-month voyage to England.

Arriving in Liverpool with letters of introduction, he quickly found friends and supporters among naturalists and influential citizens who were greatly impressed by his mixed-media paintings of the exotic birdlife of America. An exhibition at the Royal Institution of Liverpool was a sensational success, and Audubon found himself lionized by society, not only as an artist but as a specimen of the American Woodsman par excellence. He kept his long hair and rough garb, even though some well-wishers urged him to dress more like an English gentleman. His new friends and admirers were also impressed by his openness and simplicity of manner.

After an unsuccessful visit to Manchester, Audubon moved on to Edinburgh. There, after a cool initial reception, he found enthusiastic admiration and support and—again—lionization. He was wined and dined by intellectuals, artists, and influential citizens. He was also elected to membership in several prestigious scientific societies. Most important, he greatly impressed the Scottish engraver W. H. Lizars, who had done plates for ornithological volumes. In describing their meeting, Audubon tells of spreading out his work and of Lizars' surprised exclamation: “My God, I never saw anything like this before!” (1826 Journal 244).

Lizars offered to help launch the publication of the work and to begin by deferring immediate payment for the engraving, printing, and coloring of the first five plates, which Audubon could then use as the sample first number for the purpose of selling subscriptions. Audubon accepted gladly, though he realized that the arrangement meant a British visit of years rather than months since he was determined to superintend the engraving and the coloring personally: “I pray that my courage will not fail; my industry, I know, will not.” Lizars insisted that he wear a wolf-skin coat for a portrait to be engraved and used to attract subscribers abroad as well as in Britain (1826 Journal 252, 262).5

5. The original oil painting by John Syme (1795–1861), F.S.A., long thought to be lost, has recently been discovered; it is now in the White House Collection, Washington, D.C. (1826 Journal 252n).
The cost of each five-plate number was to be two guineas (or $10 American; amounting to $1000 for the completed work). Audubon wrote to Lucy, "It is not the naturalist that I wish to please altogether, I assure thee. It is the wealthy part of the community. . . . The University of Edinburgh having subscribed, I look to the rest of them . . . to follow" (1826 Journal 346–47). And the rest did, in England and Europe and increasingly in America, once the news of his foreign reputation spread.

*The Birds of America* was to be a subscription book in the grand tradition. It proved to be quite possibly the greatest of its kind even though it came late, at a time when the subscription method was changing from a way of insuring the publication of expensive works to a way of distributing large numbers of books through the use of traveling agents (a method later exploited by Mark Twain as the exclusive subscription publisher of his own popular books).

Edinburgh completed the crucial change in Audubon's fortunes that had begun in Liverpool. Behind lay long years of struggle and seeming failure; ahead, success and recognition. Just six years earlier, in 1820, Sydney Smith, the co-founder of the *Edinburgh Review*, had issued what was to become a famous (or infamous) jibe: "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue?" Well, people were looking. And Audubon was a pioneer in an emerging eastward movement that was to bring American literature and art to the Old World.

Audubon next proceeded to London, where he was hospitably received and entertained by Albert Gallatin, then serving as American minister. King George IV became one of numerous new subscribers. But suddenly a crisis developed. The publication of plates was suspended after the first two numbers when Lizars' colorists went out on

6. Albert Gallatin (1761–1849), Jefferson's great Secretary of the Treasury and architect of the Treaty of Ghent (1814) was, like Audubon, a naturalized American citizen who had failed as a frontier businessman before undertaking the career which brought success and fame. On 30 May 1827, Audubon wrote: "At twelve o'clock I proceeded with some of my drawings to see our Envoy extraordinaire. He has the ease and charm of a perfect gentleman, and addressed me in French [the Genevan's native tongue]. . . . The ladies knew every plant, and Mr. Gallatin nearly every bird" (*Audubon and His Journals* 1: 254). The Gallatins were the first viewers abroad to whom Audubon's subjects were not strange and exotic.
strike, and Audubon was cut off from the copies needed for new subscribers. After looking for new colorists, Audubon found the English engraver Robert Havell, and their arrangement became permanent.

For the next eleven years, Audubon worked long days (often sixteen or seventeen hours). Besides painting new specimens, he attended to the multifarious business details and correspondence involving not only production but also selling subscriptions, collecting payments, and bookkeeping. The bookkeeping was complicated by the fact that the work was issued in numbers rather than completed volumes and also that subscribers came and went. Some of the endless chores were delegated in various ways over the years, but Audubon maintained responsibility. He also closely monitored the quality of the engravings and their coloring, which remained a persistent problem. When he visited the Radcliffe Library at Oxford, he was dismayed to find that some of Lizars’ early plates were hardly colored, and he saved the subscription by providing replacements. Motivated as he had never been in his youth, he finally succeeded in business, a vital part of his huge project. As he wrote in his journal, “Had I made such regular settlements all my life, I should never have been as poor a man as I have been; but on the other hand I should never have published the ‘Birds of America’” (Audubon and His Journals 1: 292, 276).

Audubon’s residence abroad was broken by several lengthy visits to the United States, where he made sales trips and undertook excursions for new specimens to Georgia, Florida, Texas, and the Canadian maritime provinces. He was showered with attention in both the private and public sectors. Revenue cutters were put at his disposal, and he enjoyed the hospitality and assistance of naturalists and government officials. In both Britain and America he also now had the support of assistants including Lucy, their sons, Victor and John, and George Lehman, a skilled German Swiss landscape artist, an example of whose work can be seen in the South Carolina plantation setting of the Snowy Egret (Plate No. 242).

Audubon’s most important scientific assistant was William Macgillivray, a young Edinburgh professor who helped with the preparation and editing of the Ornithological Biography, in five volumes (1831–39). These contain eloquent and often dramatic descriptions of the birds and their habits and, at intervals, sketches of Audubon’s earlier
life and adventures along the Ohio River and in the wilderness. The varied subjects include Fourth of July celebrations, shooting contests, hoedowns, horseracing, practical jokes, and tornadoes. One describes the great New Madrid earthquake of 1811, which he had experienced at a distance. Two sketches are devoted to the exploits of Daniel Boone, described by Audubon as a friend and hunting companion, although Boone was actually fifty years his senior. (The Boone stories are highly dubious. The legendary hero had also been a frontier business failure; after losing his land rights, he had moved on to Missouri before Audubon reached Kentucky.)

While in Edinburgh, writing the text of the Biography, Audubon rose and began work at 4 a.m., passing his copy on to Macgillivray, who began at ten and worked on into the night; the edited manuscript was given to Lucy, who wrote out fair copy for the printer and probably contributed substantially to the editing, without acknowledgement. Although everything Audubon wrote for the Biography

7. These sketches, or episodes, as Audubon called them, have been collected and edited by F. H. Herrick under the title Delineations of American Scenery and Character (hereafter cited as Delineations).
was edited, Macgillivray respected his basic style and meaning, and the published text was in the form Audubon wanted (Adams 378–79).

Audubon's mood in the autobiographical sketches is mellower than in the earlier journals. Although he recognizes the hardships of his earlier life, his retrospective views tend to be nostalgic and appreciative. Most important, he is writing with an audience other than Lucy in mind, and with an awareness that his identification with Boone and the primitive wilderness will enhance his image as the American Woodsman, as he often called himself in his journal conversations with Lucy.8

His first sketch, “The Ohio,” presents an idyllic picture of an early descent of the beautiful river in a skiff, with Lucy, in the month of October: “The days were yet warm. The sun had assumed the rich and glowing hue, which at that season produces the singular phenomenon called there the ‘Indian Summer.’ . . . We glided down the river, meeting no other ripple of the water than that formed by the propulsion of our boat. Leisurely we moved along, gazing at the grandeur and beauty of the wild scenery around us.” He comments on the river traffic of rafts and flatboats in this pre-steamboat period and on the richness of the wildlife along the largely uninhabited shores. He also describes a fearsome break in the idyllic voyage when, one evening, they are alarmed to hear in the distance a “loud and strange noise” like the “yells of Indian warfare.” (It was the period of the War of 1812, a time of many frontier raids.) As the noise grows louder and more threatening, they round a bend to discover that “the uproar was being produced by an enthusiastic set of Methodists” holding a camp meeting in a beech clearing. The sketch concludes with the common western theme of the wondrous rapidity

8. In a typical journal entry, Audubon begins by addressing Lucy, continues with a conversational report of the events of the day and of his feelings and reactions, and closes with a tender good-night or farewell. When he bought a new blank journal in London on 1 February 1828, he wrote in it: “Another Journal! It has now twenty-six brothers. . . . I bought you yesterday from a man across the street for fourteen shillings; and what I write in you is for my wife, Lucy Audubon, a matchless woman, and for my two Kentucky lads, whom I do fervently long to press to my heart again” (Audubon and His Journals 1: 280). Only three of the twenty-seven journals are known to have survived in their original form.
with which in the space of a single generation a wilderness has given way to advancing civilization (Delineations 1-5).

Besides describing raccoon hunts and other adventures in the woods, Audubon treats the grimmer subject of the regulators, or vigilantes, who wrought rough justice on frontier desperadoes. He also tells, in "The Prairie," of how he narrowly escaped death when a termagant backwoods mother and her two sons, in a cabin in which he was staying for the night, plotted to kill him for his gold watch. The plan was foiled by the arrival of other travelers, who helped to bind and hang the plotters next morning, with no regrets. Audubon adds that this was the only time in twenty-five years of wandering in America that his life was "in danger from [his] fellow creatures" (14-18). Although this tense, dramatic story may have had some basis in Audubon's common experience of taking shelter for a night (with some uncommonly suspicious characters), the story of the actual plot and hanging were most likely the work of Audubon the artist, and fabulist. Yet there were many actual incidents of this kind on the frontier.

In "A Tough Walk for a Youth," Audubon relates an experience twelve years earlier, when he and his son Victor, age thirteen, traveled by steamboat up the Mississippi, bound for Louisville. At the mouth of the Ohio, the boat was unable to go farther because of low water, and the boy suggested that they walk overland, along the Ohio River, to their destination. They did so, and Audubon describes the rigors and pleasures of the journey (304-09). (A century later, William Carlos Williams was to draw on Audubon's account for his own poetic purposes.)

After the completion of the publication of The Birds of America in 1838 (and its companion Biography a year later), Audubon immediately began work on a smaller lithographed edition that sold by subscription very well and profitably at $100 a set, and on the ambitious Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America, for which he and his sons provided the plates and John Bachman the separately published text. (When Audubon first thought of publishing the smaller Birds, in the early thirties, he mentioned that the work might be done with "excellent Wood cuts on the plan of Bewicks birds" [Letters 1: 259].

9. Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), British wood engraver and naturalist, whose work Audubon greatly admired, engraved both a History of British Quadrupeds (1790) and a History of British Birds, 2 vols. (1797, 1804). After meeting Bewick for the first
But by the end of the decade the newer and faster technique of lithography was becoming popular.

Audubon’s hopes for upwards of 300 and perhaps even 500 subscribers to the great folio were never realized. The list fluctuated, reaching an overall total of about 175 for the completed edition. In a letter to a relative in September 1838, Lucy wrote: “It is Strange rather how few complete copies of the ‘Birds of America’ there will be, everyone believing that afterwards it would be cheaper; and already the mistake is beginning to be felt since the coppers are all put by—in the application of some for a few extra plates which cannot be had even now” (DeLatte 220).

Audubon and Lucy returned to America in the fall of 1839, when he was fifty-one. They built a large house overlooking the Hudson, in Washington Heights, between what are now 158th and 159th streets, and named it Minnie’s Land, for Lucy, using the Scottish word for mother. Their first home of their own since leaving their log house in Henderson more than twenty years earlier, it remained their extended family base. In 1843, Audubon undertook his last ambitious expedition, a steamboat voyage up the Missouri River (forty years after Lewis and Clark’s epic journey) in search of specimens of quadrupeds. In 1846 his vision failed, and subsequently his mind, so that he was disabled during the years before his death in 1851.

Because of and beyond his work as an ornithologist and painter, Audubon has become a symbolic figure in our culture, most familiarly as a patron saint of the Audubon Society and other conservation movements, but also as an artist identified in differing ways with a more primitive and individualistic America. Over the past forty years, at least four modern writers have developed and projected the image of Audubon as a peculiarly American artist: they include Jessamyn West, Robert Penn Warren, Eudora Welty, and William Carlos Williams.

The most ambitious and yet most simple of their works is Jessamyn West’s opera, A Mirror for the Sky (1948), in which Audubon is linked with Boone as contrasting questing figures in the westward movement, symbolized by the turning wheels of the prairie-schooner wagon train. Boone is characterized as a pioneer of exploration and settlement, while Audubon’s mission is to seek out and preserve

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time, Audubon wrote, on 19 April 1827, “Thomas Bewick is an inventor and the First woodcutter in the world!” (Audubon and His Journals 1: 238).
through his paintings the beauty of the bird life of the young republic. Encouraged by Lucy, he rejects an offer of royal reinstatement (the Dauphin legend) in favor of the higher cause of his artist's vision and vocation.

Warren's group of meditative poems published as *Audubon: A Vision* (1969) begins, "Was Not the Lost Dauphin, though handsome was only / Baseborn . . . , / Was only / Himself, Jean Jacques, and his passion—what / Is man but his passion?" (3). His passion is symbolized by the Great Blue Heron silhouetted in flight against the morning sky. In Warren's view, Audubon's vision of beauty as an artist exists in contrast to the evil and corruption of the human state, into which Audubon had been initiated by his ordeal in the frontier cabin described in "The Prairie."

This theme, rooted in Warren's Kentucky Calvinism and developed through similar symbolic contrasts, also appears in his other poems and prose fiction. It is truer to the sensibility of Warren than to that of Audubon, who, despite many disillusionments, was not much occupied with the subject of human depravity, and especially not in his *Delineations*, which Warren draws upon very selectively.

