Emery Walker, Typographer

Simon Loxley

'Sir Emery Walker […] typographer', says the blue plaque at no. 7 Hammersmith Terrace, Emery Walker's House. The description, applied to Emery Walker, does not seem quite right. If one is not going to use the term 'graphic designer', then 'typographer' seems most fittingly applied to someone who works out and implements the way that words are going to look in their particular application: the choice of typefaces, their sizes, the line spacing, line lengths, where the words are going be positioned in the design, etc. This does not seem to overlap very much with any hands-on work of Walker's. But the extent to which he was 'hands-on' in any of his areas of activity is an open question, since he was more of a consultant, advisor and delegator. And after all, there is only so much space available on a blue plaque, so the term works well as a single-word allusion to one area of his expertise.

This article will look at some of Walker's work in the field of typography and type design, in particular his contributions toward the development of typefaces for what came to be regarded as the great triumvirate of English private presses: the Kelmscott Press, the Doves Press and the Ashendene Press. It will examine not just what those typefaces were, but where the idea of them – their DNA, if you like – came from, as well as what they meant in graphic terms, why they were considered appropriate, the role they played as part of the visual landscape within the books in which they were used, and what they meant to people in the wider world outside the workshops of those presses.

Emery Walker was born and grew up in London. He did not have an easy start, as his father, a coachmaker, went blind when Walker was about twelve or thirteen, which meant an end to any further formal education for the boy. Walker had to go out to work in manual jobs to support the family, but he seems to have been a great self-educator, and to have kept the flame of learning constantly burning in his mind.

Walker's friend and sometime business partner Sydney Cockerell wrote of this period that 'he had already imbibed an interest in some of the studies which made him later a prominent member of the Society of Antiquaries'. J.H. Mason, chief compositor at the Doves Press, felt that in him Walker recognised and empathised with a fellow auto-didact 'without early advantages in education'.[1]

Walker, the man of many future connections, got lucky with an early one. He had already encountered the painter Henry Dawson through attending Sunday school. Dawson clearly sensed the boy's potential and intelligence, and encouraged him in his studies. In 1872 Dawson's son Alfred founded the Typographic Etching Company. Its offices were in Farringdon Street in central London, but with the works in Chiswick, near Hammersmith. Walker joined the following year. The timing was fortunate. Printing technology had remained largely stagnant since its European inception in the mid-1400s, but the nineteenth century saw developments not just in the printing presses themselves, but also in typesetting and the reproduction of images.

The population of Britain nearly quadrupled across the period of the nineteenth century, with rising literacy levels, helped by the 1870 Education Act. This meant there was a rapidly expanding popular market for the printed word, which could increasingly be both read and afforded by sections of society from whom it would previously have been excluded. Repeals of taxes on advertising and paper meant that financing and printing newspapers and magazines became more cost-effective, with a growing potential readership to attract.

For these popular markets, the reproduction of pictures became increasingly important. The 1870s saw the development of the photographic line block, the means of reproducing an illustration from a photographic negative. Another innovation, photogravure, used film positives and the etching process to reproduce the tonal gradations of a photograph. By the 1880s halftone plates were being commercially produced, whereby a photograph is rendered into a pattern of dots of varying sizes. Walker would learn about these, and printing and hand typesetting while at Dawson's. It was this experience, and his close eye for detail and quality, that would make him such a valuable figure in the decades to come. He became an expert on graphic reproduction, a facilitator. He knew how to achieve the best results, and who, if not himself, was the best person to help realise that objective.

Sydney Cockerell, writing in June 1909 to Walker's former partner in the Doves Press, Thomas Cobden-Sanderson, summed up his friend's influence:

> I cannot help feeling that you undervalue Walker's position in relation to the revival of artistic printing. So far as England is concerned, and England has done much already to influence the world, he is simply the father of the whole

> movement and as such will unquestionably live in history. His lecture at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition of 1888 was the first public exposition of the principles underlying that movement, though Walker had before that proclaimed them in private and had begun his crusade in favour of Caslon's old faced and Miller and Richards' old style types, which, thanks chiefly to him, have made the reputation of the Chiswick Press and have spread thence to the other important Presses of the country. It is not too much to say that but for Walker there would have been no Kelmscott Press. He was behind it from the first and could have been a partner in it if he had chosen. Had there been no Kelmscott Press […] there would have been no Doves Press.[2]

We can pass over Cobden-Sanderson's egocentric riposte that in fact he himself could claim all of this credit, as he had suggested that Walker give his lecture on 'Letterpress Printing' in the first place. Walker indeed seemingly managed to kickstart a whole movement by his lecture. His delivery was unimpressive, and William Morris, sitting in the audience, thought that he should have armed himself with some notes.

But in reality, the significance lay far less in what Walker said than in what he showed, which were 'magic lantern' slides of examples of book typography and calligraphy dating from the fifteenth century through to the present. Although some or many of these examples might have been familiar to the audience – and Morris was looking at examples from his own library – it was the effect of viewing them through an entirely different medium, illuminated and enlarged many times beyond their true size, that had an electrifying effect. This effect was enough to inspire a burst of applause on seeing a slide featuring the work of the Renaissance scribe, printer and type designer Ludovico degli Arrighi, if Oscar Wilde's review for *The Pall Mall Gazette* is to be believed.[3]

I. The Types of the Kelmscott Press

According to Kelmscott legend Morris was so inspired by what he had seen that by the time he was making his way home the resolution had crystallised in his mind to put into action an idea he had toyed with for a while, to found his own press. As Walker later described it:

> The first business was to get a type cut to his own design. He supplemented his collection of early printed books by buying examples of every fine type – gothic or roman – obtainable. These we, i.e., my firm, photographed upon a large scale to enable him better to distinguish the actual shape of the letters apart from the excess of ink by which in early printed books the shape is often obscured.[4]

