

census as a contribution to book history. The KC was born a collector's book, and it has remained so for over a century. This is what makes it such an interesting series of case studies in book history. And it is what makes this census so valuable. Peterson is not interested here in the making of the KC, but rather in its afterlife: its myriad pathways through the book trade. Since the vast majority of vellum and paper copies of the KC have been institutionalized, those fascinating stories have largely ended, but there are many available for the harvesting, chiefly from the pre-WW II period. It will probably come as no surprise that most of the extant copies of the KC repose in U.S. libraries (more than 175), but what is interesting is to see just how quickly the U.S. market responded to the lure of the book. American collectors were there from the start, astutely primed by their principal supplier, Bernard Quaritch. Indeed, it is probably the case that most of the U.S. cache of KCs were initially acquired by collectors before the Depression. The book was, from the beginning, a staple of the trade. And in reading through some of Sydney Cockrell's correspondence with American collectors, one gets a fairly vivid picture of how quickly and deeply the Arts & Crafts movement rooted across the pond.

Thus, it is not uncommon for institutions to have more than one copy of the KC. Yale is the leader here, with six copies, one of which is on vellum. The state of Texas contains within its borders at least twelve copies, with five each at SMU in Dallas and the HRC in Austin, both of which have a vellum copy. Berkeley, Princeton, and Cambridge each hold four copies. And there are (at least for this reviewer) some initial surprises. Carnegie Mellon holds as many copies as the Morgan Library (three), though one of the Morgan's copies is on vellum. The Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, and the Multnomah County Library in Portland, Oregon, each have a copy. And Lord Andrew Lloyd Webber has his very own vellum copy. In the 1980s, copies of the KC began moving to Japan in

such quantities that Japan now ranks third on the sweeps list after the United States and the United Kingdom.

Space limitations do not allow me to do anything but hint at the stories and anecdotes tucked away in this book. So, let me give you a few from the author's own summary of the various fortunes of copies of the KC:

W. B. Yeats ... kept his "Chaucer" on a painted lectern between two candlesticks ... Howard Storrs, a Florida newspaper editor/publisher, left his copy on the floor next to a Linotype machine for an entire year until he had fully paid for it ... One famous collector of the "Chaucer" was married to an exotic dancer ... A copy in Australia was allegedly bartered for several weeks' lodging ... And a copy at Yale was said to have been used as a doorstep....

This remarkable volume should be a key source book for anyone interested in "reception history" in the 20th century. It repays many visits.—*Michael Ryan, Columbia University.*

P.J.M. Marks. *Beautiful Bookbindings: A Thousand Years of the Bookbinder's Art.* New Castle, Del.: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2011. 192p. alk. paper, \$49.95 (ISBN 9781584562931). LC 2011-016079.

P.J.M. Marks is Curator of Western Bookbindings at the British Library. This is her third book, and it has been published by the British Library in collaboration with Oak Knoll Press. *Beautiful Bookbindings* is precisely what it claims to be: a lavishly illustrated survey of the most beautiful examples of bookbindings created over the last 1,000 years.

Marks states that bookbinding has been overlooked as an art form, and she believes that instead it is often regarded purely for its practical function. This book is her attempt to rectify that situation. The bindings she includes are all drawn from the British Library's collections, selected by members of the staff according to their personal aesthetic preferences but nonetheless

creating a comprehensive and representative sample of bookbinding history. The selections emphasize the Western bookbinding tradition but also include some notable examples from the East. Some of the bindings once belonged to some of the world's most well-known bibliophiles, like Jean Grolier and Thomas Mahieu. They represent the work of centuries of master bookbinders, some of whom we know by name and others who remain unidentified.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of bookbinding as art, Marks offers a brief history of bookbinding and its role in cultural history. She argues that by protecting textual content, bindings have contributed to the present-day survival of historic notions of religion, philosophy, science, and literature. She discusses the history of various formats and materials, and she includes diagrams and illustrations of binding structures and processes. Her thorough explanations make the text a valuable resource for those who are new to binding history and may be less familiar with the terminology. Marks briefly touches on cultural influences affecting the design and style of bindings, including technological advances, an increase in literacy, changing aesthetic tastes, and evolving shelving practices.

Marks organizes the book chronologically, with one chapter addressing "Early Books," followed by one chapter for each of the 16th through 20th centuries. Each of the approximately 100 books selected for this volume represents the highest form of bookbinding as art. All are depicted in full-color photographs, including some magnified views where appropriate. After the explanatory material in the introduction, the remainder of the text is composed primarily of lengthy captions associated with each image. In addition to providing basic information to identify what each item is, Marks' descriptions do an excellent job of clarifying why that particular binding is significant. She discusses the materials used to create the bindings and the decorative techniques employed, as well as the cultural context for the work.

Throughout this historical survey of bindings, Marks also offers some brief explanatory material related to the aesthetics of specific decorative elements. She describes special features such as medallions and clasps, as well as characteristic styles like those produced by Cobden-Sanderson and the Mame firm. She concludes her survey with selected examples of notable 21st-century bindings, although she does not dedicate a separate chapter to this period.

The glossary is brief, less than a single page, but it provides definitions for some of the decorative terms, structures, and styles that may be confusing for those individuals who are not familiar with binding terminology. The book lacks an index, which could be an impediment for someone not familiar with binding history. A binding scholar searching for examples of bindings by Samuel Mearne would most likely know to turn to the chapter on the 17th century. But otherwise, the structure of the book presumes a certain level of knowledge on the part of the reader to locate specific information. Marks does, however, include a section of notes and additional reading for several of the bindings in the book. This section provides the reader with some guidance in pursuing additional information about the included works.

As the title claims, *Beautiful Bookbindings* provides a visual survey of some of the loveliest examples of historic bookbindings. The book is effective as an introduction to the field for the novice binding scholar, hitting the notable highlights in chronological order. It can also serve as an excellent reference resource for those who teach courses in bibliography, because it offers clear descriptions and illustrations of exemplars in significant binding styles, materials, and techniques over the history of the art form, which can be useful in guiding students. Finally, its extraordinary aesthetic appeal makes it a convincing "marketing" tool for anyone trying to draw new enthusiasts to the field. —Jennifer K. Sheehan, University of North Texas.