In "A Still Moment," an intriguing story first collected in *The Wide Net* (1943), Eudora Welty takes liberties with history to bring together, on the Old Natchez Trace, the frontier revivalist Lorenzo Dow, the homicidal frontier outlaw John Murrell, and the frontier naturalist and artist Audubon. Preoccupied with his unrealizable dream of rescuing souls from damnation to an eternal life, Dow is riding toward a revival meeting, when Murrell falls in with him, plotting his death. The man of God and life everlasting and the man of evil and death are interrupted, however, by the appearance of Audubon, on foot, single-mindedly stalking a "snowy heron" (Great White Heron, Plate No. 281), which suddenly appears in the rays of the evening sun, feeding by the water, as a shared vision of beauty. The effect on the two horsemen is to overcome them temporarily and paralyze their intentions. But Audubon, as the artist and man of beauty, must shoot the bird: "In memory the heron was all its solitude, its total beauty. . . . But it was not from that memory that he could paint." Yet his creation of beauty in his painting must remain a dead, and not a live thing, "never an essence, only a sum of parts" (90-92). Welty does not consider the extent to which it may be perceived as more than "a sum of parts."
Of the four treatments, Williams' is the most interesting and most relevant to *The Birds of America*, though it is not the simplest—or the most fully developed. In this brief passage from Book v of *Pater-son Five* (1958) quoted here, the horned beast with which Audubon is identified is the mythical unicorn:

Audubon (Au-du-bon), (the lost Dauphin)
left the boat downstream
below the falls of the Ohio at Louisville
to follow
a trail through the woods
cross three states
northward of Kentucky . .
He saw buffalo
and more
a horned beast among the trees
in the moonlight
following small birds
the chickadee
  in a field crowded with small flowers
  its neck
circled by a crown!
  from a regal tapestry of stars!
lying wounded on his belly
  legs folded under him
the bearded head held
  regally aloft
  What but indirection
will get to the end of the sphere?
  Here
is not there,
  and never will be.
  The Unicorn
has no match
  or mate .  the artist
  has no peer
Death
  has no peer:
  wandering in the woods,
    a field crowded with small flowers
  in which the wounded beast lies down to rest

(210–11)

In this passage, the trek along the Ohio River, described in “A Tough Walk for a Youth,” is altered and merged with the imagery of the Unicorn Tapestries at The Cloisters, which Williams develops as a symbol of ever-renewed art over the centuries. The wounded white unicorn with the golden collar (shown in the tapestry as encircled by a low fence) is identified in Christian iconography with the risen Christ. It is also, for Williams, a symbol of the artist, who attests the continuing life of the imagination in the midst of suffering and death. Although the unicorn is a quadruped, it is not viviparous. It is a creature of the imagination, in which it has its only existence.

In Williams’ version of Audubon’s vision in the American wilderness, the horned beast’s neck is encircled not by a golden collar, but by a crown. Twice associated with the word regal in this passage, the image reinforces the poet’s metaphoric identification of Audubon with
the lost French prince. Au-du-bon is not only "to and of the good." He is identified with the "best." Just as the unicorn "has no match or mate," "the artist / has no peer." Williams recognizes Audubon as an earlier artist of a primitive lost America whose work will endure as a token of imaginative perception, like that of the weavers of the tapestries. (And like that of Williams the poet.)

All four of the contemporary works place Audubon in a new and distinktively modern heroic role as an artist—a role quite different from that of the earlier nineteenth-century idealized "American Woodsman," or child of nature. All four also are individualistic in their conception of the role and status of the artist, although Williams speaks elsewhere in his poem of the collective and communal role of the weavers, whose hands work together, following the cartoon of the designer, in the creation of the great work of the tapestries.

It seems to me that this latter view is most appropriate to the actual creation of The Birds of America, which could not have come into existence without the cooperative efforts of paper makers, engravers, painters, scientists, colorists, patrons, and promoters, all of whose activities were coordinated by Audubon, the master artist who conceived and composed the work as a whole. There could have been no individual triumph without collective effort—and no collective achievement without the essential individual genius.

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Edward FitzGerald and Bernard Barton: An Unsparing Friendship

BY JEFFREY P. MARTIN

Edward FitzGerald (1809–1883), English poet and translator of The Rubaiyat by Omar Khayyam, was also a genial host and ready critic to a wide circle of literary acquaintances and correspondents. His letters show an industrious concern for the welfare of his friends (often men of published fame) among whom he counted Tennyson, Thomas Carlyle, and Thackeray—to mention only some major figures. Financially independent, he had the time and the means, as well as the genius and inclination, to insert himself effectively into nineteenth-century English literary society. Included, perhaps surprisingly, at the intimate heart of this august coterie was the “Quaker poet” Bernard Barton (1784–1849), whose verse FitzGerald championed and probably had a hand in correcting.

The Alfred McKinley Terhune Collection in the George Arents Research Library is an outstanding source of material on Edward FitzGerald and his associates. In addition to forty-five letters by FitzGerald, there are letters by his friends (such as Barton), which shed light on various aspects of the contemporary literary life. The collection also contains other extensive research materials (such as research notes, correspondence files, and the collected photostats of all FitzGerald’s letters) that Professor Terhune used in writing his biography, The Life of Edward FitzGerald, and editing The Letters of Edward FitzGerald. This paper makes use of some of the riches from this collection.¹

1. Materials cited in this article that are found in the Alfred McKinley Terhune Collection will be noted as such. Any irregularities in grammar, spelling, or capitalization are present in the originals. Alfred McKinley Terhune (1899–1975), for many years professor of English at Syracuse University, was the author of The Life of Edward FitzGerald (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1947). After his death his widow, Annabelle Burdick Terhune, persevered in the editing of FitzGerald’s correspondence. The completed, four-volume The Letters of Edward FitzGerald was published by Princeton University Press in 1980.
Bernard Barton and Edward FitzGerald met in Woodbridge, Suffolk, where FitzGerald lived and entertained in his comfortable cottage, while Barton (a widower and FitzGerald's senior by twenty-five years) labored to keep afloat by clerking in a bank to support his child Lucy and his passion for poetry. Though his childhood and youth had been marred by tragedy, Bernard Barton's life, by this time, was sufficiently settled and calm to nourish the home-loving tone of his poetry. Barton's biographer, Edward Verrall Lucas, describes his "quiet pilgrimage" through life:²

a plain man, unselfish and undistinguished whose every word was gentle, whose leisurely walk through life lay along sheltered lanes and over level meads; a man, none the less, of fine judgment, broad sympathies, generous toleration, and rich humour—attributes which have been missed by many who have risen to far greater eminence.

But Barton's lanes and meads were perhaps not quite so sheltered or level as they appeared to be. Despite his self-deprecating demeanor, he had piercing poetic ambitions that quite eluded his actual capabilities, though those were not trifling. In a moment of grandiose illusion, Barton considered leaving the bank in order to devote himself exclusively to poetry. At this point, his friend and correspondent Charles Lamb wrote to him:³

Keep to your bank and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public: you may hang, starve, drown yourself for any thing that worthy personage cares.

As did Byron:⁴

Do not renounce writing, but never trust entirely to authorship. If you have a profession, retain it, it will be like Prior's fellowship, a last and sure resource.

4. Quoted in FitzGerald's "Memoir", xix.
It seemed the common conviction that Barton should keep his feet on the ground. He wisely submitted to the general judgment and remained with the bank until a scant two days before his death. Victorian biographical information is both superficial and unin-
quiring in its assessment of the man Barton. He emerges simplistically from the extant opinions of his friends as a saint. Modern scholarship, as might be expected, takes a more psychological approach:5

Although he remained a faithful Quaker, Barton was far from representing the gloomier reaches of his persuasion, and other Woodbridge Quakers were said to distrust him because he had ‘Mr.’ on his brass doorplate, wore embroidered waistcoats, bought pictures, wrote poetry, and was the most genial of hosts, serving liberal gin and water to his frequent guests. Only at FitzGerald’s constant pipes and cigars did he draw the line, insisting the tobacco smelled remarkably like guano.

Interestingly, though Barton heartily disapproved of cigars and their smoke, he himself was an inveterate snuff-user.

His letters, which are often lively and full of fresh opinion, are (thankfully) still valued today, both for the subjects they deal with and for the people they address. As one critic has stated, “Barton never considered his own letters as literary productions. Rather he felt that his poetry was his sole claim to literary fame.”6 It was a sad misjudgment that Barton had made, but one perhaps that kept him in the magic circle, letter-writing to his august friends for our subsequent edification.

In a letter dated 6 August 1846 to George Crabbe, Jr. (son of George Crabbe, the poet), Barton complains about the protracted period of heat, but then reveals a penchant for fun by citing an anecdote that FitzGerald was fond of telling. Barton says: “I longed to follow the example of Edward Fgd’s friend Squire Jenney who heroically doffs the trowsers, & sits with only calico drawers on—so I am told”.7 It is easy to see how with such ready humor he might have inspired the affection of FitzGerald.

In another letter to George Crabbe, Jr., dated 1 February 1845,

7. Bernard Barton to George Crabbe, Jr., 8 June 1846, Alfred McKinley Terhune Collection, George Arents Research Library, Syracuse University, Box 2.
he teases him, calling him a “libeller” for having dared “to insinuate that I tippled away at that Port inordinately!” Barton then goes on to discuss what is really on his mind:

but the odour of that room after the first hour or two from the time of lighting up was really awful. talk of my tippling Port! marry the clouds such a trio as yours can & do blow would do more to make me drunk than all the wine I could ever be induced to swallow. All through that pitiless driving Snow I smelt that perilous weed—all night, whenever I woke, I still smelt & tasted it; it linger’d on my palate next morn, it flavor’d my bohee at Breakfast, my Veal & Bacon at dinner—and when, as I had company to keep my Birthday, to tea, I went to put on the Coat & Waistcoat I wore in your august presence—had I taken ’em out of Pandora’s Box, they could not have borne a worse odour!

Looking again at the Arents Library letter to George Crabbe, Jr., we are made aware of Barton’s fine critical sense, which must also have appealed to the discriminating FitzGerald. In it, Barton is discussing his recent reading of Dickens’ Martin Chuzzlewit:

It is equal in power and divinity of genius to any work I have read of the Author’s—but for all that it is a harrowing, revolting, & excruciating Book . . . —but the bad and the base so awfully preponderate in the main I really felt relieved when I had got through the Book—which I am, spite of all I have said against it, glad to have read—though it is somewhat like having sate through an anatomical dissection of a murderer—or having a tooth drawn.

This excerpt, which deals with the treatment of thieves and rascals, is, in fact, part of a favorable assessment. Barton’s overall feelings about Dickens reflect the critical opinion of the day: that he was an

10. Bernard Barton to George Crabbe, Jr., 6 August 1846, Alfred McKinley Terhune Collection, Box 2.
Bernard Barton's letter to George Crabbe, Jr., 6 August 1846, in which he discusses *Martin Chuzzlewit* and the hot summer weather.

Courtesy of Syracuse University Library.
outstanding writer in the difficult position of having to wrestle with unsavory materials.

But gossip and jokes and literary discussions by post were secondary to Barton's love of poetry, which was the driving force in his life. He labored hard for his laurels. In the end he achieved enormous popularity, though the reputation of his poems has not survived the exactions of time. The modern reader finds them unsuccinct, pious, and cumbersome. But so keen was Barton to become a recognized poet, that he could defer with an almost conniving extravagance when interacting with influential reviewers. He seemed to feel that critics and reviewers were "formidable personages who could help a struggling poet in a number of small ways and that no hopeful poet should neglect any reasonable means of securing a favorable review".11

In a wheedling letter of 5 December 1828, Barton addressed an unknown critic of The Athenaeum who had reviewed some of his poetry. Barton, clearly upset, reveals here a not quite so attractive side of his personality, one, certainly, which is not in tune with modern sensibilities.12

[your statement] has puzzled me prodigiously. If the article be thy own, might I beg the favor of a line or two referring to the piece, & supposed Party? I will receive it gratefully & answer it frankly, if thy leisure allows of thy according me such an indulgence.

Every publication, one imagines, was an uphill battle for a poet of Barton's unexciting endowment. Today, his poetic works are largely neglected, mere footnotes to the survey of English literature. The current view is generally unflattering:13

Most of his poetry was hastily written and would be considered verse rather than poetry by most critics. His diction is obscure and vague, and he relies on suggestion rather than

11. Barton, Literary Correspondence, 25.
13. Barton, Literary Correspondence, 17.
preciseness in most of his lines. Many of his rhymes are forced, while his meter is frequently irregular and thumping. In addition to these faults, Barton's love of the homely and edifying frequently caused him to write didactically and morally rather than poetically.

Although this evaluation of Barton's poetic skills generally holds true, there are, nevertheless, some poems of considerable appeal. An example from the Terhune Collection is a holograph copy of the poem "A Christian Dirge", which was enclosed in a letter of 20 May 1841 to his friend Jane Biddell. The poem itself had been published more than two decades previously.

The hour is come, the solemn hour,
    When earth to earth we give;
Our hope, our stay, the Saviour's power,
    Who died that man might live.

Though dear the form, and lov'd the heart
    We now commit to dust,
No virtues of the dead impart
    Our spirits' holiest trust.

Those virtues memory oft shall trace
    With pensive placid brow,
But Christian faith and Christian grace
    Must be our refuge now.

The light they lend alone can cheer
    The dark and silent tomb.
Can hush the sigh, make bright the tear,
    And glory give for gloom.

We would not mourn as those who see
    No hope beyond the grave;
Before thee, Lord! we bend the knee,
    The Comforter we crave.

14. Bernard Barton to Jane Biddell, 20 May 1841, Alfred McKinley Terhune Collection, Box 2.
His power can make the soul rejoice,
    Tho eyes with grief be dim,
And bid us raise with grateful voice
    A Christian's funeral hymn.

It is easy to criticize this poem from the perspective of modern attitudes. Nevertheless, Barton's thought is sincere. This type of poem, in celebration of a particular season or event, predominates in Barton's work, and it is quite possible that the consequent aura of contrivance, combined with the accumulation of poetic infelicities, is what renders Barton's poetry so alien to the modern ear.

In contrast to his "Christian Dirge" is the dedicatory poem that Barton inscribed "To Anne, Hannah, Phebe, and Eliza" in a copy of his collection Napoleon and Other Poems. Here, we see him in a playful mood, and certainly more at ease. The last two lines speak to the point of his special 'Quaker' appeal:15

Whether these Pages win for me,
    In other eyes, a Poet's fame,
Or not;—allow them still to be,
    In yours'—a pledge of Friendship's claim.

And if they have the added power
    To lend me, in your partial eyes,
The Name of Poet; 'tis a dower
    Too grateful for me to despise.

The proudest Fame the World can give
    Scarce pays the Bard whose wishes roam;
The Fame for which 'tis sweet to love,
    Must come from eyes and lips at Home.

5th Mo., 10th 1822.

Bernard Barton was a well known minor poet in his own age. Though religion, humility, duty, and love of home were deeply ingrained in his personality, humor and generosity of spirit were also present, as was the hunger for fame. It was his devotion to the arts

15. This poem is written on the front free endpaper in the Arents Library copy of Barton's Napoleon and Other Poems (London: Thomas Boys, 1822).
To Anne, Hannah, Phebe, and Eliza.

Whether these Pages were for me,
In other eyes, a Poet's fame,
Or not;—allow them still to be,
In yours a pledge of Friendship's claim.

And if they have the added power
To kindle me the true poet's fire,
The Name of Poet, I'm a donor,
To grateful for me to divide.

The modest Fame the World can give
Glance yours, and the Bard whose love returns;
The Fame for which till sweet to live,
Must some lone eye and life at home.

