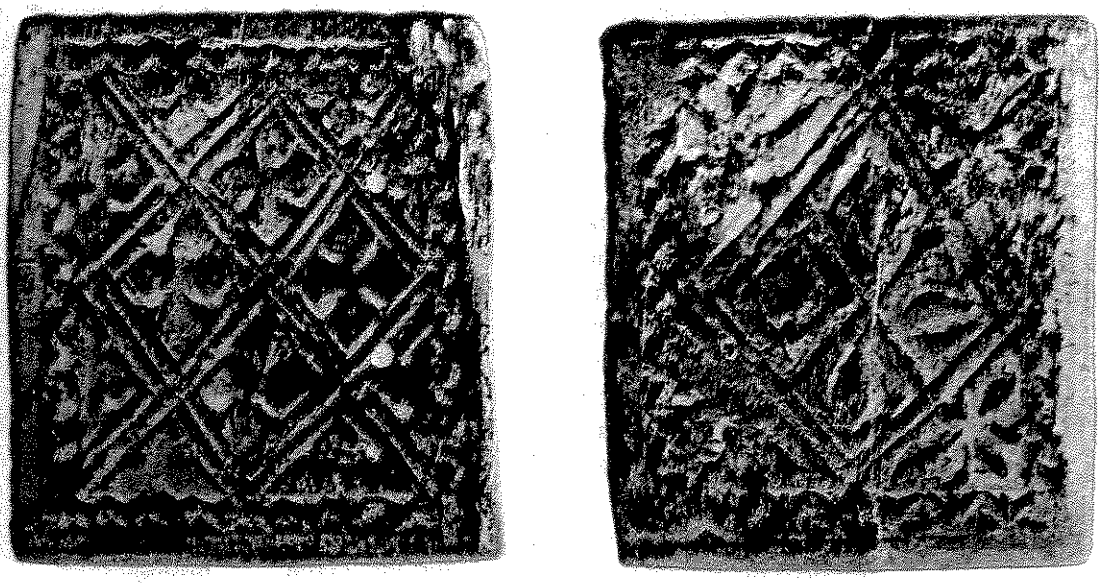
THE BEGINNING OF BOOKS

In its broadest sense, the story of bookmaking goes back to the beginning of graphic communication. The development of writing from the first picture-symbols scratched on bone or stone to the sophisticated alphabets of today is a fascinating study, but for our purposes, the story begins with the earliest codex, i.e., the first book in the form of bound leaves, as distinguished from the scrolls that preceded it.

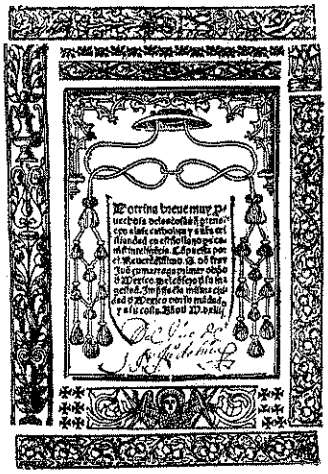
No one knows when the first codices were made, but they came into general use in Europe during the 9th century. By that time, paper and printing were known in Asia, and some codices were used, but scrolls were still in favor there. A form of codex was developed by the Aztecs during this period, but only a few later ones survived the systematic destruction of the Spanish conquest.



2nd century Egyptian codex covers

Until the fall of Rome, papyrus had been the common material of books, and then it was vellum, the treated skin of animals. The Arabic art of papermaking came to the West in the 8th century and was ready to serve that voracious consumer, the printing press, which appeared in Central Europe in the mid-15th century. As far as we know, printing in Europe was invented without reference to the Asian craft that had been in use for hundreds of years—perhaps a thousand years—before Gutenberg.

a book printed in Mexico in 1544

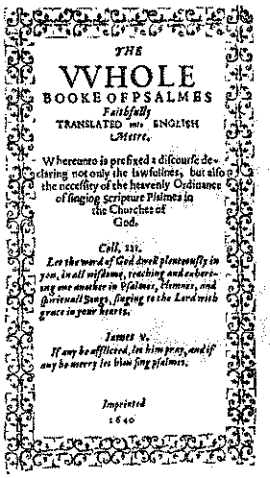


Many of the conventions of bookmaking originated in the handwritten manuscript phase, and the general aspects of page form and binding were quite well established by the time printing began. Indeed, the first printed books were made to look as much like manuscripts as possible, largely in the hope that the difference wouldn't be noticed!