Walker and Morris, in their creation of the Kelmscott types, were following two impulses that were polar opposites in terms of typographic intent. They would not have seen it that way, and would have judged their work to be a consistent response to a desire for the restoration of beauty on the printed page. But one imperative was the search for clarity. They both considered mainstream mid- to late-nineteenth-century commercial typography in Britain to have hit an aesthetic rock bottom. Walker later summarised:

> [A]t the end of the eighteenth century a revolution was made, and [type] founders entirely abandoned the traditional forms of their predecessors, and evolved the tasteless letters with which nearly all the books published during the first sixty years of the present century are printed, and which are still almost universally used for newspapers and for Government publications. Particularly objectionable forms are in everyday use in all continental countries requiring Roman letter.[5]

Commenting later on the type styles that immediately preceded his work with Morris, he considered William Caslon, who began typefounding in the 1720s, 'our greatest English typefounder'. The type of John Baskerville, who began printing in Birmingham in the 1750s, he judged 'inferior in design to that of Caslon', with its 'thick downstrokes and very thin upstrokes', redeemed, he conceded, by Baskerville's exemplary production values.

However, the Italian Giambattista Bodoni, an admirer of Baskerville's work, 'carried the exaggeration of the thin and thick strokes of the letters still further'. Bodoni's influence on type design was great, Walker acknowledged, 'but, from the point of view of beauty, entirely bad. At the end of the century it had driven the reasonable types of Caslon out of the market, and for the next fifty years a style derived from his letters was dominant, ending in what Morris called "sweltering ugliness".'[6] These are harsh words, but Bodoni's style needed the painstaking presswork and high production values that their creator exercised as a printer. As literacy rose in the nineteenth century, increased demand for the printed word meant that care frequently disappeared in the search for quick turnaround and profit. Without it, the printed impressions of Bodoni-style letters, known as Modern, were liable to break up on the page.

Morris believed that if one were going to revive a style, one might as well pick the best, and for his first type face, Golden, he and Walker turned to the work of Nicolas Jenson, a Frenchman working in Venice in the 1470s (Figure 1). He is regarded as the first to print with a high quality version of the roman type style. Johann

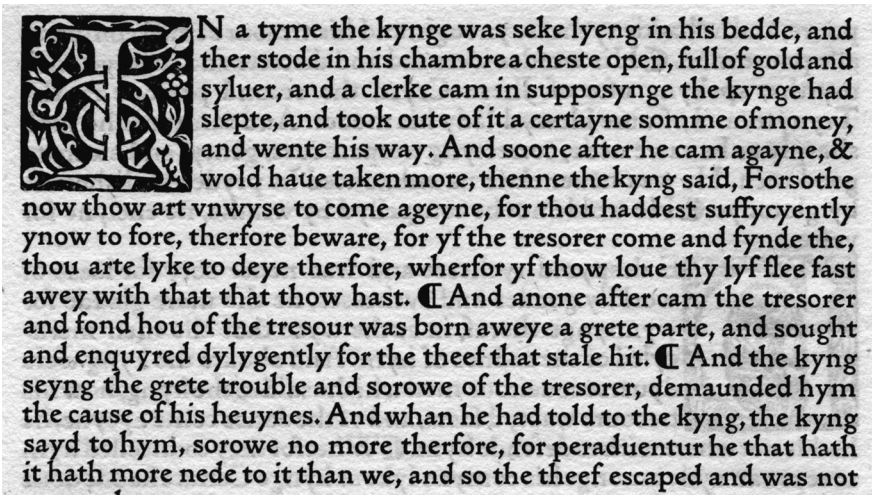

IN a tyme the kynge was seke lyeng in his bedde, and ther stode in his chambre a cheste open, full of gold and syluer, and a clerke cam in supposynge the kynge had slepte, and took oute of it a certayne somme of money, and wente his way. And soone after he cam agayne, & wold haue taken more, thenne the kyng said, Forsothe now thow art vnwyse to come ageyne, for thou haddest suffycyently ynow to fore, therfore beware, for yf the tresorer come and fynde the, thou arte lyke to deye therfore, wherfor yf thow loue thy lyf flee fast awey with that that thow hast. ¶ And anone after cam the tresorer and fond hou of the tresour was born aweye a grete parte, and sought and enquyred dylygently for the theef that stale hit. ¶ And the kyng seyng the grete trouble and sorowe of the tresorer, demaunded hym the cause of his heuynes. And whan he had told to the kyng, the kyng sayd to hym, sorowe no more therfore, for peraduentur he that hath it hath more nede to it than we, and so the theef escaped and was not

Figure 1: The Golden type, shown here in *The Golden Legend*, published by the Kelmscott Press in 1892.

Gutenberg, printing his Bible in the 1450s, had used blackletter, and there were some halfway houses, most notably the work of Sweynheym and Pannartz, two itinerant German printers who headed south in the 1460s, eventually setting up shop in the abbey at Subiaco, fifty miles east of Rome. As William Peterson tells us in *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure*, Walker and Morris were not the first in the late nineteenth century to praise the virtues of Jenson's type, but they were arguably its strongest and most demonstrative latter-day proponents.[7] Two books using Jenson's types were used as sources, Leonardi Bruni's *Historiae Florentini Populi*, printed by Jacobus Rubeus, and Jenson's own printing of an Italian-language edition of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*. Both were printed in 1476, and are now increasingly thought to have used the same type rather than two distinct versions of Jenson's letterforms.