Aug. 10th, 1822
Bernard Barton

Bernard Barton's dedicatory poem "To Anne, Hannah, Phebe, and Eliza", inscribed in his Napoleon and Other Poems. Courtesy of Syracuse University Library.
that provided for him the sparkle to an otherwise drab and lonely life. His friend FitzGerald was the key to that vibrant otherworld. Despite the enormous difference in age they became close friends, the younger man playing host, mentor, and critic to the older one and deriving thereby, quite possibly, a satisfaction that he could not find among his own true and competitive equals. The pair had common interests in both literature and art, but in addition, "there was an easy camaraderie between Barton and FitzGerald that allowed them to tease each other affectionately without being offensive". Other aspects of Barton's personality that must have delighted FitzGerald were his easygoing, unassuming nature and his unpretentious ways. Both disliked the trappings of high society.

That Barton meant a great deal to FitzGerald is certain. FitzGerald was attracted to and (after the father's death) would marry Lucy Barton. Though it was not to be a happy union or even very long-lasting, the season of the developing mutual interest must have fired up a special relationship. FitzGerald, who could be quite abrasive in his guardianship of literature, was apparently tender when it came to the saintly musings of the Quaker poet.

It is interesting to compare FitzGerald's criticisms of Tennyson (whose fame still holds strong) with those he made of Barton. Tennyson had been a friend since youth. They had met as undergraduates at Cambridge University, and the interaction had been both combustive and rewarding. In later years, however, they rarely saw each other and limited their correspondence to an annual exchange. FitzGerald followed Tennyson's career through letters to other acquaintances, notably Tennyson's brother Frederick. In spite of the close connection, or possibly because of it, FitzGerald could be, though was not always, scathingly critical. On 1 January 1848, FitzGerald wrote a letter to John Allen in which he attacked Tennyson's most recent work:

17 I have bought his [Tennyson's] new poem; which I cannot read through: nor is my first impression concerning it altered. I am really grieved that such a man, who should now be

doing something like Dante and Milton, should have dwindled to such elaborate trifling as “the Princess.” . . . His idle, selfish, and unheroic way of life has wasted away the heroic poetical faculty, I doubt: I nevermore expect a great work from him.

Many years later, FitzGerald ‘evaluated’ Tennyson’s most recent play. In the letter dated 29 December [1876] to his friend Anna Biddell, he wrote:¹⁸

I will only say of “Harold” [the play] that I think AT [Alfred Tennyson] had better been of mind, in not writing, or publishing, more. These latter Inferiorities will temporarily, though not justly, cloud his present Reputation and be a drag upon those words of his which are to live.

But when it came to Barton, FitzGerald was unfailingly kind. On 21 February 1842, FitzGerald wrote a letter in which he compared his own, self-confessed lack of poetic skill to Barton’s abilities:¹⁹

I have not the strong inward call, nor cruel-sweet pangs of parturition, that prove the birth of anything bigger than a mouse. With you the case is different, who have so long been a follower of the Muse, and who have had a kindly, sober, English, wholesome, religious spirit within you that has communicated kindred warmth to many honest souls.

In addition to this evidence of glowing warmth, is his memoir of Bernard Barton, published soon after the poet’s death, when FitzGerald himself was working closely with Lucy on an edition of selections from her father’s works. Here, understandably, he glossed over the less than perfect Bartonian prosody:²⁰

The Poems . . . were probably as little elaborated as any that were ever published. Without claiming for them the

¹⁸. Edward FitzGerald to Anna Biddell, 29 December [1876], Alfred McKinley Terhune Collection, Box 1.
¹⁹. FitzGerald, Letters, 1: 308.
highest attributes of poetry, (which the author never pretended to,) we may surely say they abound in genuine feeling and elegant fancy expressed in easy, and often very felicitous, verse. These qualities employed in illustrating the religious and domestic affections, and the pastoral scenery with which such affections are perhaps most generally associated, have made Bernard Barton, as he desired to be, a household poet with a large class of readers—a class, who, as they may be supposed to welcome such poetry as being the articulate voice of those good feelings yearning in their own bosoms, one may hope will continue and increase in England.

FitzGerald’s judgments were known to be clouded by the emotion he threw into his friendships. He was unable to divorce his strong feelings for a writer from his own critical analyses of the work under examination. It was a flaw that disbalanced his assessment of both exalted and lowly writers. Surely FitzGerald did not fail to see the faults in Barton’s poetry; indeed, he was enough aware of them to endeavor to fix them.

FitzGerald’s encouragements included a participatory pen. In private, his sympathetic generosity seems to have taken the practical turn of incisive editing, derived perhaps from the way that he used to repaint or cut up the paintings he obsessively purchased. As far as is known, his remodelings of Barton’s works were his first efforts of that nature in the literary domain.

Not surprisingly, FitzGerald’s critical eye was able to improve on some of Barton’s poems. One example is the poem “Winter Evenings”. Barton’s version has eight sestets. FitzGerald has stripped it to three, honing those to clarify the rougher sections and to bring out the logical sense. For example: Barton’s line “Dark clouds round us hover” becomes “Dark clouds o’er us hover” in FitzGerald’s rendition. Where the tone errs, FitzGerald adjusts it. Barton, in this homely poem, says:

The bright fire is flinging
Its splendour around;

The kettle, too, singing,
And blithe is its sound.

The choice of "splendour" in this poem undoes the feeling of home-liness and intimacy, which are what the poem is truly about. Fitz-Gerald's version changes the second line to: "Its happy warmth around". This is not a large change but it helps to strengthen the mood of the poem.

In "Leiston Abbey by Moonlight" FitzGerald takes an even firmer hand in revising Barton's initial effort. He cuts the thirteen stanzas to twelve and invigorates the passive landscape that Barton was prone to adopt for describing nature. Barton writes:

Methinks I hear the matin song,
From those proud arches pealing;
Now loud and clear,—now borne along
On echo softly stealing.

FitzGerald's revision is:

Methinks I hear the matin song
From those proud arches pealing;
Now in full chorus borne along,
Now into distance stealing.

The continued presence of the second "now" clause, though certainly effective, is ironic in that FitzGerald allowed it. Barton himself was inclined to repeat, though in his case the cause was inadvertency—failure to focus on word choice—as well as an overriding aversion to revision.

Barton ends the poem with the following two stanzas:

How spirit-soothing is the sound
Of night-winds softly sighing

26. Barton, Poetic Vigils, 68.
Through roofless walls and arches round,—
And then in silence dying.

Oh! Let thy charms be what they would,
When first thy towers were planted,
A nobler still, in thought's best mood,
Is to thy ruins granted.

With a few internal changes, FitzGerald’s version ends with the original penultimate stanza:27

More spirit-stirring is the sound
Of night-winds softly sighing
Thy roofless walls and arches round,
And then in silence dying.

Though FitzGerald noticeably improved on Barton’s poetry, the finished product remained earthbound. Nevertheless, the poems reflect the era, which was an important one in the history of English literature, and occasionally mount to a Cowper-like quality. At any rate, FitzGerald did Barton’s reputation a great service by his strategic incisions and rearrangements. His editing was so radical on occasion that it constituted a manifest rewriting. “It was the first public appearance of [FitzGerald's] remarkable ability at reshaping other men's works, seeming in retrospect to have been a preparation for his later translations.”28

Although Bernard Barton was only a minor poet, his correspondence, so often about or addressed to the literary luminaries of the time, is enlightening under examination. His insights into literature and the doings of his belles-lettres friends, as well as his accounts of specific events, all induce fresh views of early-nineteenth-century England. He is a man of whom it could be said that he is well worth knowing.

27. Barton, Selections, 200.
A reminiscence of James Fenimore Cooper, written in 1889, lies among the papers of William Mather (1802–1890) in the George Arents Research Library at Syracuse University. It is written in pencil on two sheets of paper, one of which is the blank back of a Herkimer County newspaper supplement of 1889. Each sheet is folded to form a sort of booklet. Mather’s text, as it stands, is disjointed and marred by occasionally confused syntax, illegible words, and repetitions. A series of false starts, of beginnings not decided upon, occurs before something of a narrative coherence is achieved. Material obviously intended for incorporation in a previous section ends the draft. Overall, the account struggles along, fitfully served by the memory of the eighty-seven-year-old Mather in his return to an event that had occurred forty-five years before. Nevertheless, once repetitive and extraneous material is deleted, what emerges is a late-nineteenth-century portrait of Cooper: a forceful and uneasy impression of both the man and the author.

William Mather was a physician who never practised his art; he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine from Fairfield Medical College in Herkimer County, New York, in 1826, but devoted his career to chemistry rather than to medicine. He held several academic appointments as a chemistry professor, his longest and last at Madison (now Colgate) University. Because he was, in his own words, “an ardent lover of the science of chemistry”, Mather also travelled, giving lectures and demonstrations in chemistry, and thereby, it should be noted, acquired considerable regional fame.¹

Cooper’s interest in chemistry undoubtedly began when he was a

¹. The biographical material on Mather, including the quotation from Mather, was derived from a description of the Fairfield Collection prepared by a Syracuse University Library staff member in 1954.
student at Yale College. His favorite professor was Benjamin Silliman, professor of chemistry, with whom he maintained a correspondence for many years. But a mind such as Cooper's casts a wide net: in a varied life that found him in youth a sailor, in young adulthood a farmer and landscape gardener, and finally a novelist, political theorist, and naval historian, Cooper was always a close observer of his country's intellectual growth. Alert to scientific matters, he took a keen interest in technological internal improvements—canals, railroad and highway systems, steamboats; and in such disparate branches of science as linguistics, geology, and Arctic explorations. During his European sojourn (1826–33), furthermore, he sought out and met Cuvier, Bunson, and the naturalist Bonaparte; at home, one of his closest friends was Samuel F. B. Morse. Elements from all these sources found their way into his writings.²

From this very brief sketch, then, it is easy to see that Cooper would be attracted to the chemical presentations that Mather gave in Cooperstown. He did in fact attend the lectures and demonstrations, and found Mather congenial enough to offer him the courtesies of his house. Significantly, Mather found a domestic Cooper at the quiet center of a stormy public life.

Near the end of his narrative Mather notes, "After I left Cooperstown I used to read of Mr. Cooper's being involved in Lawsuits with his neighbors". Mather is referring to the so-called Three Mile Point Controversy, which he explains briefly, but which perhaps requires further amplification.

Cooper and his family had returned from a seven-year stay in Europe in 1833 and resumed residence in New York City. Then, in August 1834, he repurchased his father's (Judge William Cooper's) house, Otsego Hall, in Cooperstown, the initial sale of which had been part of the dissolution of much of the family estate in the years following Judge Cooper's death in 1809. The return to Cooperstown

residency was gradual. Though he intended to live there only in summer, the charms of the Hall and the financial burden of maintaining two residences eventually dictated a different arrangement; but Cooper's final return home after a seventeen-year absence also had a compelling psychological motive. He seemed to need to restore the Cooper name and position in the community founded by his father—and perhaps to redeem himself to his father's ghost for failing to keep up the family fortune after his father's death.3 These subconscious promptings, however, form only the distant background to a much more visible series of events when the Coopers took up permanent residence in 1837.

Three Mile Point, a strip of land on the western shore of Otsego Lake, was originally owned by Judge Cooper. According to the Judge's will, the land was to be held in common by his heirs until 1850; then, whoever was the youngest descendant to bear the name William Cooper was to inherit the land. Both during and after the Judge's lifetime, the public, at first by permission, used the land as a picnic ground, thereby creating a tradition of public use. This practice ended in the summer of 1837. Damage to a tree "that had a peculiar association with my father" had prompted Cooper, the legal executor of his father's estate since 1834, to prepare a notice that was to be published in a local newspaper cautioning citizens against vandalism. But tempers flared all around when word spread about the intended notice, and instead, Cooper published a new notice forbidding further public use of the land.4 Local reaction was immediate: a town meeting was held later the same day and among the resolutions adopted were to "recommend and request the trustees of the Franklin Library, in this village, to remove all books, of which Cooper is the author, from said library" and to "denounce any man as sycophant who has, or shall, ask permission of James F. Cooper to visit the Point in question".5

5. Quoted in Thomas R. Lounsbury, James Fenimore Cooper (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1893), 145–46. I will have more to say about this landmark biography at the conclusion of the essay.
THE public is warned against trespassing on the three mile point, it being the intention of the subscriber rigidly to enforce the title of the estate of which he is the representative, to the same. The public has not, nor has it ever had, any right to the same, beyond what has been conceded by the liberality of the owners.

J. FENIMORE COOPER,
Executor of the estate of the late Wm. Cooper.
July 22, 1837

James Fenimore Cooper’s warning notice to the public as it appeared in the Freeman’s Journal, Cooperstown, 31 July 1837.

This parochial event, which eventually—if awkwardly—resolved itself, soon became “the match which touched off the dynamite”. Whig newspaper editors, strenuously critical of President Jackson’s Democratic administration and long opposed to Cooper’s Jacksonian political views, took up the controversy. In 1838, a year later, when Cooper published his novel *Home as Found* (generally viewed as autobiographical) and incorporated the Three Mile Point episode as part of a satirical attack on America’s cultural and moral decline, journalistic responses became especially vicious. There followed an eight-year battle (1837–45) with the press, during which Cooper sued various Whig editors for libel. His suits were largely successful, but long-range damage was done to his popular reputation:

it was a barren victory he had won. He had lost far more than he had gained. That such would be the results, he knew, while he was engaged in the controversy. It affected, at the

time, his literary reputation, and, as a result, the sale of his writings; and since his death [1851] it has been a principal agency in keeping alive a distorted and fictitious view of his personal character.

So much acrimony, generated for so long a time, had made his libelers successful.

It is, then, from this perspective that Mather's narrative, which now follows in edited form, can be best understood.

WHAT I REMEMBER OF JAMES FENNIMORE [sic] COOPER

In looking over my journal of past events I find that on the 19th day of Feb. 1844 I arrived in Cooperstown, N. Y. with a load of boxes containing an assortment of Chemicals together with chemical and philosophical apparatus to considerable extent designed for a course [of] popular lectures with experiments on Chemistry and kindred sciences. About that period during a portion of each year when not occupied with Classes at Madison University I visited some of the cities and many prominent colleges of the state for the purpose of lecturing and Cooperstown was one of the number. These lectures were sustained by subscription and an amount at least sufficient to defray the expenses was usually pledged before commencing lectures. I had heard of James F. C. also of his father before visiting Coopertown. His father, Judge Cooper, was a great land holder and a pioneer settler in that portion of the state after whom I think the place was named. If the son James Fennimore was not a pioneer settler he was at least a pioneer author at [an] early period when very few in this country had attempted to write a book or at least very few books written by American authors were read and our brethren across the Atlantic would ask the question Who reads an American book?

9. William Cooper settled his family in Cooperstown in 1790, when Cooper was an infant of 14 months. (James Grossman, James Fenimore Cooper [New York: William Sloane Associates, 1949], 9-10.)