Whereas a complex alphabet and unfavorable social conditions discouraged a wide use of printing in China, its spread was relatively explosive in Europe. Within fifty years presses were established in every major country—and by 1535 printing issued from the first press in the New World in Mexico City. However, another century passed before printing came to the North American settlements.

The Book in America

From 1639, when the first printing was done in the American colonies, until the 19th century, the printer was publisher and bookseller as well. Working with presses little different from Gutenberg's, printers became increasingly involved in the complexities of publishing until it was impractical to operate these functions *and* the craft of printing from one office. Separation began with the advent of the steam-powered press (about 1815), when printing became a major business in itself.


THE
WHOLE
BOOKE OFPSALMES
Faithfully
TRANSLATED into ENGLISH
Metre.

Whereunto is prefixed a discourse declaring not only the lawfulnes, but also the necessity of the heavenly Ordinance of singing Scripture Psalmes in the Churches of God.

Coll. iii.
Let the word of God dwel plenteously in you, in all wisdome, teaching and exhorting one another in Psalmes, Himnes, and Spirituall Songs, singing to the Lord with grace in your hearts.

Iames v.
If any be afflicted, let him pray, and if any be merry let him sing psalmes.

Imprinted
1640

The Bay Psalm Book, the first book printed in the colonies

The power presses were capable of devouring all the handmade paper produced and more, but, fortunately, papermaking machines came along to meet the demand. Then, with the introduction of mechanical typecasting equipment around 1838, mass production of books became possible.

Rapid expansion had an unfortunate effect on typographic development. Where the hand printer was confined to a few basic typefaces (and therefore simple typography), the machine-age printer had types of every description—and many that defied description. The result, beginning at mid-century, was typographic chaos. About 1890, a reaction set in against the machine-made monstrosities. In England, William Morris revived the handcrafts of medieval bookmaking. In America, a few scholar-printers, notably Theodore DeVinne, Daniel Updike, and Bruce Rogers, restored the typography of the 17th and 18th centuries. Although no more inventive than was Morris's, this movement introduced the

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William Morris page

Bruce Rogers page

THE CENTAUR. WRITTEN BY MAURICE DE GUÉRIN AND NOW TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY GEORGE B. IVES.

I Was born in a cavern of these mountains. Like the river in yonder valley, whose first drops flow from some cliff that weeps in a deep grotto, the first moments of my life sped amidst the shadows of a secluded retreat, nor vexed its silence. As our mothers draw near their term, they retire to the caverns, and in the innermost recesses of the wildest of them all, where the darkness is most dense, they bring forth, uncomplaining, offspring as silent as themselves. Their strength-giving milk enables us to endure without weakness or dubious struggles the first difficulties of life; yet we leave our caverns later than you your cradles. The reason is that there is a tradition amongst us that the early days of life must be secluded and guarded, as days engrossed by the gods.

My growth ran almost its entire course in the darkness where I was born. The innermost depths of my home were so far within the bowels of the mountain, that I should not have known in which direction the opening lay, had it not been that the winds at times blew in and caused a sudden coolness and confusion. Sometimes, too, my mother returned, bringing with her the perfume of the valleys, or dripping wet from the streams to which she resorted. Now, these her home-comings, although they told me naught of the valleys or the streams, yet, being attended by emanations therefrom, disturbed my thoughts, and I wandered about, all agitated, amidst my darkness. 'What,' I would say to myself, 'are these places to which my mother goes and what power reigns there which summons her so frequently? To what influences is one there exposed,

ANNALS

OF THE

CITY OF KANSAS:

EMBRACING FULL DETAILS OF THE

TRADE AND COMMERCE

OF THE

Great Western Plains,

TOGETHER WITH

STATISTICS OF THE

AGRICULTURAL, MINERAL AND COMMERCIAL RESOURCES

OF THE COUNTRY

WEST, SOUTH AND SOUTH-WEST.