Thus, in the minds of Walker and Morris, would typographic clarity and legibility be restored, and, of course, beauty. Walker, writing in 1924, held unmodified views:

> In the opinion of many judges Jenson carried the development of the Roman letter as far as it can go. It is admirably clear and beautiful. Most of the letters are of generous proportions, that is to say, there is no lateral compression. Nearly all modern letters – those designed from about the beginning of the last century and still in general use in newspapers and blue books – are too narrow.[8]

However, for the second Kelmscott Press type, Troy, and its smaller variant, Chaucer, Morris turned to a typographic form where those factors of clarity and legibility were under constant challenge – blackletter, or as Morris refers to it, gothic. With Morris's personal love of the medieval, it was probably inevitable that he would be drawn towards blackletter. These heavy – sometimes extremely heavy – letterforms, which display clear roots in medieval penmanship, have been linked strongly with that period in people's minds both in the nineteenth century and now, notwithstanding any other associations they have picked up along the way.

Johann Gutenberg had based his type for his Bible on the writing styles of scribes in northern Europe. Arguably he had enough to contend with financing, printing and marketing this new form, the printed book, without the added question of designing a conceptually groundbreaking typeface to accompany it. Consumer resistance was a possible stumbling block to the venture, so it was best to present customers with something that looked as close as possible to what they were used to, its handwritten predecessor.

The use of blackletter gradually died out in Europe, being used only sparingly as a means of textual emphasis in the period before the idea of the type family, with its bold weights, came into currency. Eventually only Germany remained a bastion of blackletter, and even there it became a player in a political battleground that would reach its deadliest heights with the rise to power of the Nazi party, which was, for a while at least, an advocate of the form.

There always were strong arguments that familiarity is the key criterion for legibility and readability. Germany's 'Iron Chancellor', Otto von Bismarck, found blackletter easier to read than roman. However, most people would probably concede that the opposite is true for them, even if they have a personal attraction to the form. Most blackletter capitals really only work effectively in relation to some lower-case characters whereby the reader can intuit which character they represent. Aesthetically, depending on your taste, they can be either beautifully challenging or a horror show.

Morris's blackletter typefaces, Troy and Chaucer, made their first appearance in the Press's eighth book, Raoul Lefevre's *The Rucuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, published in 1892. Morris avoided the pitfall of over-ornate capitals, and used simpler forms that were easier to read. One of the evils of nineteenth-century typography, for Morris and Walker, was too-small text type. Morris liked his type big. Troy had a cap height of about 4.5 mm, about 18pt. He much regretted having to make a smaller version for the projected complete works of Chaucer, but to achieve a vaguely realistic economy of space, it had to be done. Chaucer's cap height is about 3mm, closer to 14pt, which is still a generous size for text (Figure 2), so Troy and Chaucer stand as representatives of a readable blackletter. Whether the Kelmscott *Chaucer* is truly meant

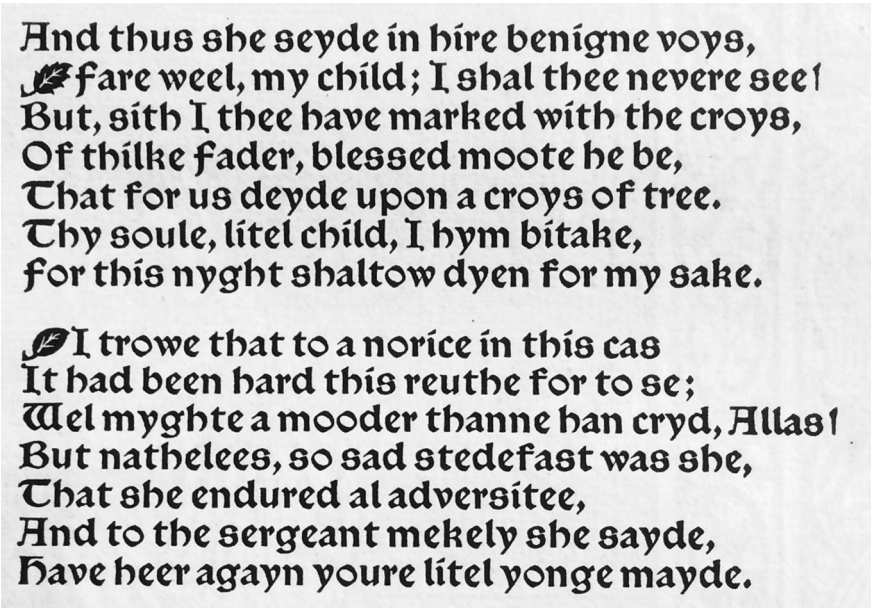


Figure 2: 'The Clerk's Tale' set in Chaucer type, in the Kelmscott *Chaucer*. (St. Bride Library).

to be a book to be read at any length, or even in its entirety, rather than leafed through, read for short passages and admired – and thus the 'work of art' Morris intended it to be – is probably now an unanswerable question.

Even so, Troy and Chaucer both fail the test Beatrice Warde laid out in her twentieth-century essay on the philosophy of typography, 'The Crystal Goblet': that printing – i.e. typography – should be invisible. If you notice the type as you read, she contended, it is interfering with the transmission of the author's message, the overarching objective for which any aesthetic factors merely labour as servants.[9] When one reads the Kelmscott *Chaucer*, it is hard not to be conscious of the typeface at all times.

II. Influences

The typographic influence of the Kelmscott Press was fairly immediate. American Type Founders, a company formed in late 1892 from a merger of twenty-three type foundries in the United States, had by the following year brought out its own blackletter, Jenson Old Style, its promotion carrying an open reference in both words and ornamentation to Morris. Cockerell threatened legal action against the typefounders Sir Charles Reed and Sons, who had cast the Kelmscott type, when

they attempted in 1897 to market an American face called Kelmscott Old Style.[10] Of greater significance, and subsequently much loved by designers and small presses, particularly in America, was Bruce Rogers's Centaur. Born in Indiana in 1870, Rogers did actually enjoy a formal college education in art, unlike many of his significant professional contemporaries of the early decades of the next century. He worked first as an illustrator, an on-the-spot artist for *The Indianapolis News*, making drawings of fires and other disasters which would be converted into newspaper illustrations.