10. This famous sneer of Sidney Smith (1771–1845) echoed throughout the nineteenth century; it is often given the form Mather uses, but Smith's actual words were, “In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?” Smith's query appeared in his essay for the Edinburgh Review, of which Smith was a distin-
have recently noticed an article in the Century Magazine in regard to Mr. Cooper as an author in wh. he is represented as one of the earliest if not first who produced readable books which every body wishes to read and wh. have been translated and read in other languages than the English. My object in writing this is not to speak especially of Mr. Cooper as an author but to call to mind some events in regard to my acquaintance with him while I tarried a few weeks in Cooperstown. In looking over the list of subscribers I noted the name of JFC and this was what I expected as he was known to be wealthy and public spirited, yet I did not ask or anticipate any especial attention from him.

After giving my introductory lecture and when [I] was well started in my course I was surprised to receive from Mr. Cooper an invitation to dine with him on a certain day wh. he designated... Of course I was punctual in accepting of his invitation, and outside of the family I found at the table only one guest besides myself and that was Judge Nelson of the Supr. Court of U.S. As far as I recollect his family consisted besides himself of four unmarried daughters... He introduced me to his daughters who from circumstances I concluded were highly educated and from appearances were accomplished young ladies, but of a taciturn disposition and I held but very little conversation with them. These daughters I thought were rather reticent. One of these daughters I think is now head of a Young Ladies Episcopal School at C[oope]rstown.

After dinner [Cooper invited Judge Nelson and me into his study.

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12. Samuel Nelson (1792–1873), a resident of Cooperstown since 1825 and an especially valued friend of Cooper, was a Democrat, and as a jurist was an “authority in the field of admiralty and maritime law”—the Navy and the law were two of Cooper’s passions. (Dictionary of American Biography, s.v. “Nelson, Samuel”; see also Ralph Birdsall, The Story of Cooperstown [New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1925], 299–325.)
He talked about the late war (1813) with Great Britain and about his experience on ship board during or after the war.] He seemed to know everything about a ship and could talk like a genuine sailor. He knew which was the laboard and which was the stabboard side of a ship something which I have never learned although I know the stem from the stern of a ship. What nonsense it is to a landsman to hear the sailors talk about the jib-flying jib and jib boom of a ship. This knowledge of life on the ocean wave was of much use to Mr. Cooper in writing some of [his] books. Another subject upon wh. he conversed was his travels in Europe. He had maps or charts around his apartment in wh. as he pointed out I could trace the different routes he took among the European Kingdoms and nations. Of all the rivers of Europe the river Rhine in his opinion had the preference. He considered it as the Hudson of Europe. It seems that steam boats on that river had attained a considerable degree of perfection 45 years ago, when this interview took place. Mr. Cooper was so successful as an author that I think a little vanity in him may be excused.

I do not recollect in particular about the pen ink and paper which

13. The bracketed material summarizes a confused passage in Mather's manuscript. Cooper was in the U.S. Navy, 1808-11; he saw no active service, but his knowledge of naval affairs was profound. He had written The History of the Navy of the United States of America in 1839, which, it should be noted, initiated another court appearance for his supposedly biased account of the controversial conduct of Jesse Duncan Elliott, Oliver Hazard Perry's second-in-command, during the Battle of Lake Erie. Cooper masterfully demonstrated, in a hearing before three referees, the accuracy and impartiality of his account, even to the admiration of his enemies. For a colorful rendering of this bizarre episode, see Lounsbury, Cooper, 208-30; and Letters and Journals 3: 357 passim.

14. Mather at times seems to blend his recollection of Cooper with Brander Matthews' article; he may have had in mind here Matthews' observation that Cooper "invented the sea tale just as Poe invented the detective story—and in neither case has any disciple surpassed the master". (Matthews, "Centenary", 797.)

15. Cooper's "vanity" emerges as the theme of Mather's account, although he tempered it with an apologist's demur. In this he clearly echoed—or simply agreed with—Matthews, who noted: "No doubt Cooper had his faults, both as a man and as an author. He was thin-skinned and hot-headed. He let himself become involved in many foolish quarrels. He had a plentiful lack of tact. But the man was straightforward and high-minded, and so was the author". (Matthews, "Centenary", 798.) It should be added that Matthews, in turn, echoes the Lounsbury biography, which he mentions with praise.
he used and wh. occupied the table in the room[..] But he said to me
in substance Here I sit and write, the printer prints and sends it out
and often it makes a great stir and commotion among the people.16

The Coopers were Episcopalians and I have no doubt but that the
family constituted one of the main pillars of that Church at Coop-
erstown, but if James Fennimore read his responses in church in the
same way old Roger De Coverley17 did in the reign of Queen Ann
in England I did not notice it, that is, Sir R. pronounced his re-
sponses a little behind the rest of the Congregation. Mr. C. had
however a very correct ear for music. One Sabbath the organist was
absent and a new man supplied his place. When I next met Mr. C.
he complained bitterly of the bad playing of organ on the previous
Sabbath.

After I left Cooperstown I used to read of Mr. Cooper’s being
involved in Lawsuits with his neighbors. He was a land holder and
his neighbors used to hold picnics and trespass upon his lands, with-
out his permission. It might be said that he should have given them
permission. True but if he did not choose to do it they should respect
his wishes. There is no man perfect and Mr. C. might have been
unfortunate or had his faults. If so [the] community shd. have [looked]
upon them kindly and not embittered the latter days of his life.

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A final historical note needs to be made in conclusion. Mather’s
reminiscence was inspired, as Mather himself says, by Brander Mat-
thews’ essay on Cooper. Through its acknowledged link with the

16. This allusion to Cooper’s war with the press is suggestive of the calm with
which Cooper faced his ordeal. James Beard writes: “As the son of Judge William
Cooper, he had been introduced early to the atmosphere of legal warfare; and, as a
young man, he had learned to live with equanimity in the midst of legal entangle-
ments that would have immobilized most men”. (Letters and Journals, 4: 4.)

17. Roger De Coverley was a fictional character created by the famed British es-
sayist Richard Steele (1672–1729) for The Spectator Papers. One literary history de-
scribes De Coverley as “a Tory country squire, aged and lovable, but politically
incompetent. As an outmoded figure he was once or twice contrasted with the
Whiggish Sir Andrew Freeport [another fictional character] in a manner prophetic
of the social and economic revolution that was to occur in England at the end of
pleton-Century-Crofts, 1948], 875–76.) This description illuminates Mather’s allu-
sion: it is, if only very tangentially, satirically apposite to Cooper’s personal and
public character as perceived by his detractors.
Matthews text, Mather’s reminiscence can be seen to reflect not only the extensive evaluation of Cooper (and other American literary figures) being published in the 1880s, but the terms of that evaluation as well.

“The American Men of Letters Series”, under the editorship of Charles Dudley Warner, produced between 1881 and 1904 twenty-two volumes of critical biographies, “illustrating”, the prospectus said, “the different phases of American Literature [and] the social, political, and moral influences which have molded these authors and the generation to which they belong”.18 Out of this project came the first scholarly, astute biography of Cooper, by Thomas Lounsbury, in 1883. Brander Matthews’ essay, as we have seen, appeared in 1889, Cooper’s centenary.19 The purpose of both Lounsbury’s and Matthews’ studies was to weigh Cooper’s artistic achievement, his historical importance as our first famous novelist, and his personal integrity against his temperamental liabilities. These four factors, codified by Lounsbury, merged into the received academic portrait of Cooper in the late nineteenth century—and indeed for decades to come.20 As always, Cooper created radical dissent: Mark Twain’s formidable attempt at literary assassination, “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses”,21 would follow in 1892. But by then American scholars might well have revised the British jibe “In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book?” to “Where can we be praised?” Where indeed, if not in this complex, difficult man, in this author whose works were being read, it might be said, all over the world.

18. Quoted from endpapers promoting the series, and found in every edition of this series I have seen. Charles Dudley Warner (1829–1900) was an essayist, critic, novelist, who with Mark Twain wrote The Gilded Age. There was also a companion series, “American Statesmen”. “The American Men of Letters Series” marked a significant step forward in the long process of acceptance of American literature in the curricula of American colleges and universities. (See Kermit Vanderbilt, American Literature and the Academy: The Roots, Growth, and Maturity of a Profession [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986], especially pages 105–52.)


20. Spiller, writing in 1931, states that the Lounsbury biography of Cooper “is still the nearest approach to a ‘standard’ biography, even though its attitude is unsympathetic”. (Fenimore Cooper, 320.)

The Punctator’s World: A Discursion

BY GWEN G. ROBINSON

Part Three

Into Print: 1400–1550

This is the third in a series of articles on the past and future of punctuation. The years under focus here are crucial ones, for they include the invention of the printing press and the shift it caused in the human response to the written word.

The scribal era retained the oral-aural sensibilities of its prealphabetic mother culture. A medieval manuscript reverberated with speech sounds, and not surprisingly, for its nature was rooted in the traditions of rhetoric and dictation. More likely than not, an early scribe pronounced the words as he proceeded letter by letter through an exemplar crammed with ligatures, abbreviations, and idiosyncratic spellings—all written in a Latin that was no longer truly his own. Despite his alphabetic competence, he would rely on his hearing for the intellectual assimilation of words,¹ his strong aural memory making a surer vehicle than his visual one for the transfer from copy to fresh parchment. The process is set forth by an eighth-century scribe:

“Tres digiti scribunt, duo oculi vident. Una lingua loquitur, totum corpus laborat, et omnis labor finem habet, et praemium ejus non

1. Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 82–85. With this dependence on aural reception, medieval ‘publication’ continued the classical custom of being oral. “Among the Greeks the regular method of publication was by public recitation, at first, significantly, by the author himself, and then by professional readers or actors, and public recitation continued to be the regular method of publication even after books and the art of reading had become common.”
habet finem." But alas, stamina was not the only requirement for a happy result.

In the transmission of oral to written, there is much room for error (as journalistic misquotations even today will attest). Speech has wings, as the ancients well knew, and tends to arrive at the page with exhilarating inexactitude. In pretypographic times the accurate transmission of a text depended on the integrity of middle-men—scriiveners, correctors, quotation borrowers, and anecdotalists—who were not held accountable as such folk are supposed to be today. An exact duplication was neither expected nor achieved—as the composite quality of old materials now locked in print makes plain to see.

The amorphous, kinetic action of a handwritten product meant that no statement was likely to be perceived as private property. Authorship, as we know it today, with its entailment of rights and adulation, was an extraneous concept, applicable, if at all, to giants—Demosthenes, Cicero, Jerome, Augustine, and the like—all safely dead and candidates for hero worship. Contemporary writing was more vulnerable to Nature's way, for it induced a sort of dogfight amongst admirers. Passages were cheerfully ripped apart and choice phrases, rhyme schemes, plots, and jokes were reclaimed without shame, let alone citation. Thus, ideas—deemed to be public property—survived through their appeal to fashion. The words that conveyed them were likewise free-floating. Generated by the tongue with whatever degree of integrity, they swarmed into the common domain and promptly changed their shape. Memory could not contain them, nor would they abide correction; certainly, no ordinary pen sufficed to fix them firmly. Generally, a scribal 'duplication' rendered a unique result, and readers of copied documents, cosmographies, maps, philosophical commentaries, and the like could not be sure that the facts

2. "Three fingers write, two eyes see. One tongue speaks, the whole body labors, and all labor has an end, and its reward does not have an end." Henry John Chaytor, From Script to Print: An Introduction to Medieval Vernacular Literature (Cambridge: W. Heffer, 1950), 14. As a man becomes more facile at reading, his pace picks up and exceeds the speed at which he can pronounce the words. He begins to mutter rather than articulate, when he substitutes the visual for the audible image. But most interestingly, Chaytor points out, the silent reading still provokes an action in the vocal chords. See page 6.
upon which they were building fresh theory were indeed the facts at all. 3

In his own search for correct readings, Coluccio Salutati (1331–1406: Chancellor of Florence, bookman, scholar, and friend of Petrarch) concluded that scribes do not copy so much as corrupt the ancient texts. Suspicous of newer manuscripts, he himself preferred to use the older codices for study, since scribes (whose minds incline to wander) “omit words, . . . change what they do not understand, and introduce marginal and interlinear glosses into their texts”.4 Without trust in the scribe, readers too (learned or not) began to make arbitrary emendations, some of which were absolutely indefensible—and so it went. The answer, Coluccio said, was to set up a good, many-volumed library (as did the Alexandrians, and as Cosimo de’ Medici would soon be doing at the monastery of San Marco) where erudite masters (if they existed—and he doubted it) might collate revisions after careful study.5

With reason, then, a good copier was highly prized, a treasure; a bad one was worse than the devil. A few decades later saw Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459: disciple of Coluccio, humanist, apostolic secretary, and intrepid hunter of lost classical texts) also ranting at the havoc wrought by sloppy scrivening. Frustration blusters through his extant letters. The following sample was written in the autumn of 1417:6

5. Ibid., 102.
6. Poggio Bracciolini, Two Renaissance Book Hunters: The Letters of Poggio Bracciolini to Nicolaus de Niccolis, trans. and annot. Phyllis Walter Goodhart Gordan (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974), 212–13. Later, in a letter of 1427 (see page 119), Poggio writes: “I shall send you Caesar’s Commentaries as soon as I have found someone to carry them carefully so that you may have them rubricated and bound. I have a copyist of uneducated intelligence and peasant habits. For four months now I have done nothing but teach him in the hope that he may learn to write, but I fear that I am ploughing the seashore. He is now copying Valerius, on whom he proves his ignorance, but day by day he becomes stupider. And so I yell, I thunder, I scold, I upbraid; but he has ears full of pitch. He is leaden, a blockhead, wooden, a donkey, and whatever can be
I am sending you [Franciscus Barbarus] Silius Italicus, five books of Statius' *Silvae* and M. Manilius, the astronomer. The man who copied the books was the most ignorant of living men; one needs to use divination, not reading itself, and so it is very important that they be copied by a scholar. I have read as far as the thirteenth book of Silius and I corrected a lot, so that it might be easy for someone writing it correctly to avoid similar mistakes and to correct those in the later books, so see that they are copied and then send them to Nicolaus in Florence.

Because words were still like jumping beans and most scribes were not scholars, knowledge in chirographic days had a fluid quality, which the modern scholar—aided by access to abundant quantities of paper, to indexes, and retrieval systems—can scarcely appreciate. Strange to contemplate, the medieval library catalogue was inclined to poetize its inventory. Mnemonic jingles activated the custodian, guiding him, and him alone, to the desired volumes, stored in cupboards and chests, or chained thereabout to desks. He had little incentive to arrange his records to international standards, for there were no such standards. Until the sixteenth century, even the alphabet did not suggest to all men a fixed order. A library was custom-collected and custom-organized to fit the wants of its proprietor. A single volume, for example, could (and the majority did) contain variously authored works put together between the same boards for reasons that seem irrelevant and even outlandish to the modern scholar. Often enough, those works were attributed erroneously to writers who were not even chronologically likely: a copyist, transcribing a manuscript that carried no author's name, would simply assign to it the author mentioned that is duller and clumsier. Damn him. He is bound to me for two years; perhaps he will improve." Again, in a letter of 1428 (see page 126), he speaks irritably of Cicero's *Philippics*, which he has been correcting against an ancient codex. "It is so childishly written and so faulty that in the parts which I copied I needed not guesswork but absolute divination. There is no woman so stupid and uncultivated that she could not have written it better . . ." And finally (page 175) in a letter of 1431: "No one, believe me, will copy the Plautus well unless he is well educated; for it is the same writing as many old books, which I think must have been written by women with no separation between the words, so that one often has to guess".

of an adjacent tract. Capriciousness of this sort pocked the entire range of medieval literature. “Almost every other book seems to be known habitually under a name which cannot possibly be that of its true author.”