EMBRACING

WESTERN MISSOURI, KANSAS, THE INDIAN COUNTRY, AND NEW MEXICO.

BY C. C. SPALDING.

KANSAS CITY.

VAN HORN & ABEEL'S PRINTING HOUSE.

1858.

Victorian title page

mature traditions of printing to machine technology—and had a far greater effect.

The last basic bottleneck in printing was eliminated by the perfection of typesetting machinery in 1886. By this time, machinery had been introduced into the bindery, although some operations have only recently been mechanized.

The separation of printer and publisher that had begun at the start of the 19th century was far advanced at its end. Where an association remained, it was generally a publisher who owned a printing plant; rarely a printer who published books.

New distribution methods created the need for protective wrappers, which developed rapidly from plain paper to the modern full-color jacket. While books changed little in four hundred years, jackets evolved entirely during the first quarter of the 20th century.

At the beginning of the second quarter, a distinction between printer and typographer/designer took form. By then, technical developments permitted a wide enough range of expression in book design to attract some full-time designers. The names of T. M. Cleland, W. A. Dwiggins, Merle Armitage, Ernst Reichl, P. J. Conkwright, and others became known in the next decades. This was the period that saw book design emerge as a recognized department of publishing. Book design courses, the Fifty Books shows, clinics, and other activities of the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) grew in influence, and the publishing trade journal, *Publishers Weekly*, began a monthly department devoted to design and production.

World War II interrupted the progress of bookmaking, but one important development did come out of military needs: the technique of high-speed production of paperbacks, which paved the way for the postwar expansion of paperback publishing. The technology was ready when paperbacks began to be distributed through magazine outlets. This made possible very large printings, thus enabling greatly reduced costs and low retail prices. At first, these books were handled like magazines and, like the pulp magazines they soon drove off the stands, they tended toward Westerns and mysteries—with maximum pictorial appeal on the outside and relatively little attention to design inside. Gradually, the publishers and magazine distributors began to treat titles of more enduring interest as if they were books, and the better lines began to find their way into bookstores. An important breakthrough occurred when the Anchor books, a line of higher-priced paperback reprints of serious titles, demonstrated that the college market could absorb enough books of this kind to justify their publication. Similar lines followed, thereby creating a whole new segment of publishing. The design of these "quality", or "*trade*", *paperbacks* got off to a good start and has been in the main excellent.