Rogers's light-bulb moment came in 1893 when he encountered Joseph M. Bowles, an enterprising salesman in an Indianapolis art store who had started a magazine, *Modern Art*, which featured the work and aesthetics of the English Arts and Crafts movement. Seeing its first issue and the Kelmscott books Bowles had imported for sale in the shop, Rogers decided that book design was where his future lay, and he was given work on the magazine designing decorative initials and other embellishments.

Bowles moved *Modern Art* to Boston in 1895. Rogers followed, and managed to secure employment at the Riverside Press in nearby Cambridge before Bowles's publication went under. He induced Riverside, a very commercially orientated company under the umbrella of publishers Houghton Mifflin, to devote part of its endeavours towards a fine press, Riverside Press Editions, which had smaller print runs of more expensive editions, designed by Rogers.

In 1902, he again used his powers of persuasion to induce George Mifflin to let him create a bespoke typeface for the Press, to be used first on an edition of Montaigne's *Essays* and taking as its inspiration a 1470 type of Nicolas Jenson's. But Rogers was not happy with the resulting typeface, Montaigne, feeling that the punchcutter had paid too little heed either to Jenson's original or to Rogers's drawings.

He may have begun a second stab at a Jenson-inspired type while still at Riverside, possibly as early as 1909. He enlarged pages from Jenson's edition of Eusebius's *De Evangelica Praeparatione* and, seeking to capture the calligraphic qualities he perceived to be in the original, drew his letters with a broad-nibbed pen, then retouched them. William Morris and Emery Walker worked from enlargements of letters where spread of ink on the original paper had given them extra weight, a disproportion which had either to be imitated or taken into account and compensated. Both are very 'site-specific': used elsewhere they inextricably carry the flavour of the Kelmscott Press or the Doves with them. Rogers, using a freer, more instinctive method, and drawing upon his skills as an illustrator, produced something with far wider, universal appeal. Its effect on the page is much lighter.

As for blackletter, the Kelmscott influence seems to have been huge in repopularising the form. American Type Founders, once again, produced their

'hommage' to Troy, called Satanick, supposedly in reference to Morris telling them to go to hell when they approached him about marketing his designs in the United States. The Kelmscott influence seems to have been particularly great there, and we can see blackletter lingering well into the 1920s as an expression of the desire to be perceived as possessing a sophisticated typographic eye and an awareness of the printing craft's history (Figure 3).