To illustrate how such disorder might well have come about, the medievalist E. P. Goldschmidt hypothesized the following set of events.

Imagine a monk or secular cleric (for before the founding of universities in the thirteenth century no other calling suggests a candidate) deciding to compose a book. As he collects his material, he accumulates notes on sheets of vellum, which he keeps in his cell to be made use of later. If he needs to consult books that are not in his own monastery, he writes to other abbeys reputed to have big libraries. Then, he waits. If, in the fullness of time, a library responds that, indeed, the wanted book is on the shelf but cannot go out on loan, then our author must apply to his abbot for the permission and wherewithal to travel; or, he must rely on a friend to copy the work for him—in either case, a risky enterprise, whose result will be some script-covered parchment quires. Once all the bits and pieces are accumulated, including a substantial supply of costly vellum cajoled from the monastery bursar, he can begin to set down his composition, using his notes from scraps and odd sheets, “copying his excerpts and quotations from other books, all of which . . . lie ready to hand in his cell in the shape of vellum leaves”. If, in the middle of his opus monumentale, he conceives new insights or learns of some important book that requires consultation, the discarded beginning will remain in his cell in the shape of vellum leaves (too precious to throw out), covered with his writing.

Finished at last, the book is presented to the abbot, who admiringly requests an additional copy so that this one may be sent to the bishop. The author sits down again, using the notes he had used before, to make a fresh copy for the generous abbot. But as he writes, new facts come to mind that he endeavors to incorporate into a better arrangement. That done, the ‘same’ book might be requested again. “Thus we may have two or even three redactions of the same book, all equally authentic, but often differing considerably.”

8. Ernst Philip Goldschmidt, Medieval Texts and Their First Appearance in Print (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1943), 86.
9. Ibid., 89–93.
Finally, our author dies. His brethren, who have venerated him as a great scholar and writer, reverently enter his cell. Wishing to preserve every scrap of the learned man’s work, they collect all those miscellaneous sheets that have accumulated on his shelves and bind them into volumes. One should remember that these volumes would be viewed as ‘books’, “books like any others in the library, to be studied, copied, transcribed, etc.” In the light of such conditions it is easy to understand why so many of our medieval books contain “quite uncalled-for repetitions, whole inserted pieces recognizably taken from other authors, a chain of argument abruptly ending in the middle of a sentence, taken up again from its first premises thirty pages later, and so on”.

Librarians and bookbinders put together many volumes of miscellaneous content, in numbers such that they probably constituted the majority of books in the library. They would assemble a number of pamphlet-length tracts of similar size or related topic, but practically never did they give consideration to authorship, nor did they disdain to juxtapose works from varying centuries. Once bound together, these separately written segments would be copied out in a uniform hand, which would render their heterogeneous origins less obvious still. How the librarian set about cataloguing the finished masterpiece seems to have been a matter of weather, as much as anything else. But before print, the accessibility of information was not a librarian’s explicit goal. Indeed, the more unfathomable the retrieval procedures could be made to appear, the more agreeably could his ego sufflate. But to give him his due, it was a difficult job to produce order and invite scholarship against the generally unsettled background of the middle Middle Ages. The coup in that campaign awaited the printer.

For the moment, certainty about authorship, provenance, and dates—not to mention the actual words of the text—continued to be elusive. Contributing to the phantom atmosphere was the practice of amending one’s own copy of a work from another’s, which itself might be riddled with error. This well-attested custom continued from antiquity through the chirographic era, despite the difficulties of travel, the scattered locations of manuscripts, and their scarcity. Often the ancient or medieval reader would, if given the chance,

copy a text from a multiplicity of exemplars, intermingling his own best guesses with the hypotheses of scribes, whose primary characteristic seems to have been the inability to copy exactly from what lay before them. Accordingly, despite the energetic scholarship of men like Poggio Bracciolini (and there were many in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries), a rich new vein of error-generating opportunity opened up, and the reader was left to ponder quite justifiably on the original form of ancient statements. With the passage of years the scholar-printer and the modern university medievalist would attempt with great earnestness to rescue their baffled publics by slogging back through swamps of textual red herrings to historical truth—generally a vain endeavor, given the irreverence that scribes had had for vintage manuscripts. For when, say, in the ninth century—a period of hectic transliterating activity—a manuscript of difficult uncial text (contaminated by variant readings, marginalia, and dubious interlinear glosses) was copied into readable Carolingian miniscule on pristine parchment, it was more customary than not to shred the mouldy original.

And so we see how the medieval information seeker, not knowing in which direction accuracy lay, was more or less constantly kept off balance. Anxious to glean meaning and to arrive at the target of the communication, he sorted, sifted, and wrestled the written materials with a tenacity that cosseted readers today would not be willing to muster. His powers of empathy must have been enormous, his perceptions downright predacious.

THE STATE OF LITERACY IN THE FINAL PRE-PRINT YEARS

It was a jungle world before the exactions of print, but change was afoot. The human mind, if you will, was preparing for the reception of technology. If the twelfth century had been an age of romance—of troubadours, knights, feasts and battles, of pale ladies flicking their

hankies out turret windows—then the next was an age of reason, in which education, rapidly increasing, began its slow seep into the nether classes. Gatherings of scholars formalized into colleges and universities; Padova, Paris, Oxford, and Cambridge were all active centers of learning by the end of the thirteenth century. The vernaculars were acquiring a degree of social acceptability: for example, a complete French Bible, probably countenanced by the Sorbonne, was put out in 1235. A spirit of inquiry about canon law, current affairs, social conditions, and constitutional changes brought down the apparatus of epic romance poetry—with all its tedious repetitions designed for the sluggish ear—and replaced it with prose that needed to be clear when disputatious, and more quickly paced when recounting the feats and amours of heroes.15 Paper—because it was more pliable, more absorptive of ink, and more cheaply and abundantly available than parchment—was beginning to be manufactured to great effect for less expensive book production in Italy, from where it would proceed northwards.16 Adding energy to these printward gusts were: the growth of towns with their middle-class artisans and their commercial, often very small, scriptoria engaging in vernacular output; improved transportation; and in some monasteries, reforms that encouraged common folk to read for themselves parts of the Bible and devotional literature.17 In the fourteenth century more universities emerged: Vienna, Heidelberg, and Cologne. In general terms, as reading became more relevant to the successes and pleasures of the average man, so books multiplied. Copying became a sort of home industry, organized by stationers and booksellers. One was paid by the chunks (the peciae)18 doled out and duly returned. Professors had given up the practice of slow dictation in the university lecture hall

15. Chaytor, Script to Print, 84–85.
17. Ibid., 10.
18. Devised in Northern Italy during the thirteenth century, the peciae were units for estimating payment to the copyist. The standard form of a Bolognese pecia was eight pages of two columns, each containing sixty lines of thirty-two letters. Pecciari were appointed by the University of Bologna to oversee the system and to safeguard the accuracy of reproduction. Fines were imposed for imperfect renderings, and also for lost peciae. Scriptor got four denarii per pecia and correctors, two denarii. See Robert Steel, “The Pecia”, The Library, 4th ser., 11 (September 1930): 231.
and progressed now at a faster clip over greater ranges of material. A student no longer achieved a degree by slavishly composing a book from the spoken words of his teacher. 19

Throughout the Middle Ages, aural attitudes increasingly altered in the direction of the visual. We learn from an admiring St. Augustine that the learned St. Ambrose (fourth century) could comfortably read without the necessity of wiggling his lips. “But when he was reading, he drew his eyes along over the leaves, and his heart searched into the sense, but his voice and tongue were silent.” 20 The Benedictine Rule (Chap. xlviii) suggests that by the sixth century reading to oneself was not at all rare: “Post sextam [horam] surgentes a mensa, pausent in lecta sua cum omni silentio; aut forte qui voluerit legere, sibi sic legat ut alium non inquietet”. 21 Writing, which we think of today in conjunction with reading, was often taught separately, with the result that some priests could read but not write. 22 By the twelfth century, when Abbé Ode described the scriptorium at Tournai, silent writing was an expectable activity, yet intriguing enough to write about: “Ita ut si claustrum ingredereris, videres plurumque xii monachos juvenes in cathedris sedentes et super tabulas diligenter et artificiose compositas cum silentio scribentes”. 23 It is interesting that there are so many of the juvenes and that they are so diligent, artistic, and quiet, for the youths in other monastic accounts seem more like brawling cubs than industrious scribes.

We see more juvenes in the “first region” of Abbot Johannes Tritemius’s fifteenth-century Liber de triplici regione claustralium et spirituali exercicio monachorum—a book giving advice to those progressing through the levels of monkhood—where their adolescent failings (described with gusto) sadly included: carnality, not being obedient to superiors, foolishness, whispering, squirming, contumely (so odious

21. “After the sixth hour, having left the table, let them rest on their beds in perfect silence, or if by chance anyone should want to read, let him read to himself so that he does not disturb the others.”
23. Chaytor, Script to Print, 18. “Thus, when you enter the cloister, you will generally see twelve young monks sitting on chairs at tables and writing compositions diligently and skillfully in silence.”
to God), detraction of others, inventions of wickedness, and sundry other high jinks. Such riotous spirits demanded suppression, and indeed, they got it; for by the time the novice entered the exalted atmosphere of the “third region”, a tamed and proper religioso, he is (between prayers) hitting the books and doing so selectively, lest “vana lectio” generate “vanas cogitationes”. Upon returning to the cell after meals, Tritemius enjoined, “Boni aliquid ad edificationem lege” (Read something good for edification). Then:24

Take up some work that has not yet been mastered by you, or write. If it is a free day, go with your book of studies to your regular reading place, and sitting with the others, read what you want in silence. Indeed, a monk should always have “aliquid boni legere”. But not all reading is good for all monks, especially not for those who might be a little infirm in the spirit. So if you are one of those, stick to simple doctrines. Do not read to become more learned, nor to encounter curiosities that do not edify. But if you are one of the stronger, then read what you want, for true reading does not harm devotion. [To which may be added that not all abbots were so enlightened.]

By Tritemius’s time, visual attitudes had generously infected the moral imagination, and reading silently was often perceived to be more worthy than mumbling along in the wake of a pointing finger. Early in the thirteenth century the worried Cistercian abbot, Richard of Schönthal, was already recounting:25

Oftentimes, when I am reading straight from the book and in thought only, as I am wont, they [devils] make me read aloud word by word, that they may deprive me so much the more of the inward understanding thereof, and that I may the less penetrate into the interior force of the reading, the more I pour myself out in exterior speech.

In modern times, though the scene is changing swiftly, what is merely heard does not hold the respect of serious folk. The late Philip Larkin represented this intellectual stand. He disdained poetry readings and the theatre on grounds of shallowness, for the words come too quickly and “receive an instant response, which tends to vulgarize”. With the ear alone, they cannot be savored for their potential multiplicity of connotation and innuendo.26 Ironically, a more traditional poetic approach is that of Robert MacNeil, television reporter and commentator, who describes himself as follows: “I am a mover of lips and a public mumbler when reading words worth savouring. If I am to take them into my consciousness, have them move me, I must know what they sound like.”27 This attitude to the spoken word is quite different from that of the passive listener to radio, or watcher and hearer of television. These latter activities smack of intellectual surrender. The thinking person should engage with books.

Unlike poor Poggio, today’s reader dives into text with the expectation of understanding what his author wishes to tell him. He knows where the index will lie and how to find the date of publication, the appendix, page numbers, preface, and chapter topics. He looks forward to a satisfying experience—and the easier the better, for he quite likes a quick jaunt through galactic spaces or murders that resolve in a hundred pages flat. Faced with a richly colloquial vocabulary and ‘impactful’ sentences where subject, verb, and object stand plainly posted by two not-very-far-apart periods, contemporary readers thrive in a state of tropical indolence. The market is theirs to debase as their lowest mood devises.

But, as has been shown, it was not always so. For the first two millennia of alphabet writing, the reader’s life was one of struggle. Nevertheless, by the intellectually fecund fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a vast literate audience was gathering in the dawn’s gloom—anxious, enthusiastic, and on the qui vive to comprehend what learned men had to say about what the world was, and how and why it ticked. Once literacy had been democratized, linguistic expression,

letter formation, and orthography straightened their wayward courses, moving always in the direction of uniformity.

**PUNCTUATION CROSSES THE BOUNDARY**

During these changeover years, punctuation, too, began to pester for attention. The breaking up of text into chapters, subchapters, and paragraphs had long been seen to illuminate meaning for the inexpert reader. Now, it was plainly the season to address the minutiae. Accordingly, there erupted a seemingly spontaneous generation of analyses, codifications, and recommendations concerning the potency of the modest punct. Those literary sages who understood the craft urged would-be intellectuals to master its power. An example of the general concern is a three-page Latin tract, generally attributed to Petrarch (*pacte* Novati and Ullman, whose abstentions, alas, afford sound reasons for doubt) and called *Ars punctandi*.

The only version of this *Ars punctandi* in early print dates from 1493 and is included in a ten-page volume (there is a copy in the Cornell University Library) of other punctating advisements. Petrarch (if it is indeed he) tells us that there are five points in use. The *suspensivus* is essentially a simple *virgula*, which one uses to produce a little quiet before the clausal sense is complete. The *colus* (or *colon*) is appropriate for the end of the clause where the sense is complete. The *coma* is useful for that indecisive terrain where the clause sense is complete but the writer wishes to add more. The *periodus* is more clear cut. It terminates a section, a chapter, or a whole work, and should appear when nothing more is to be said. The *interrogativus* is also discussed. These are the puncts that deal with time. But there are also other marks that can aid the writer in parceling out his text. The obelus and asterisk are both useful for condemning the authenticity of a line or word, and of drawing attention to it. The *semipunctus* (or hyphen) is used for the end of a line where the exactions of margin do not allow room for the word to be completed. The parenthesis is also described to be more or less as we know it today.