By the 1950s, many publishers recognized the challenge posed

Design: Brenda McManus

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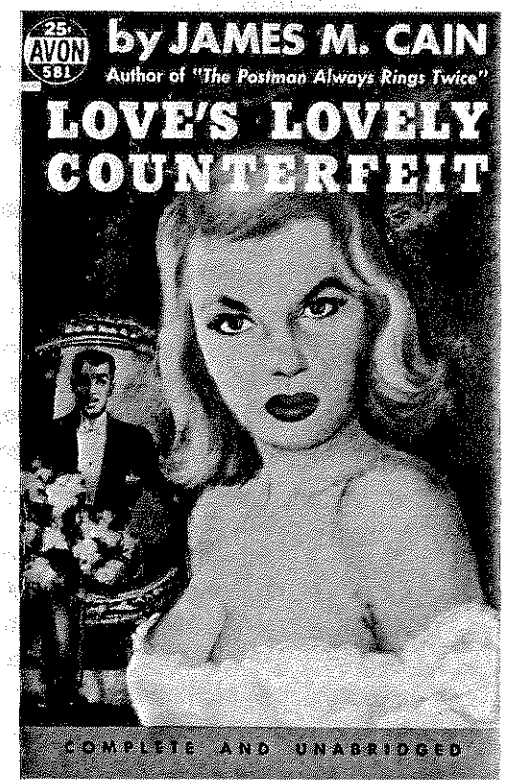
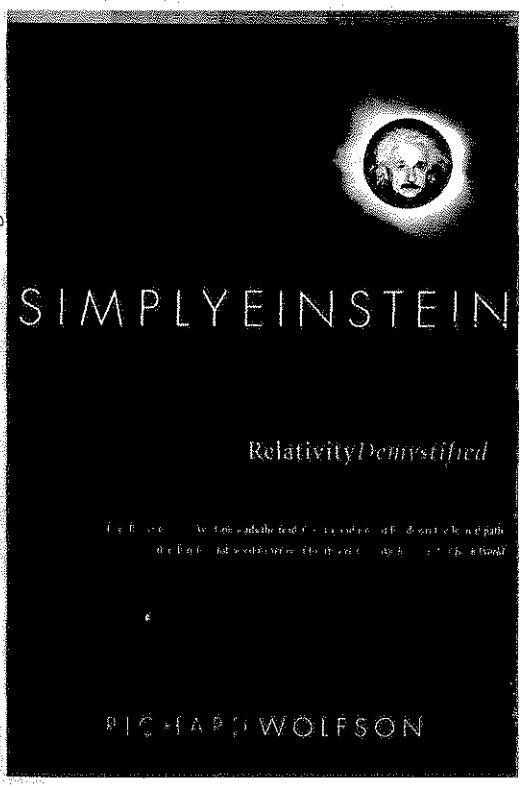
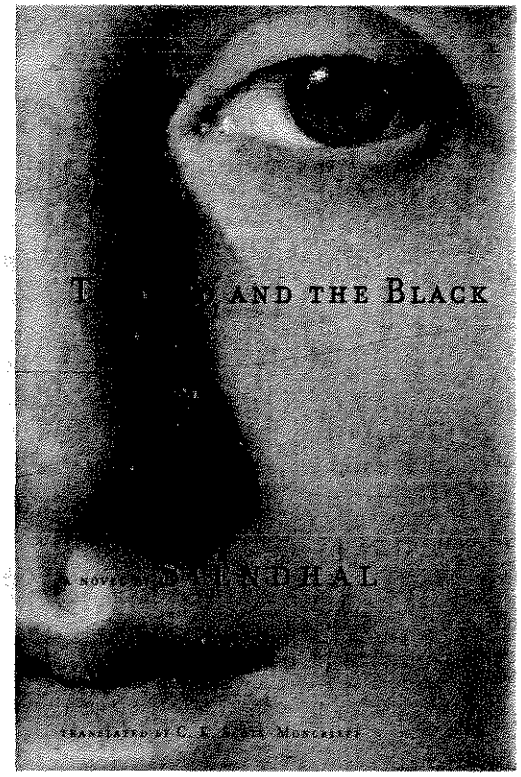


mass-market paperback covers of the 1940s



Design: Brenda McManus



Design: Abby Weintraub

trade paperbacks of 2003

by a generation accustomed to the dynamic graphics of advertising, magazines, and television—and books showed definite signs of responding to the visual esthetics of the 20th century. The design of jackets and paperback covers led the way, chiefly because they're closer to advertising and are often the work of designers whose training and experience were in that field. By the 1990s, the quality of jacket and paperback cover design had improved enormously. (A critical survey of individual designers and their work is outside the scope of this book—see "Sources of information" in the Appendix for further reading.)

The most marked development was in textbooks and children's books, where rapidly expanding markets and keen competition drove publishers to heavy use of color and illustration. At first, the competition was mainly in the amount of graphic effects used, but gradually the quality of design became the selling point.

Meanwhile, technical advances in color printing encouraged an already growing interest in art and illustrated books, with many publishers using foreign as well as American color-printing facilities. At the beginning of the fourth quarter of the 20th century these trends had created a responsive audience for many books of graphic interest. A major new category of trade paperbacks—large format and extensively illustrated—were published and sold in large numbers in regular bookstores.