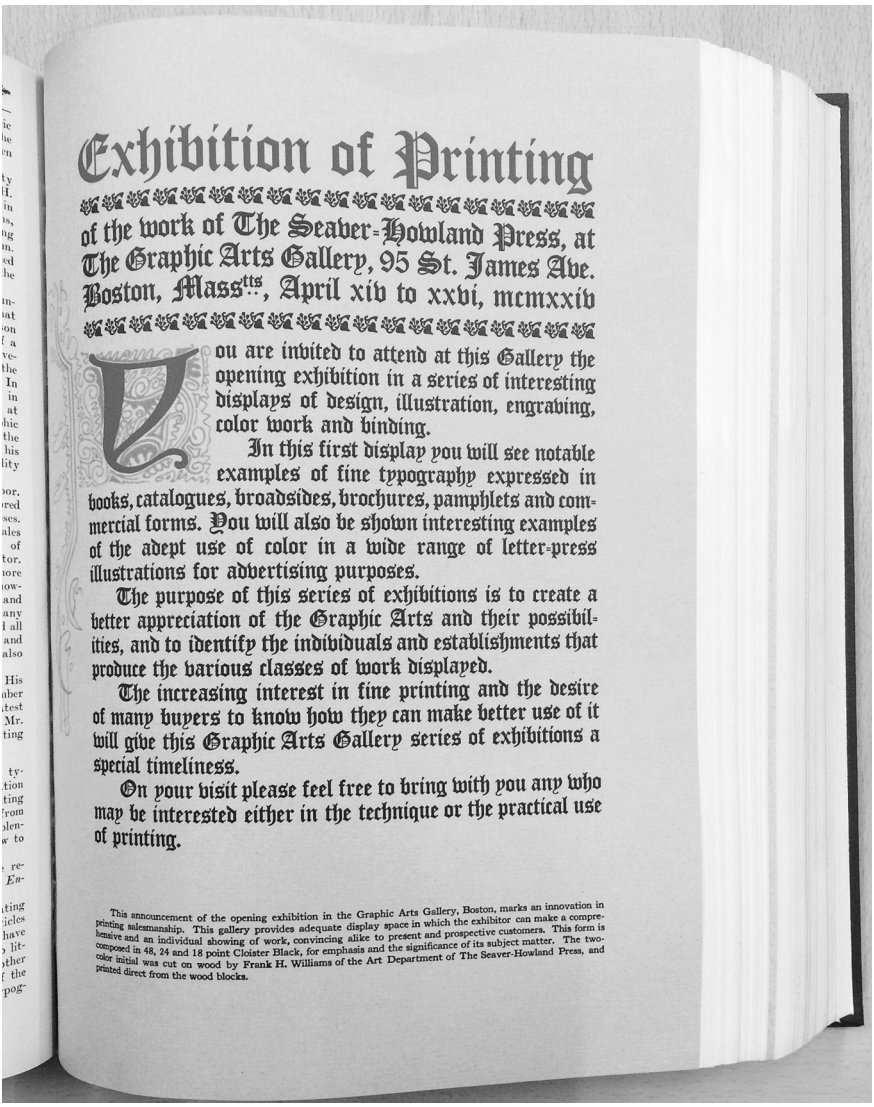
III. The Types of the Ashendene Press

Emery Walker clearly held no aversion to blackletter, as he would be instrumental in putting it on the pages of the books of another private press in the years following Morris's death. Charles St. John Hornby was a director of W.H. Smith, and his Ashendene Press was purely a personal, spare time pleasure, not intended for profit, although its output came to be highly regarded and valued. His first book for the press, *The Journal of Joseph Hornby, February-March 1815*, appeared in 1895 using Caslon. But by the early years of the twentieth century the desire for a bespoke typeface for the press became too great. Morris and Walker had looked at and photographed the structurally transitional type of Conrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz, and Morris was attracted by the idea of designing his own type based on theirs, an ambition cut short by his death. But Walker and St. John Hornby would return to the fallen idea and make it a reality. As St. John Hornby later described it:

> [A]fter examining numerous incunabula [we] decided to have a type modelled upon the first type of Sweynheym and Pannartz, with which they had printed three books in 1465 at Subiaco, before migrating to Rome. It is interesting to note that William Morris had at one time made experiments with the same type but never went so far as to have punches cut from his designs. Photographs were taken by Walker and Cockerell from a vellum copy of Cicero's *De Oratore* at the British Museum, and after various enlargings, touchings-up and modifications, and the designing of new letters such as k, w and y, the punches were cut by E.P. Prince.[11]

Hornby later reflected:

> I look back with unalloyed pleasure to the many meetings and discussions with my two friends to which the preparation of this type gave occasion. I was not a little proud when the first few trial letters reached me and I was able to see them in juxtaposition by setting up a few specimen lines. I am still of opinion, as I was then, that the Subiaco is a noble type. Its possession made me anxious



Exhibition of Printing

of the work of The Seaver-Howland Press, at The Graphic Arts Gallery, 95 St. James Ave. Boston, Mass^tts^, April xiv to xxvi, mcmxxiv

You are invited to attend at this Gallery the opening exhibition in a series of interesting displays of design, illustration, engraving, color work and binding.

In this first display you will see notable examples of fine typography expressed in books, catalogues, broadsides, brochures, pamphlets and commercial forms. You will also be shown interesting examples of the adept use of color in a wide range of letter-press illustrations for advertising purposes.

The purpose of this series of exhibitions is to create a better appreciation of the Graphic Arts and their possibilities, and to identify the individuals and establishments that produce the various classes of work displayed.

The increasing interest in fine printing and the desire of many buyers to know how they can make better use of it will give this Graphic Arts Gallery series of exhibitions a special timeliness.

On your visit please feel free to bring with you any who may be interested either in the technique or the practical use of printing.

This announcement of the opening exhibition in the Graphic Arts Gallery, Boston, marks an innovation in printing salesmanship. This gallery provides adequate display space in which the exhibitor can make a comprehensive and an individual showing of work, convincing alike to present and prospective customers. This form is composed in 48, 24 and 18 point Cloister Black, for emphasis and the significance of its subject matter. The two-color initial was cut on wood by Frank H. Williams of the Art Department of The Seaver-Howland Press, and printed direct from the wood blocks.

Figure 3: The long reach and influence of the Kelmscott Press's use of blackletter: an exhibition notice in the printing trade journal *The American Printer*, United States, 1924. (St. Bride Library).

to produce something more important than I had hitherto attempted. The resulting Dante was the first with vellum copies and the first with hand drawn initials, by Graily Hewitt.[12]

Lo Inferno di Dante Alighieri Fiorentino (1902) was the first book Hornby printed using

Subiaco, and he continued with it for decades (Figure 4). F.C. Avis in his book *Edward Philip Prince: type punchcutter*, described the face as possessing 'exquisite grace and delicacy […] a very fine semi-gothic'.[13] Walker clearly remained fond of it: '[i]t is as readable to us as is the Roman to which our eyes are more accustomed', he commented in the 1920s.[14] The transitional form of Subiaco, away from Gutenberg's preferred styling, allows it, like Troy, to use more simplified forms for its capitals.

During the mid-1920s Walker created another blackletter typeface for Hornby, who recalled:

> The second type cut specially for the Press, which I christened the 'Ptolemy', made its first appearance twenty-five years after the 'Subiaco'. It is modelled upon the type of F. Holle, of Ulm, used by him in 1482 for the printing of the *Geographia* of Ptolemaeus, the only book in which it is found. The photographs and drawings for this type were also done for me by Emery Walker. Unfortunately, E.P. Prince, who had cut the 'Subiaco' punches, had died in the interval, and as no other good punch-cutter was available the punches were cut mechanically […].[15]

The American designer Frederic Warde, writing to Bruce Rogers in 1926, commented of Ptolemy, 'I have heard some rather left-handed compliments about it'.[16] The complimentary element of these purported reactions was probably out of deference to the reputations and achievements of Walker and Hornby. But by the middle of the 1920s, taste for blackletter or any channelling of a medieval typographic aesthetic was starting to look outmoded in comparison to the different kinds of historicism, drawing on more recent sources, that were being practised by Rogers, Warde and others, and instigated and marketed by Stanley Morison in his role as typographic advisor at Monotype – while from Germany came the rumblings of early modernism. The Ashendene Press, with a lifespan of forty years, far exceeded in longevity its original contemporaries in the British private press movement, and it is understandable that Hornby's tastes remained to a large extent rooted in the period in which he had begun the venture.