The next section of this little book is the *Alius compendiosus dialogus de arte punctandi* by Johannis de Lapide—a question-and-answer dialogue between an *amantissimus adolescens* and his teacher, in which all the 'Petrarchan' materials are meticulously gone over. Thereafter
follows an anonymous list of rules, part of which is interesting in that it deals with voice production. The suspensivus, coma, interro-
gativus, colon, and periodus are discussed in terms of do, re, mi, etc. In a case of suspensivus, it is advised that the voice continue on the same level after the pause. The coma, though previously described as having a line dot with a virgula floating above (/), is therewith printed as two dots (:) and given the duty of guiding the voice downwards from sol to mi: “descensus unius tertie”. The interrogativus, the most complex vocally of the four basic stops, is to be dealt with as follows: the antepenultimate syllable goes down from fa to mi, the penulti-
mate from mi to re, and the ultimate back up to mi—enough, it might seem, to put anyone off asking a casual question. For the colon or periodus the voice sinks from sol to ut, a “descensus unius quinte”.

It is known that Guarino of Verona (1374–1460: professor of rhet-
oric and classical languages) taught interpunctuation—undoubtedly along Petrarchan lines—in Ferrara and that his pupils, scattering mostly to the north where humanistic erudition was not so advanced, con-
tinued to lecture on it. A notice in Latin of such a lecture at Leip-
zig survives today. Dating from 1462, it advertises that Peter Luder (fl. 1410–1475?: student of Guarino and himself a visiting lecturer on poetry, metrics, rhetoric, epistolography, Horace, Ovid, Virgil, and Terence) would be explaining the art of punctuating “cum lu-
cida declaracione”, so that anybody might understand. To appreciate the tenor of his appeal, it is necessary to realize that all during this period and indeed well into the eighteenth century, popular percep-
tion held punctuation to be a rather esoteric craft, requiring an ex-
alted technical knowledge. The prescient Peter Luder, however, pre-

tended the subject quite casually as an obvious necessity for everyone, on the grounds that whatever idea is written, be it ever so lucid, it will need to be tidied up with commas, colons, periods, question marks, admiration marks, exclamation marks, asterisks, and obeli. Without these tools, reader, no matter how clever you may be, you will founder in obscurities! Promising talismans against rough passage, he invited the public to bring its money to his lodgings at three o’clock

28. Hirsch, Printing, Selling, 136–38. Interestingly, Hirsch points out (page 137) that, in general, the “typical [Italian] humanist paid no or very little attention to the average reader”. But lesser intellects beyond the Alps, where writers were nei-
ther so autocratic nor so facile with the Latin language, both needed and supplied the textual help of punctuation.
on the following day. The whole business, he urged, would take only a little more than an hour. 29 Was the room, then, filled with jostling, wealthy pupils, jotting down their revelations? We are left uninformed. The time-frozen action is as provoking to the imagination as the scene on Keats' urn.

The Germans took to punctuation like ducks to water and for a few decades were exploring its reach in a progression of publications. In his 1473 translation of Boccaccio's De claris mulieribus, Heinrich Steinhöwel (1412–1483: humanist, doctor, and translator) offered the first known advice to the silent reader about punctuation. "To understand this book and others, which I translated from Latin into German, you must pay attention to the different signs of interpunctuation . . . three types having different meanings." 30 But his differentiations produced in fact four sense and pausal stops, which soon expanded to five, as he infixed subtle modifications between his original basic values and, like all the punctuation addicts of his time, confused his disciples by creating arbitrary symbols to represent them. 31

Friedrich Riederer's elaborate system (consisting of ten symbols: five sense and pausal markers and five textual devices) was first mentioned in 1477, and then later (in 1505) described in the following way. We start with the five pauses. 32

The virgula, or punct, signifies a small pause (or stop) to the reader or the speaker: and it is used to differentiate the incomplete part of a speech [a vocative or phrase, one assumes], which can consist of one word or many words. The gemipunctus is used at the end of every complete part [a clause?]. The koma signifies a longer temporary silence than the gemipunctus. It too is used after a completed portion of the sentence and indicates that more parts are still to follow.

30. Hirsch, Printing, Selling, 137.
31. Johannes Müller, Quellenschriften und Geschichte des deutschsprachlichen Unterrichtes bis zur Mitte des 16. Jahrhunderts (Gotha: E. F. Thienemann, 1882), 289. I would like to thank Karin D'Agostino for her indispensable assistance in translating for me the relevant and sometimes complicated passages from Müller's book.
32. Müller, Quellenschriften, 291–93.
and that they are important to the preceding part. A *kolon* signifies a more complete temporary silence than the previously mentioned *virgula*. It should be noted that its position lies between two complete speeches [short sentences? sentence fragments?], which sometimes serve together to combine or unite the other segments of the lines. The *periodus* has the most complete temporary silence, because it is put at the end of the entire speech where the following speech has no relationship to the previous part.

Amongst Riederer's five textual devices, two are rather intriguing. First, a regular question, if dispatched in its entirety, carries the symbol (?) to signal its finish; but if the question issues forth in pieces, then the following symbol (:) is placed between the pieces. Second, for spots where one might wish to mention "the first or last name of a person and does not know it", two dots (..) are recommended to fill the gap. This symbol he also calls the "gemipunctus", then, more disconcertingly: "though many use the N for it". He terminates his advice with a paragraph that, ironically, displays in its 1505 printed form absolutely no evidence of the puncting procedures so earnestly being propounded. In English, it reads:

The above mentioned symbols are named and drawn differently by many, and also mean something different that every reader should remember; this I announce, so that if the readers find it differently in other writings, they can adjust their basic knowledge and remember the reason for these symbols.

Nicholas von Wyle (friend of Steinhöwel, ambassador, notary, and teacher of writing style and orthography) printed his straightforward, essentially Donatian three-point system (see Part Two) in his *Translationen* (1478)\(^{33}\)—undoubtedly a pleasant relief to professional punctators. But most interesting, indeed, is a short anonymous tract in the Munich State Library, written about 1480, which outdoes all previously encountered punctating manuals in its overload of detail.

Again, we are back in a kaleidoscopic world of pointing possibility. The values with their refreshing symbols are as follows:\textsuperscript{34}

1) Punctus suspensivus planus [✓]; 2) Semipunctus [.; or •]; 3) Punctus suspensivus currens sive pellens [✓ or ✓] [because it runs from phrase to phrase, marking each one for the significance of meaning, and never stands alone, but only with company]; 4) Punctus admirativus [!*]; 5) Punctus interrogativus [§]; 6) Punctus interpositi, i.e., for the parentheses [⊙]; 7) Punctus exclamativus [♥]; 8) Punctus lamenti or planctus [ⓐ]; 9) Punctus gaudii cum honestate [phoon] [cum dishonestate is not mentioned]; 10) Punctus conclusivus orationis perfecti [↑ or ↓]; 11) Punctus orationis finalis [ⓒ].

The Punctus orationis finalis brings to mind the feelings of an anonymous medieval scribe, who climaxed his pious chore with the following words: “Here ends the second part of the Summa of the Dominican brother Thomas Aquinas, the longest, most verbose, and most tedious to write; thank God, thank God, and again thank God”\textsuperscript{35}.

The pedagogues seem to have gone mad with the thrill of distinguishing niceties. It is scarcely a wonder that printers, scrimmaging between solvency and bankruptcy, did not bother themselves over such detail. The more hectored they were, the more attractive was the lure of simple virgules and periods.

**EARLY PRINTING**

When the use of movable type was firmly established, attention trained on the communicating aspect of writing, which became, necessarily, the author’s genuine concern. He was no longer talking to a small, identifiable circle, but to a vast swell of strangers who wanted to understand, indeed, were paying to understand. Surely one’s own elucubrations, however unexalted, deserved safe conduct into those eager receiver brains. Given the natural inclination of a writer’s ego, it did not take long for the author and his team of compositors,

\textsuperscript{34} Müller, Quellenschriften, 293.
correctors, and publishers to come to the view that the public was owed this pleasure. Together, they contrived a release from the mystique of scribal styles, from choked texts and idiosyncratic spellings, punctuation, and page settings. Words would be pinned down at last; and once their source was proclaimed, accountability was inescapable.

Increasingly, the printer inserted himself into the author-reader relationship as middleman with ambitious ideas that embraced a mix of artistic and mechanical considerations. Ideally, he was a scholar of the ancient letter designs from Roman inscriptions, and of medieval scribal styles—the uncial, Carolingian, Gothic, Roman chancery, and English secretarial scripts—of which he selected the most appropriate for the genre of work to be printed. He had a practical ingenuity for the details of punchcutting and experience with metal strengths as well as the patience needed for those irritating moments when flourishing descenders collided with letters beneath. Though generally the urge was towards clarity, simple forms—like a perfect ‘O’, for example—were not at first technically feasible, and angled, intricate shapes were sometimes useful in concealing the weakness of a cut.

The first century of print (1450–1550) would see the multifarious type faces (copied initially from book hands) divide into two strains: the Teutonic Gothic and the Latinate humanistic—with the subsequent cross-hybridizations generating handsomely legible faces on both sides of the divide. But it is not the case, as is sometimes thought, that the incunable years saw every printer with his own homemade type. Economy militated against variety, as it is inclined to do.

38. For example, the Italian gothic style known as ‘rotunda’ (which was cut by Wendelin de Spira in Venice in 1472 and constituted for some decades the Northeners’ longest incursion into humanistic terrain) was copied in Cologne in the same year and appeared in the Low Countries in 1475, at Basle and Lyons in 1477, Augsburg and Nuremberg in 1478, at Paris in 1479, at Leipzig in 1481, and in London in 1499. Between 1485 and 1501, at least fifty printers in Germany and Basle acquired fonts of the German Schwabacher, many identical from the same sets of punches. By 1490 the French bâtardes had become widespread. In the last decade of the fifteenth century, five or six printers in Paris were using types from a single
Gradually, small publishers were forced to adopt the styles of the big houses, for readers will not willingly plunge into a page of type that does not resemble in its major aspects those to which he is accustomed.\footnote{Ibid., 49.} Italian humanism with its classical focus led the push for the general substitution of Roman for Gothic type. Accordingly, by the mid-sixteenth century the Roman faces had essentially gained the field in Western Europe, with the exception of Scandinavia and Germany, where resistance to it was absolute. The Roman is today "the international font of western books".\footnote{Hirsch, \textit{Printing, Selling}, 118.} In 1540 the Vulgate had been printed both in Gothic and in Roman at Paris and at Lyons, but thereafter always in Roman.\footnote{Carter, \textit{Early Typography}, 75, 57–58, 64.} To abbreviate a history, which, though appealing to book lovers and language zealots, is too sprawling to reconstruct here, let it be said simply that by the time of Garamond's death in 1561, a range of his beautiful, clear, graceful Roman types was in frequent use, and that they included in their fonts a handsome array of commas, colons, brackets, and question marks.

The progress of book production was towards explicitness, towards method in hierarchical dispositions of phrases, clauses, paragraphs, chapters—all the steaks and chops of a punctator's feast. For what does a punctator do, if not carve up the written line for intellectual consumption? To the assumed delight of the reading public, the new,

\begin{itemize}
\item punch.
\item England, under the Act of 1484, was importing foreign workmen, the majority probably from Rouen. Caxton in 1490 was using a type common also to Vérard and Leret of Paris; De Worde in 1493 owned a type being used by Dupré in Paris, and in 1499 both De Worde and Notary were in possession of another type from Morin's of Rouen. Two of Pynson's types were Higman's and Hopyl's (Paris). England itself was slow in putting out type. A virgule (/) followed by a ragged r, to deputize for k in several early London fonts, is evidence against the position that letters were in the beginning cut and struck there. See Carter, \textit{Early Typography}, 75, 57–58, 64.
\item 39. Ibid., 49.
\item 40. Hirsch, \textit{Printing, Selling}, 118. In its brevity this survey rather understates the complexity of the situation, for Italians in the fifteenth century often favored the Gothic types for theology, law, and even science. The classicists generally leaned to the \textit{antiqua}, derived like the full Roman from the ancient letters. In the German-speaking North, some twenty-five presses owned and operated Roman-class fonts before the end of the century. France had many, mostly in Paris, and England had none. See pages 114–15.
\item 41. Carter, \textit{Early Typography}, 88.
\end{itemize}
evenly set print was easy to take in. The eye seemed able to do it alone. As it moved with unimpeded speed over the words, the lips shut firmly once and for all, and the intake became interiorized, a remove away from voice sounds. In this tranquil intellectuality, the structure of syntax became more apparent, and with it, the need for a new logical punctuating method.

Chirographic culture could not survive the invention of the printing press, but its demise was slow. For several decades after Gutenberg, there was tremendous freedom in the not-as-yet regulated book trade, and printers and scribes busily copied each other’s texts for the same sorts of markets. Men from the most diverse backgrounds entered the field to work alongside those who were already acquainted with one or another of the bookmaking crafts. As economic opportunities opened out or closed up, so scribes became printers, and printers went back to scribing, or wool trading, or cheesemaking, or whatever. There was room for both script and print, and for a time they seemed willing to share the market. In the 1450s (at the very time that Gutenberg’s forty-two-line Bible was being printed) the scriptorium of Vespasiano da Bisticci in Florence, with its forty-five working scribes, was putting out “as many books as were desired.”

But the handcrafted volume was indeed special. It carried a cachet of luxury, of uniqueness and importance. In full dress it was magnificently bound and illuminated, calligraphed on choice vellum—an object so desired in ducal libraries that it was often prepared by scribes from already printed materials. To acquire bookshelf space amongst

42. Eisenstein, Printing Press, 33, 49.
43. Hirsch, Printing, Selling, 21. Here Hirsch presents an extensive list of the previous activities of printers and their staffs. In Germany, for example, we find: a priest, several woodcutters, an illuminator, some letter writers, an astronomer, a Franciscan monk, a professor of medicine, a former proofreader, a painter, a bookbinder. In Italy we find: a composer of music, a number of Greek and Cretan scholars, authors, type designers, and an architect. There were real-estate dealers in Paris; and in Britain, merchants and judges.
44. Hirsch, Printing, Selling, 14–18.
45. Eisenstein, Printing Press, 51. It is interesting that English renaissance courtiers were still unable to bring themselves to convert their scribblings to print, so distasteful did they find the new invention (p. 64). Even today, in social notes, one comes across the occasional apology for having written with a typewriter or word processor, instead of with pen. See also: Sandra Hindman, Pen to Press: Illuminated Manuscripts and Printed Books in the First Century of Printing ([College Park]: Art Department, University of Maryland, 1977), 101–3.
The opening page (leaf [a3r]) of the text of the Sophologium of Jacobus Magni (Strasbourg, ca. 1476), showing the printed text with hand-painted (rubricated) initials, and red-inked paragraph signs, capitals, and underlinings of the listing ordinals. Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.
all those arrogant big-hitters, typographers continued obsequiously to imitate the uncial, Carolingian, and Gothic scripts—printing them, upon request, on parchment with rubricated capitals and hand-colored ornaments.