There is still considerable adherence to convention in American book design, but it's becoming weaker. The change is good where meaningless and impractical conventions are dropped, but the blessing isn't unmixed. Too many young designers have cast themselves loose from conventional forms without having developed better alternatives, and there have been examples of typographic fads in which bad design, such as the use of hard-to-read tiny type, is imposed on readers by self-indulgent designers concerned more with patterns and faux-elegance than reading. Some publishers, too, have cast off concern with reading in order to achieve lively effects, directing designers to use distracting graphic elements and color backgrounds that attract attention but discourage reading (particularly when combined with too small type). On the whole, however, it seems preferable to open the possibility of creative design than to remain locked within rigid and outworn rules.

THE BEGINNING OF EDITING

In the sense that editing means selection and discrimination it can be said to have existed almost from the beginning of man's civi-

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lized life. Even before there was writing, editorial judgment shaped the oral literature. Each successive teller of a story related it a little differently, perhaps omitting the duller parts and rephrasing others to make the whole more effective. No doubt there were some embellishments and probably some substantial additions from time to time. Once writing began, it can be safely assumed that some persons other than the writers decided what writings would be cut into clay or stone and accepted into the official record. Further, it's reasonable to suppose that someone with authority asked for or made changes in the work submitted. The point is that in all such cases the "published" work was the product of not only its originator but also another person whose judgment affected either the work itself or its publication or both. Although such persons wouldn't have been called "editors", they performed editorial functions.

It's probable that some professional editing was done on the ancient Greek plays by their producers, and it's known that people were hired to assist in producing the vast amounts of Roman literature. These antecedents of the modern editor were followed by the scribes who made the medieval manuscripts. They applied not only selection and discrimination but a certain amount of the corrective work that we call "copyediting". Certainly there was "proofreading" in the sense that the work was not considered finished until it had been read and the errors corrected. If this editorial work was not up to the standards we set for ourselves today, neither was there the authority of an established dictionary to consult. Without accepted rules of grammar and spelling, the "editors" were left to make their own choices—but choose they did and languages developed through this process. Presumably, the works that showed better clarity, consistency, and logic were admired and imitated—leading to the eventual adoption of their style by the lexicographers to come.

Once printing began, the editing of books became institutionalized in the sense that it was then done as a professional routine. In the first decades after Gutenberg, printer-publishers generally did their own editing, although proofreading was given to an employee or family member. As printing-publishing houses grew larger, scholars were engaged to evaluate and sometimes correct or modify projected works in their discipline. Many printers were themselves considerable scholars, and several, like Aldus Manutius and Christophe Plantin, were honored as much for the editorial distinction of their books as for the quality of their typography.

By the 18th century, the full-time editorial employee was an established feature of publishing houses—which by that time were often separate from the printing offices where they began. Even then, the main editorial judgments were probably made by the head of the house and the editorial employees were primarily

proofreaders. It was not until well into the 19th century that the size of publishing houses exceeded the capacity of the owners to handle all the editorial decision-making. They still made the primary decisions to publish or not, but even these were delegated in part to editors when the companies grew very large and began to departmentalize.

The professional editor as a qualified specialist has existed for not much more than one century. Since World War II, the profession has been dividing into specialties that form a chain linking management to the various departments of publishing. Where our image of an editor before 1950 was the Maxwell Perkins type who worked with authors and manuscripts (mss.) from concept to printed book, we now sometimes have as many as four editors involved with a single book, each concerned with a different part of the process. As book publishing companies become larger and their domination by professional managers increases, this tendency toward fragmentation and specialization of the editorial function will probably continue. Unfortunately, the trend also has seemed to diminish the concern for careful ms. editing.

THE BEGINNING OF PRODUCTION

While virtually all processes in bookmaking are now done by computer or with computer-generated materials, all bookmakers should have at least a rudimentary knowledge of how the basic processes were accomplished B.C.—Before Computers—in some cases for more than four centuries. Not only is this the history of your profession, it's the source from which came most of the present practices. So, be sure to read carefully the Typography and Composition chapters (CHs.5, 6) in particular, because these are the areas that have been changed most by the computer, and where it's most important to be well grounded. All other parts of bookmaking have been changed also in varying degrees, but in discussing each of them some attention has been given to what *was*, along with an explanation of what *is*.