IV. The Doves Type

In Walker's deposition and summary of his career which he submitted to his lawyers in 1924, as part of his legal action against Annie Cobden-Sanderson, he described the making of the Doves type. He and Thomas Cobden-Sanderson returned to one of Morris's sources, Jenson's Italian translation of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*:

> The book, like nearly all of Jenson's, was, judging by modern standards, over-inked and gave an imperfect view of the type. The true shapes had to be extracted so to speak […]. This was done under my direction in my office by a draughtsman still in the employment of my firm.[17]

A note in shorthand, presumably dictated by Thomas Cobden-Sanderson to a lawyer's secretary, on the back on the original typescript of this document slightly contradicts the above account:

> Jenson's type was excellent type but his method of printing was very crude and with the body of the type much hidden. And when I set out to copy this type, I made up my mind to omit this very serious defect which consisted of excrescences of over-inking.[18]

Robert Green, who designed a digital version of the Doves Type in the twenty-teens, has described it as 'something of a hybrid, a Venetian slab-serif'.[19] Aided perhaps partly by the mystique attached to the Doves Type by Cobden-Sanderson, and the drama and notoriety of its submergence in the River Thames, it is probably widely regarded by aficionados as superior to the Golden type, although former St. Bride librarian James Mosley has recently described it as 'beautifully and faithfully drawn, though perhaps just a bit bland when compared with the rugged Golden type'.[20]

However the Doves Type's standing also benefits from its application, as a key player in the stark simplicity of the Doves Press books, which foreshadow the general developments of book styling in the twentieth century in a way that the Kelmscott ones do not, and these books could be described, not in type style or in their rare decorative flourishes, but in their overall design philosophy, as forerunners of mid-twentieth-century modernism (Figure 5).

V. The Types of the Cranach Press

A significant outlier to the British trio of presses was the Cranach Press of the German Count Harry Kessler, who in 1896 joined the editorial board of the art-nouveau periodical *Pan*, which featured the Kelmscott Press in that year's issue. In 1903 he took over directorship of the Museum of Art and Crafts in Weimar, and first contacted Emery Walker in 1904 for technical advice on books for the Leipzig publisher Insel Verlag. Inspired by the examples of the Kelmscott Press and the Doves Press, Kessler established the Cranach Press in Weimar in 1913.

While working for Insel Verlag, Kessler had been introduced by Walker to visual contributors Edward Johnston and Eric Gill. When Kessler set up the Cranach Press

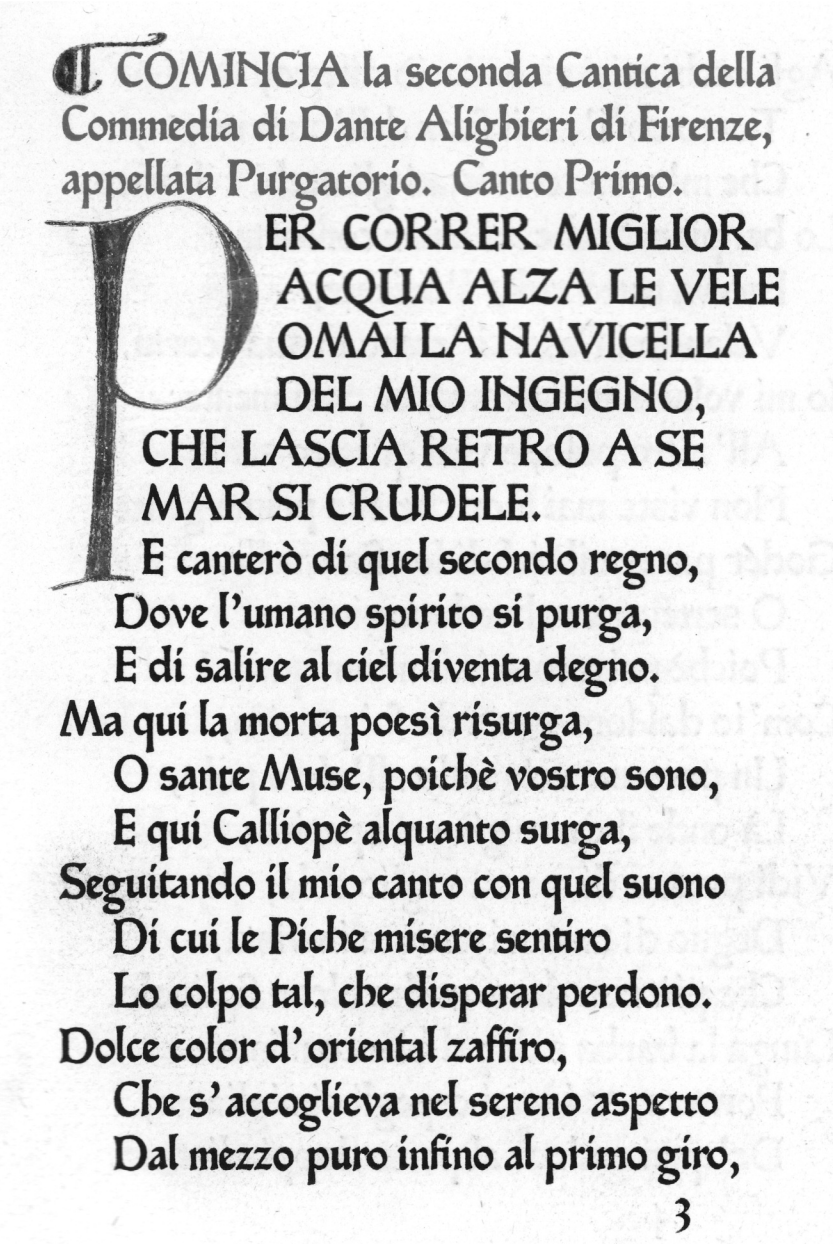


Figure 4: The Ashendene Press's Subiaco, in *Lo Purgatorio di Dante Alighieri Fiorentino*, published in 1904. (St. Bride Library).