“Ill.ma Ex.ma Madama”, wrote Aldus Manutius to the Marchesa of Mantova in June 1505. “Me scrive V.S. li mande tutti quelli libretti io habia in membrana de lettera cursiva . . .” (Your Ladyship has written me to send all the little books that I have in italics on parchment . . .) wherewith, only eleven days after the date of her initial inquiry, he sent by porter for inspection: Horatio and Juvenal and Persius bound together for six ducats; Martial for four; Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius for three; and Lucan for three—all presumably on parchment in the “picol forma” (that is, the octavo) that she had requested he pull for her expressly.46 Undoubtedly, like Grolier's own octavo copy of the Manutius edition of Pliny the Younger's letters in the British Museum, the Marchesa’s books would have carried the titles gold-stamped on leather bindings and been embellished inside by gilded Aldine dolphin-and-anchor pressmarks, gilded capitals, and hand-applied, red initial letters.

But despite this homage to personalized warmth, letters from type revealed their mechanical nature and carried their information aloofly, a step apart from the animal warmth of re-dipped pens, varying descenders, and inserted corrections—from the intimacy of touch and voice memories. As print objectified wordage, so new traditions developed in response to the aroused visual sense, which engages the passions less lustily and deals in terms of distance, isolation, silence, and surfaces. Printed text encouraged man to be exact for a democratic and critical public; it allowed perfect duplication so that new findings might accumulate and corrections adhere. It provided the precision necessary for modern scientific discovery and brought coherence to scholarly effort across Europe. For the first time ever, strangers could spar intellectually across spatial and temporal distances.

Printers began to regularize their in-house punctuation and orthography, to seek type with justified lettering, to eliminate dialectal expressions—in short, to do everything conceivable to provide an

'easy read' for the most people; for general readability was crucial to the mass consumption upon which profit depended. As production put more and more books before the public, so the reader freed himself of the impedimenta so passively put up with by his oppressed ancestor. Words were clearly separated; abbreviations increasingly opened up. Colophon and explicit materials transferred to an opening title page (an expected feature by the 1480s), where the bookshop browser could locate them with ease and be enticed to a purchase by the august names of author and editor, by the insignia of the printer (printers' and publishers' marks were common by the 1490s), and by the succeeding authorial letter of presentation to pope or royalty. Here was the flavor of authority and responsibility. And it sold. Accordingly, printers moved towards a consistency of integrity, and acquired 'privileges' to protect the turf they were now assiduously cultivating. They also gave thought to the disbursal of their wares.

Bookselling, previously the sideline activity of teachers, scriveners, and merchants of all sorts, centered now in printing houses and stationers' shops.

Year by year the book itself continued to open up to daylight. Woodblock illustrations were used to alleviate dense text and encourage the irresolute reader. The first author's portrait in a printed book was that of Paulus Attavanti Florentinus in 1479. Pagination, that is, the numbering of leaves on both recto and verso, firmly ousted the less informative signature lettering and made it possible for accurate references to be given. Running heads proved useful, and stayed; as did tables of contents and indexes (at last possible in great detail because of the immutability of print). The more easily comprehensible, the more wide-reaching a book became; and the more wide-reaching, the more implacable, inert, disengaged. Faced with the gap between reader and producer, the book arts pressed for the universal denominator of man's intellectual comfort, for what he would most enjoyably understand.

THE POST-PRINT SURGE IN LITERACY

The proletariat of western Europe was plainly becoming literate. By 1470 some thirty German presses were providing training for ap-

47. Hirsch, Printing, Selling, 9, 60–61, 119.
prentices and journeymen in the printing trade. Independent print shops had increased, and there were now four in Rome, four in Venice, three in Strasbourg, three in Cologne, two each in Basle, Augsburg, and Nuremberg. Many towns had single presses. The Latin classics—Cicero, Apuleius, Gellius, Caesar, Pliny, Lu- can, Virgil, Livy, Sallust, Juvenal, Persius, Quintilian, Suetonius, Terence, Valerius Maximus, and Tacitus—were in print, to be followed within the decade by Latin translations of the Greek—Strabo, Lucian, Plato, Plutarch, Hesiod, Homer, Polybius, Herodotus, Hierocles, Pythagoras, Ptolemy, Xenophon, and Aristotle. The end of the century saw about 40,000 titles (books and broadsides) produced, and “even at the low average of 250 copies per title, this amounts to an impressive total, 10,000,000 pieces, of which the great majority was produced during the last quarter of the xvth century”. The enormous expense of setting up a full-fledged printing establishment led to unscrupulous competition and such cost-cutting practices as the use of smaller formats and thinner paper no longer gathered between boards. Pamphlets and broadsheets, which required no binding expenses, made cheap vehicles for the political polemics, religious treatises, counsels on medical, culinary, herbal, and agricultural matters that poured from contemporary authors. The profusion of these short tracts attests to the reduced costs of reading materials, brought about by the enlarged market as well as by the thirty-percent drop in paper prices between the years 1450 to 1480. In 1468 Cardinal de’ Bussi (patron to and editor for Sweynheim and Pannartz, the first typographers in Italy) wrote that volumes which had formerly sold for one hundred guilders could then be bought for twenty. By some fifty to eighty percent, print had reduced the cost of an identical text in manuscript and in each passing year one could buy more pages for the same money. By 1480 skills and expanding market outlets encouraged presses to produce editions of 2000 at affordable prices. The 1490s saw two guilders (about a week’s wage for a professor of classics) purchase between 800 and 900 folio leaves (or double that in quarto). Thus, in civilized Europe within a single generation, literary output had jumped from a limited number of single-copy manuscripts to titles put out in editions of vast numbers of increasingly ambitious size.

48. Ibid., 17, 31, 15.
Soon the written word would touch the very dregs of society, for in 1543 Henry VIII was to ban the reading of the English Bible by women and the lower classes, lest heresies be spread.\textsuperscript{50}

To appreciate the 'blessings' that now showered on the reader's head, let us look at the Venice of 1503. Figuring an artisan's wage at 24–30 lire per month, the standard price of 1.5 lire per octavo did not represent an outrageous luxury.\textsuperscript{51} (A few more decades would make the recreational reading of illustrated books affordable by common working men throughout Western Europe.\textsuperscript{52}) By the end of the fifteenth century, Venetian presses had turned out more than 4000 editions. Suddenly, the city was “stuffed with books”, and ranks of bookstalls lined the major streets to tempt the passerby. Rather more than one hundred printing companies have been identified in Venice up to 1490, of which only ten survived the turn of the century—proof that a converted cheese press, a commonplace manuscript, and some pounds of paper bought on credit did not make up a sound prescription for achieving wealth. The successful printer acquired a firm contract with highly placed partners who were willing to underwrite the long-term commitments necessary to set up shop and to pay for the repair of type, for top-quality manuscripts, and for professional scholars to edit them. It was risky business to overproduce popular authors like Cicero or Virgil. Materials needed to be put before the public in a mannerly way, with an eye to what would sell in quantity yet not compete with the printer next door. As for the market, university and church connections were most useful, for the bulk of printed reading matter was essentially aimed at the upper levels of society and the established sections of the reading public—priests, school and university teachers, lawyers, doctors, secretaries, and clerks.

Despite the evidence of a literary ground swell, the popular attitude towards books was for a time ambivalent. Although cheaper books might induce a general spread of enlightenment and a better, more God-loving society, so might they also debase the purity of learning and generate confusion and heresy.\textsuperscript{53} On the one hand, we

\textsuperscript{50} Hirsch, \textit{Printing, Selling}, 94, 126.
\textsuperscript{51} Martin Lowry, \textit{The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Italy} (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1979), 100.
\textsuperscript{52} Hindman, \textit{Pen to Press}, 198–99.
\textsuperscript{53} The materials for this and the preceding paragraph have been drawn from Lowry, \textit{Aldus Manutius}, 7–24.
find Cardinal de' Bussi championing affordable books for the "poor scholar"; on the other, there is Fra Filippo of San Cipriano inveighing against the drunken, filthy, vagabond printers, who with their ambitions to rise above themselves were vulgarizing intellectual life. 54

The city was so full of books that it was hardly possible to walk down a street without finding armfuls of them thrust at you, "like cats in a bag", for two or three coppers. The texts were hopelessly inaccurate, since they had been prepared by ignorant oafs and then never corrected: but they still drove valuable manuscripts out of the market, and tempted uneducated fools to give themselves the airs of learned doctors.

Furthermore, growled Fra Filippo, profuse quantities of cheap books could be got hold of by youngsters. One could be sure the loathsome printers would take advantage of that by publishing all the pagan mythology and love poetry they could lay their hands on. 55 And everybody knows what that can lead to.

ALDUS MANUTIUS, ACCURATISSIMUS?

Indeed, in the early years there was much dissatisfaction with printers, not only their vulgar way of life—all ink stains and liquor—but also the low quality of their work. Those printers who strove to break out of the despised circle advertised their products as being accuratissimi. But most accurate to which manuscript? And who could assure its provenance? No clear idea prevailed of the relative antiquity of various available manuscripts. Accepted practice, under the circumstances, permitted editorial conjecture to 'fix' punctuational, syntactical, and philological imperfections in the text. With every half-educated man warbling about the meaning of this or that textual discrepancy, learning took on the agitations of commerce, an atmosphere far removed from the princely ambiance and monastic tranquility it had known before. 56 By skimming through abridgements and commentaries of all the classical texts, an ambitious young scholar might think of refining himself for a superior social level. Though

54. Ibid., 26.
55. Ibid., 27.
56. Ibid., 30–31.
the genuine intellectual, who had devoted his quiet life to scholarship, was enabled now to examine printed 'original texts' and was presumably grateful, he nevertheless mistrusted the push and shove of worldly ambition and stood apart, reserving his leadership; for the business of bookmaking was a crude one.

In this period of book standardization and reader proliferation, the scholar-printer Aldus Manutius (1450–1515) set up his soon-to-be famous press in Venice and began, with an inspired sense of saving the past, to print his own edited renderings of classical manuscripts—most conspicuously the Greek ones, which were increasingly available in Western Europe after the fall of Constantinople. His approach to the page was intellectual in that he concerned himself with accuracy and appropriate ways of breaking up text for easy retrieval of information. The Noctes Atticae (Attic Nights) of Aulus Gellius was the last publication he organized—he died while it was still in press—and it shows his art in full flower. The reader is presented a handy octavo (written in Latin, printed in italic) with a title page bearing the Aldine pressmark of dolphin and anchor, the visual enactment of the house dictum: festina lente (hasten slowly). The title page is followed by a two-page advisement about the importance of learning and sound friendship, written by Joannes Baptista Egnatius (1478–1553: a literary Venetian). He was the very man, he says, who, when his other occupations allowed him the time, watched over the printing of the Gellius text in Aldus's workshop and did so in order to assure that the reproductions would be “castigatissimae” (most controlled); “haberent etiam mancipem omnium et accuratissimum, et ad hanc artem instructissimum” (for they will have a dealer [Aldus] who is the most accurate of all men and the most instructed about this art).57 This short treatise is dedicated to his friend, a man of rare probity, Antonius Marsilius. Thereafter come: a thirty-two page index, listing with page numbers the names, places, words, and topics discussed by Aulus Gellius; and an alter-index to provide the lector with page references for topics dealt with, such as natural philosophy, grammar, and rhetoric. At last we are ready for the text. It arrives, neatly divided into the books and chapters inherited, one guesses, through the example of previous editions, and constitutes the major portion of the book. In turn, that is suc-

57. Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1515), leaf AA2r.
ceed by small resumés of the contents of each chapter—to assure our being able to remember it all. The last major section is a glossary of the Greek phrases, words, paragraphs within the Latin Gellius text, arranged by quaternions, alphabetized first in lower case (with astonishing omissions and repetitions) and continuing on through a partial run-through of the alphabet in capitals. The penultimate page carries the imprint and specimen alphabet (minus the as yet uninvented ‘J’ and ‘W’) both in Roman capitals and lowercase italics. On the final page the dolphin and anchor repeat their wordless oxymoron. The whole book is imbued with a reverential cognizance of the value of learning. The words of the ancients were precious.

By way of comparison it is interesting to see how the modern 1984 Loeb Classical Library edition has handled the same basic matter for reader assimilation. Most noticeably, the accompanying English translation has forced the materials into three small volumes. Thereafter, similarities abound—but, with interesting differences to aid the modern reader. After the customary title page, table of contents, and prefatory dedication to the deceased previous editor, there follow:

1) An introduction by the final editor G. P. Goold (giving the background of Gellius, a summary of his life, writing style, and literary importance, along with a list of extant manuscripts which have been consulted for the publication).

2) A preface (not found in the Aldine edition) written by Gellius himself, describing how he came to write his Noctes Atticae.

3) A list of chapter recapitulations for the volume at hand (each volume opens with such a list). This quaint feature is most surprising—as well as unnecessary, since each is presented again, verbatim, at the beginning of every chapter; whereas they appear only once (which is quite enough) in the Aldine edition, viz., in a collection at the end.

4) The text, divided (as was the Aldine) into books, and then into chapters.

5) The index, giving brief explanations of some of the proper names in volume 1 (volumes 2 and 3 carry their own). No references are given to page numbers where the names occur. The modern reader is counted upon to survive without this particular redundancy.

6) At the end of volume 3 all these names are presented
again with page references to the text, but without the explanatory detail.

The Aldine edition, despite its age and its very small print, is cozily user-friendly. The breaking up of a single textual entity has been handled with an empathetic concern for the ingesting reader. The actual puncts are clear, varied, and, though not uniformly deployed, useful to a proper comprehension.

In view of his enormous influence on printed text, one should be aware that Aldus Manutius took the matter of pointing seriously enough to include terse statements about it in various of the prefaces to his studies on grammar, the most elaborate being *De distinctione scripturae, hoc est arte punctandi*, on folio x of the 1517 printing of his *Rudimenta grammatices Latinae linguæ*. His grandson, Aldus Manutius II, would in time take a full swing at the subject. Part Four of "The Punctator's World" will deal extensively with his *Interpunctandi ratio*.

In the Pierpont Morgan Library there is a manuscript text of Pliny the Younger, which offers a splendid view of the four-way junction of chirography with print, and theory with practice. The six-page remnant has been analyzed and extensively discussed by the eminent paleographers E. A. Lowe and E. K. Rand, who date it from the late fifth to the early sixth centuries and incline strongly to the belief that it was a portion of the complete manuscript originally used by Aldus Manutius in publishing his own edition of the Pliny letters. If this is true, as appears to be the case, then we are in the advantageous position of being able to compare the transformation of an ancient, unpointed, textual lump into a passage thoughtfully laid out and panoplied with rhetorical and syntactical markers—commas, colons, capitals, periods—to aid quick intake by a modern eye. One cannot be certain that Manutius devised the punctuation out of the blue, so to speak, as there are intervening texts that vary extensively in pointing techniques, which he might well have seen or by which he might in roundabout ways have been influenced.