Walker again assisted with recommendations of pressmen, and seems to be generally credited with the design of a roman type for the press. F.C. Avis describes what he calls the Cranach-Jenson Upright as 'a magnificent latter-day Venetian, completely in the style of the Doves, with which it suffers no adverse comparison. Similarity between the two types is great.'[21] It was a similarity that did not go unnoticed by the Cobden-Sandersons, and was mentioned by Annie Cobden-Sanderson during her legal battle with Walker following the death of her husband:

> Mrs. Cobden-Sanderson would also like to know whether Mr. Emery Walker is in any way connected with the photographing of the lettering similar to that of the Doves Press which she understands is now being used in Germany.[22]

Type design is a field that has notoriously suffered from plagiarism and design piracy, and Walker might be considered not entirely guilt-free in this instance. The colophon of the English translation edition of the Cranach Press's *The Eclogues of Vergil* stressed that Walker's design for the roman type was based on one used by Nicolas Jenson in 1473, rather than the Doves Press model of 1476.

Kessler then decided that he wanted the one thing which other private presses lacked – an italic to accompany his roman typeface. Its absence was customarily circumlocuted by placing words in inverted commas. Italic typefaces in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources stood independently as entities in their own right, not as integral members of a wider type family, so the question was: what could be used as a source to accompany Kessler's Jenson-inspired roman face? After considering the original italics of Aldus Manutius, Walker eventually settled on using as a basis an italic typeface of author, calligrapher and printer Giovanni Antonio Tagliente, used in Venice in 1525.

John Dreyfus, in his book *Italic Quartet*, argues that from the start this was a bad choice, possibly worse than Walker's original plan. Tagliente's type proved to be difficult to adapt so that it could work visually with the roman typeface; this was due not only to the subtlety of the italic typeface's design, but also to its proportions (x-height, ascenders, descenders). As with the Doves Type, Walker's long-suffering company man Percy Tiffin was called upon to make the drawings. Because of shortcomings in the printed impressions of the type on the original pages, Dreyfus asserts that too much was left to Tiffin's 'inadequate judgement […]. Neither Tiffin nor Walker possessed a sufficient understanding of calligraphy to exercise a right judgement in copying the imperfect originals.'[23] As on occasions before, the drawings were sent to Edward Prince to cut the punches.

When Kessler saw the resulting proofs of what Prince had cut, he was not happy.

days, then thou shalt go down quickly, & come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel. And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. And behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, & no hurt; as the Lord liveth. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the Lord hath sent thee away. And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the Lord be between thee and me for ever. ¶ So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat. And the king sat upon his seat, as at

Figure 5: The Doves Type, shown here in the English Bible (the Doves Bible), 1903-5. (St. Bride Library).

He had already engaged Edward Johnston to work on a Greek face and blackletter for his press, but now instructed him to concentrate his attention on analysing what was wrong with the italic and improving the design. Johnston, however, conceded his lack of experience in type design, and although he could suggest how the italic letters, taken in isolation, could be improved, he was not qualified to advise how they should be adjusted to make them work with the roman.

The whole process became increasingly fraught. Prince's resentment began to grow, not just because his punches had been rejected despite his having faithfully followed the drawings supplied by Walker. He asserted that Johnston's suggestions for individual letters would not work for the italic design as a whole. Johnston replied with his own reservations that Prince was from an era predating Arts and Crafts thinking, and was incapable of creative interpretation, but was demanding an exactness in the drawings that Johnston freely admitted he was unable to supply. Somewhat contradicting his earlier judgement, he then urged that Prince be given a freer hand to interpret them. Walker, sympathising more with Prince, and possibly defensive about the original designs, questioned the wisdom of Johnston's interventions, and was keen to keep any further changes to a minimum.

Johnston was finally induced to do what he had been resisting all along: to draw a finished version of all the characters in black ink, pasted down onto boards at precisely the angles that he wanted. These were then photographed by Walker and reduced to the size of the type to be made from them, as guides for Prince.

J.H. Mason went out to Weimar in 1914 to help set up the Press and to get *The Eclogues of Vergil* into production. But the final blow to any schedule for printing was

dealt by international politics. Planning to return in the summer, he was warned by Kessler not to come, and only the first sheet of the book had been printed when war broke out in August 1914. The *Vergil* was finally published in 1926. The italic appeared only in the colophon and in the prospectus for the book. An edition with an English translation by J.H. Mason was published in 1927; Kessler's dedication reads: '[i]n sincerest gratitude to the master of book-printing, the friend and adviser of William Morris, Emery Walker'.[24]

The Cranach Press was fated to have a relatively short operational life, compromised by the magnitude of events in the world around it, but its books are highly regarded. Kessler commissioned the theatre designer Edward Gordon Craig to illustrate *The Tragedie of Hamlet*, published in 1930, and Eric Gill illustrated *Canticum Canticorum Salomonis*, The Song of Solomon, published in 1931, the final Cranach production. When Hitler gained absolute power in 1933, Kessler, known as 'the Red Count', who was a Weimar Republic diplomat and friend of, among many others, Albert Einstein, Virginia Woolf, Josephine Baker and Jean Cocteau, left Germany forever, dying in France in 1937.