60. There has in fact been argument about the Lowe and Rand attribution. Arthur E. Case, for example, in "More about the Aldine Pliny of 1508", *The Library*, 4th
Let us take for our sample the opening lines from the first letter of Book III, “C. Plinius to Calvisius”, presenting first the selected passage as it appears in the Loeb Classical Library edition of the Plinius Secundus letters, followed by the Loeb translation made by Betty Radice.

C. Plinius Calvisio Rufo Suo S.

NESCIO an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute, si modo senescere datum est, aemulari velim; nihil est enim illo vitae genere distinctius. Me autem ut certus siderum cursus ita vita hominum disposita delectat. Senum praesertim: nam iuvenes confusa adhuc quaedam et quasi turbata non indecent, senibus placida omnia et ordinata conveniunt, quibus industria sera turpis ambitio est. Hanc regulam Spurinna constantissime servat; quin etiam parva—haec si non cotidie fiant—ordine quodam et velut orbe circumagit. Mane lectulo continetur, hora secunda calceos poscit, ambulat milia passuum tria nec minus animum quam corpus exercet. Si adsunt amici, honestissimi sermones explicantur; si non, liber legitur, interdum etiam praesentibus amicis, si tamen illi non gravantur. Deinde considit, et liber rursus aut sermo libro potior; mox vehiculum . . .

To Calvisius Rufus

I can’t remember ever passing the time so pleasantly as I did on my recent visit to Spurinna; and, indeed, there is no one whom I would rather take for an example in my old age, if I am spared to live so long, for no way of living is better planned than his. A well-ordered life, especially where the old are concerned, gives me the same pleasure as the fixed course of the planets. A certain amount of irregularity and excitement is not unsuitable for the young, but their elders should lead a quiet and orderly existence; their time of public

ser., 16 (September 1936): 185–87, presents an argument in support of an unknown ninth-century Carolingian manuscript interceding in the succession between the Morgan uncial and the Aldine italic.
The same text rendered by Aldus Manutius in his 1508 edition of the letters of Plinius Secundus. Interestingly, this is the first book in which he used page numbers. Courtesy of the Syracuse University Library.
activity is over, and ambition only brings them into disrepute.

This is the rule strictly observed by Spurinna, and he even maintains a due order and succession in matters which would be trivial were they not part of a daily routine. Every morning he stays in bed for an hour after dawn, then calls for his shoes and takes a three-mile walk to exercise mind and body. If he has friends with him he carries on a serious conversation, if he is alone a book is read aloud, and this is sometimes done when there are friends present, so long as they do not object. Then he sits down, the book is continued, or preferably the conversation; after which he goes out in his carriage . . .

Following is a type facsimile of the same passage from the sixth-century Pierpont Morgan Library manuscript as it appears in A Sixth-Century Fragment by Professors Lowe and Rand. (See above, page 84 for the photograph of the manuscript itself.)

-C-PLINIUS-CALUISIO SUO SALUTEM

nescio an ullum iucundius tempus
exegerim quam quo nuper apud spu
rinnam fui adeo quidem ut neminem
magis in senectute si modo senesce
re datum est aemulari uelim nihil
est enim illo utiae generi distin
tius me autem ut certus siderum
cursus ita utia hominum disposita
delectat senum praesertim nam
iuuenes adhuc confusa quaedam
et quasi turbata non indecent se
nibus placida omnia et oridnata con
ueniunt quibus industria serTurpis
ambitio est hanc regulam spurin
na constantissime seruat-quin etiam
parua haec parua-si non cotidie liant
ordine quodam et uelut orbe circum
agit mane lectulo continetur hora
secunda calceos poscit ambulat mi
lia passuum tria nec minus animum
quam corpus exercet si adsunt amici
honestissimi sermones explicantur
si non liber legitur interdum etiam prae
sentibus amicus si tamem illi non grauan
tur deinde considit et liber rursus
aut sermo libro potior-mox uelicitum
As can be readily seen from the photograph (page 85), Aldus Manutius chose to relieve the monstrous monotony of his exemplar with bestowings of puncts, parentheses, and capital letters. The result is a sequence of comprehensible tidbits, not at all repugnant to modern sensibilities. In the push for standardization, Aldus Manutius set a strong example, for which he was much admired. On the 1511 and 1518 title pages of the Egid de Gourmont (Paris) edition of the Plinius Secundus letters, appears the following proud statement: “Omnia haec per fidelissimum aldinum exemplar . . .” By that, the sagacious punctator, of course, will understand “most faithful in intention to the Aldine exemplar”.

Interestingly, this same sample passage from Pliny can be traced through a handful of books during the first century of printing. Out of a number of volumes inspected, the following five will suffice to illustrate the punctuational indecision of the era. As will be seen, a side-by-side comparison renders surprising variety both in the evaluation of pausal-stop hierarchies and in the perception of word groups. To aid the reader in overviewing the five texts, the abbreviations (which tend to cram the line) have been opened up. Also the variations in spellings have been modified. The cited lines from the Loeb text appear first at the head of each block.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Printer</th>
<th>Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1483</td>
<td>Joannes Vercellius</td>
<td>Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Albertinus Vercellensis</td>
<td>Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1506</td>
<td>Alexandrus Minutianus</td>
<td>Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1521</td>
<td>Andreas Cratander</td>
<td>Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1527</td>
<td>Anthony Blanchard</td>
<td>Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nescio an ullum iucundius tempus exegerim, quam quo nuper apud Spurinnam fui, adeo quidem ut neminem magis in senectute,

si modo senescere datum est, aemulari velim; nihil est enim illo vitae genere distinctius. Me autem ut certus siderum cursus ita vita hominum disposita delectat. Senum praesertim:

1500  (si . . . est) . . . . velim. Nihil . . . . distinctius. Me . . . . cursus: . . . . delectat: . . . . praesertim.
nam iuvenes confusa adhuc quaedam et quasi turbata non indecent, senibus placida omnia et ordinata conveniunt, quibus industria sera turpis ambitio est.

Hanc regulam Spurinna constantissime servat; quin etiam parva haec—parva si non cotidie fiant—ordine quodam et velut orbe circumagit.

Mane lectulo continetur, hora secunda calceos poscit, ambulat milia passuum tria nec minus animum quam corpus exercet. Si adsunt amici, honestissimi sermones explicantur;

si non, liber legitur, interdum etiam praesentibus amicis, si tamen illi non gravantur. Deinde considit, et liber rursus aut sermo libro potior; mox vehiculum

As time passed, the virgule, comma, colon, and period became increasingly sensitive to syntactical considerations. Nevertheless, throughout the years under discussion, and indeed for a while beyond, euphuistic punctating, which was corresponsive to the rise and fall of the speaking voice, continued to cast its spell over written materials.
RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The records of the Art Libraries Society of North America, the Central New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, and the Syracuse Chapter of the American Association of University Women have recently been acquired by the George Arents Research Library.

The archives of associations often contain important information useful to a historical understanding of organizational policy and development, and of the activities of internal special interest groups. The Arents Library has a continuing interest in collecting archives of professional societies.

Amy S. Doherty
University Archivist

ROUAULT

The posthumous publication in 1966 of Georges Rouault’s illustrations for Baudelaire’s Les Fleurs du Mal is a landmark of considerable importance in his work as a printmaker, for it brought to an end the publication of his prints and stands as one of his greatest accomplishments in the graphic arts.

Between 1918 and 1928 Rouault (1871–1958) was engaged almost totally in printmaking, alternating between lithographs and etchings. His intense interest in these mediums was so complete that later in life he did not recall having begun a new canvas after 1916, though secondary evidence shows that he did. One of Rouault’s first ventures in printmaking had been a lithographic portrait of the poet Baudelaire, which served as the frontispiece to the second edition of Rouault’s
Souvenirs intimes (Paris: E. Frapier, 1927). Baudelaire's poetry was a powerful influence on the artist throughout his life; and this series of fourteen beautiful etchings published in 1966 by Isabelle Rouault, the artist's daughter, and Olivier Nouaille, his grandson, appropriately closed the circle that had begun with that 1927 portrait. Having conceived these etchings as early as 1918, Rouault actually executed them in the mid-1920s though his publisher Ambroise Vollard never issued them. Printed for a proposed edition of 500 copies in 1925 by the Paris master-printer Jacquemin, some of the sheets were lost or damaged during the war, so that the edition actually consisted of 450 copies when it was finally issued by La Société d'Édition L'Étoile Filante under the title Quatorze Planches Gravées pour Les Fleurs du Mal. The publication of the limited edition port-
folio coincided with the first exhibition of the prints at the Galerie Creuzevault in Paris.

In 1988, William C. Fleming, Professor Emeritus of Fine Arts and a trustee of the Library Associates, presented a fine copy of this work to the Syracuse University Library together with the authoritative catalogue raisonné of Rouault's graphic work compiled by François Chapon and published in 1978. This generous contribution brings to our already strong graphic arts collection one of the great monuments of twentieth-century book illustration.

KIPLING

The development of the Library's Rudyard Kipling Collection has continued during the past year as a result of further generous contributions by Chancellor Emeritus William Pearson Tolley.

Dr. Tolley recently presented to the Library the galley proofs of Kipling's short story "In the Interests of the Brethren" marked throughout by the author. This story of soldiers and freemasons was first published in the English magazine Story-Teller (December 1918) and later collected in Debits and Credits (London: Macmillan, 1926). The original typescript of another Kipling story, "Naval Manoeuvres," extending to thirty-one pages with substantial additions and excisions by the author, has also been added to our outstanding collection of original writings by Kipling.

Of particular interest is Dr. Tolley's gift of the typescript of The Five Nations (London: Methuen, 1903), purchased at Sotheby's for Syracuse University. Consisting of 146 folio pages, the typescript contains numerous manuscript corrections by the author as well as markings, instructions, and casting-off marks by others. Sotheby's descriptive entry (July 20, 1989, lot 200) offers the following identification of this typescript:

_The Five Nations_ is one of Kipling's most celebrated books of verse and includes a number of his best-known poems on Imperialistic and soldiering themes, including "The White Man's Burden", "The Old Men" and "Recessional". This is evidently the corrected typescript marked and used by the publisher, Methuen, for the first edition, which appeared in
We were clean at last after the horror of coaling; the First Lieutenant's face relaxed a little; the cable officer had the forecastle arranged to his mind, when someone called for the instruments of music. Out came two violins, a mandoline and bagpipes - we sat down - and the wardroom dispersed itself among tunes of nations. We were declared to look at the young clean faces under the electric globes - the very rumour of war might have been in another hemisphere but my few days aboard had prepared me for lightning. In the middle of a scientific experiment - how the ship's kitten was affected by bagpipes - the appointed hour struck and, even more swiftly than pussy fled under the sofa, the trim mess-jackets melted away, the music and the chaff ceased; the hull shivered a little to the power of the steam capstan, the slapping of the water on our sides grew clearer and we were gliding through the moored fleet to the mouth of Lough Shinny, with orders to follow the Powerful who had been despatched a moment to observe the enemy to the northward of us and return warning at once if its column of smoke turned back. It was then midnight of July 7th - the fleet could not move till noon of the 8th - and the North Atlantic was waiting for us as soon as we had put out our lights. Then I
October 1903. Besides supplying evidence of authorial revisions (entered here on his behalf by an amanuensis, or else transferred from some other copy), three separate lists of contents, one of them in the hand of the author (who originally wanted to lead with "The White Man's Burden"), indicate some of the steps by which the final ordering of the poems in this collection was reached.

Dr. Tolley's other recent gifts include a collection of twelve typed letters (June–October 1928) from Kipling to Sir Harry Perry Robinson, all relating to the War Graves Issue of the *Times* Supplement and offering suggestions for its content, layout, illustrations and contributors. Perry, the editor of the paper, was a friend and regular correspondent of Kipling, and solicited his opinions on the major questions surrounding this publication. Kipling was reticent about contributions since he did not wish to be seen to capitalize on the dead. "Although in the end he was persuaded to contribute anonymously, his role throughout the correspondence was purely advisory" (Sotheby's, June 21, 1989, lot 146). Finally, the corrected proofs for Kipling's volume of verse entitled *Songs from Books* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1912), again extensively revised by the author, were presented to the Library by Chancellor Tolley.

All of these significant additions to the Rudyard Kipling Collection further extend and strengthen one of this Library's pre-eminent literary collections.

Mark F. Weimer
Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts
PROGRAM FOR 1989–90

The Syracuse University Library Associates program for the academic year 1989–90 will be as follows:

September 21, 1989
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

Alan Fern
Director, National Portrait Gallery
MANY FACES: ASPECTS OF PORTRAITURE

October 24, 1989
Tuesday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

J. Michael Smethurst
Director General, Humanities and Social Sciences, The British Library
A MOVING MATTER: THE BRITISH LIBRARY'S PLANS FOR THE NEW ST. PANCRAS BUILDING

November 2-3, 1989
(times to be announced)

Book Sale
co-sponsored by the Library Associates and the Syracuse University Library

November 16, 1989
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

Lola Szladits
Curator, Berg Collection, New York Public Library
B(U)Y CHANCE: COLLECTING FOR THE BERG COLLECTION

December 1989

Chancellor's Reception
(by invitation to members only)

February 20, 1990
Tuesday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

Mary H. Marshall
Professor Emeritus of English
Syracuse University
MARGUERITE YOURCENAR: FICTION AND ESSAYS

March 15, 1990
Thursday, 4 p.m.
1916 Room, Bird Library

Deirdre Stam
Executive Director, Museum Computer Network
MELVIL DEWEY AND NEW YORK STATE; OR LIBRARIANSHIP AS UTOPIA

April 20, 1990
Spring Luncheon and Annual Meeting
Friday, 12 noon
Drumlin
800 Nottingham Road

Speaker: Vartan Gregorian
President, Brown University
THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY ASSOCIATES, founded in 1953, is a society whose efforts are devoted to the enrichment of the Syracuse University Library and especially the rare book and manuscript collections. The Associates' interests lie in strengthening these collections through the acquisition of unusual books, manuscripts, and other research materials which are rare and often of such value that the Library would not otherwise be able to acquire them.

The Associates welcome anyone to join whose interests incline in the direction of book collecting or the graphic arts. The perquisites of membership include borrowing privileges and general use of the Syracuse University Library's facilities and resources, as well as invitations to exhibitions, Associates-sponsored lectures, and special events of the University Library. In addition, members will receive our incidental publications, typographic keepsakes, and the Syracuse University Library Associates Courier, a semiannual publication that contains articles related to unusual and interesting aspects of the Library's holdings and, in particular, to the holdings of the George Arents Research Library for Special Collections.

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS are as follows: Benefactor, $500; Sustaining member, $200; Individual member, $50; Faculty and staff of Syracuse University, $30; Senior citizen and student, $20. Checks, made payable to Syracuse University Library Associates, should be sent to the Secretary, 100 E. S. Bird Library, Syracuse University, Syracuse NY 13244-2010. For further information about the programs and activities of the Library Associates, telephone (315) 443-2697.

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