VI. Two Conclusions

Where did Walker's typographic contributions stand by the final years of his life? By the mid 1920s, now in his early seventies, he had not given up on protecting his earlier achievements, and was embroiled in a legal battle with Annie Cobden-Sanderson, following the death of her husband, which had terminated the latter's, or his family's, legal right to possess the Doves Type. Rightfully the punches, matrices and any existing cast type should have been handed over to Walker, but they lay in the River Thames. Walker's demand for redress turned on his claim of lost income through not having the type at his disposal. His friend Alfred Pollard, Shakespearan scholar and Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, while sympathetic to Walker's sense of injustice and insult, nonetheless felt it would be better in the end to let the matter go rather than pursue a widow in the courts, and cautioned that the commercial value that Walker placed on the Doves type might in fact by now be largely erroneous:

> [Y]ou have got to estimate yourself what the likelihood then is at the present time of you or anyone else making a profit out of the use of the type, or what the original fount would sell for. Personally I can't forget our difficulties as to what to do with Proctor's Greek type […] the trend of fashion to sixteenth century models, and generally the fact that the Doves Press type, having played a big part in the history of English printing, is yet not exempt from the

> preference of each generation for its own things rather than those of 30 years ago. Thus in *my* opinion the market value of the type – the original type – if American exploiters were barred, would not be great.[25]

Although the esteem in which the type was held would rise again, along with that of the Doves Press, at this point Pollard was probably right in his assertion. But Walker's and Morris's championing of the type of Nicolas Jenson would bear a final magnificent fruit in the last year of Walker's life. With meticulous care involving several overprintings, his company printed the uncredited translation by T.E. Shaw (formerly T.E. Lawrence, known to the world as Lawrence of Arabia) of *The Odyssey of Homer*, this new edition designed by Bruce Rogers, and set in the Monotype Corporation's version of his Centaur typeface, reconfigured in the late 1920s for machine composition using that company's system. It is a beautiful production, and just one consequence of the interest in Jenson as a source for new type designs which Walker and Morris had set in motion back in the 1890s.

NOTES

1. J.H. Mason, *J.H. Mason RDI: A Selection from the Notebooks of a Scholar-printer*, ed. by John Mason (Leicester: The Twelve by Eight, 1961), no folios, seventh page of text.
2. *Friends of a Lifetime: Letters to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell*, ed. by Viola Meynell (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940), pp. 231-32.
3. 'Printing and Printers', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 November 1888, p. 5. Quoted in William S. Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), Appendix B, pp. 329-31. (Afterwards Peterson).
4. Emery Walker's 1924 deposition to his solicitors, original typescript and transcription reproduced in Colin Franklin, *Emery Walker: Some Light on his Theories of Printing and on his Relations with William Morris and Cobden-Sanderson* (Cambridge: privately printed, 1973), p. 29. (Afterwards Franklin).
5. Emery Walker, *A Brief History of Printing* (London: privately printed, Central School of Arts and Crafts, March 1911), no folios, second and third pages of text.
6. Possibly a misremembering on Walker's part. In *The Ideal Book* Morris refers to 'sweltering hideousness'.
7. Peterson, p. 89.
8. Walker's first Sandars lecture, delivered at Cambridge, 6 November 1924, in *Printing for Book Production: Emery Walker's Three Lectures for the Sandars Readership in Bibliography*, ed. by Richard Mathews and Joseph Rosenblum (New Castle: Oak Knoll Press, 2019), p. 61. (Afterwards Mathews and Roseblum). By blue books he meant government-issued information and statistical publications.
9. Beatrice Warde, 'The Crystal Goblet *or* Printing Should be Invisible', in *The Crystal Goblet: Sixteen Essays on Typography* (London: The Sylvan Press, 1955), pp. 11-17.
10. See Peterson, pp. 196-99.
11. Charles St. John Hornby, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Books Printed at the Ashendene Press MDCCCXCV-MCMXXXV* (London: privately printed, 1935), p. 8. Edward Prince cut the punches for the Kelmscott and Doves types, and for most of the major private press types of the period. (Afterwards Hornby).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

13. F.C. Avis, *Edward Philip Prince: Type Punchcutter* (London: privately printed, 1967), p. 45. (Afterwards Avis).
14. Mathews and Rosenblum, p. 55.
15. Hornby, p. 9.
16. Frederic Warde, letter to Bruce Rogers, 15 January 1926, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Pforzheimer collection of Bruce Rogers materials, 1200-1957, Correspondence, 1907-1957, Box 2a, catalogue available online: <https://lccn.loc.gov/2011655187>.
17. Franklin, p. 29. The draughtsman was Percy Tiffin.
18. *Ibid.* Colin Franklin transcribed the shorthand in *Emery Walker* (1973), but I have altered 'leave this serious defect' to 'omit this serious defect', as it seems to make more sense in relation to what Walker was saying about the Doves Type.
19. Robert Green, 'Reviving the Doves Type', *Ultrabold: The Journal of St Bride Library*, 12 (Autumn 2012), 11-18 (14). The Venetian style of roman letter was characterised in particular by a sloping crossbar on the lowercase e.
20. James Mosley, 'Emery Walker's photographs of early types for William Morris', *Ultrabold: The Journal of St Bride Library*, 20 (Spring 2021), 15-22 (22).
21. Avis, p. 45.
22. Lewis & Lewis, letter on behalf of Annie Cobden-Sanderson to Lees, Smith & Tetlow, Walker's legal representatives, 14 November 1922, The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center, Sir Emery Walker Collection, Manuscript Collection MS-4379, container 6.8-9.
23. John Dreyfus, *Italic Quartet: A Record of the Collaboration between Harry Kessler, Edward Johnston, Emery Walker and Edward Prince in Making the Cranach Press Italic* (Cambridge: privately printed, 1966), p. 14.
24. *The Eclogues of Vergil in the Original Latin with an English Prose Translation by J.H. Mason* (Weimar: The Cranach Press, 1927).
25. A.W. Pollard, letter to Emery Walker, 23 January 1924, The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center, Sir Emery Walker Collection, Manuscript Collection MS-4379, container 4.6. Walker was involved in the creation of Robert Proctor's 'Otter' Greek type, first used in 1903 – and also the Greek type of Selwyn Image commissioned by the publisher Macmillan during the 1890s.