

manuscripts for publication. The editors at these presses attempt to find works of solid scholarship that will make a useful contribution to higher education and to society in general. This does not mean they are averse to titles that sell well, only that financial return is a secondary consideration. At times, however, much to everyone's surprise, an academic book will do very well indeed in the marketplace. Such a book was David Reisman's sociological study *The Lonely Crowd*. The initial print run was only 1,500 copies, but the book caught on with the general public and soon had sales of between 400,000 and 500,000 copies. Taking both hardcover and paperback editions into account, the book eventually sold close to 1.5 million copies.

A surer strategy, however, is for academic publishers to attempt to develop what are known as "steady sellers," books that have steady, if not dramatic, sales over a long period. The Bible, of course, leads the way as the steadiest selling book ever, with claims of between 2.5 billion and 6 billion copies sold, and these sales have immensely helped both Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press. Some American university press titles that have assisted their home institutions greatly are *The Chicago Manual of Style*, for the University of Chicago Press, and *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, for Columbia University Press.

Basbanes relates examples of both successful and lucrative series developed by the editors of Yale University Press over its long history. One of these was *The Yale Shakespeare*, "the most influential, significant, and widely known of anything that appeared under the Yale imprint," according to John Ryden, director of the press from 1979 to 2002. "It wouldn't be much of an exaggeration to say that TYS bears much the same relation to Yale as the *Bible* did to the presses of Oxford and Cambridge. It was the most enduring publication of the first fifty years," and along with a sister publication, the *Chronicles of America*, "kept the Press alive during the Depression."

REVIEWED BY RICHARD HOPKINS

~ *MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan: Typographic Tastemakers of the Late Nineteenth Century*
1908–2008

By Doug Clouse
(Oak Knoll, 2008, US\$65)

As I am a lover rather than a student of type, the attractive presentation of *MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan: Typographic Tastemakers of the Late Nineteenth Century* was enough to whet my appetite for its contents, which offer a smorgasbord of typefaces as well as insights into the work of a major Philadelphia type foundry of the latter 1800s.

Tracing MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan's roots from the late 18th century through to the decline of ornamented typefaces and establishment of the American Type Founders Co. in 1892, Clouse provides an intelligent, informed commentary that will appeal to students of the printing trades, book arts and the history of books as well as contemporary graphic designers looking for inspiration in typefaces by turns colourful, gaudy and—occasionally—thoroughly modern Gothic.

Clouse manages to capture both the spirit of the foundry and its designers as well as explain its position at the turning point that saw a division between high book arts and—for lack of a better distinction—the low book arts. MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan represent one of the last moments in an age when industrial production was still a folk art of sorts, something that Nicolette Gray believes "still expresse[d] the general taste of society." Clouse tells us how that was so, illuminating the role of the foundry in both promoting taste and tapping popular sentiment in the captions used to illustrate its typefaces in specimen books.

This monograph provides a comprehensive overview of MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan's own designs, offering a slice of the ornamentation that's synonymous with late-19th-century typesetting as well as bearing witness to the optimism and excesses of the era. There are also more subtle insights provided in the specimens shown; Clouse notes that firm principal Thomas MacKellar engaged in gentle satire in a manner that not only alleviated boredom for compositors but expressed "a nineteenth-century sense of humor that is particularly American." It eventually set the style for specimen showsbooks nationwide, setting an example still often followed today by designers of spirit. One thinks of specimens such as "Gender's Hempen Fenders" (in French Clarendon Shaded) and the Fancy Text—set "Mountebanks Bedecked in Heaven's." Pointing up the darker side of society is a specimen of Continental laid out to read, "*CREMATED CHINAMEN* | *Dust made for Pharmaceutists*" and the heavily ornamented

Campanile's "LATTER-DAY EXCRESCENCES | Personators and Signature Imitators."

Clouse briefly explores the reasons for the decline of ornamented typefaces and the changes that fuelled the emergence of a new breed of graphic designer working in an industry that was learning to become more efficient and streamlined. The rise of modern typefaces left a nostalgia for the older, ornamented styles as fine printing developed a life of its own separate from commercial work. Clouse suggests that ornamentation, left behind by commercial foundries, became part of the backlash against "the detrimental effects of industry and commercialization on design."

In this way, the designs remain relevant today, as typographers continue to debate the place of ornament and style. An occasional raid of the old designs often serves to highlight our own contemporary prejudices and aspirations, as lamppost posters announcing the latest indie band's performance. When fame is as much ornamentation as it is actual achievement, the achievements of a past era can highlight in florid style fame's transitory character. Clouse provides an entertaining guide to the historical moment in which MacKellar, Smiths & Jordan's achievements flourished, and then passed on.

REVIEWED BY PETER MITHAM

~ *The British Book Trade: An Oral History*

Edited by Sue Bradley

(British Library, 2008, £25)

Publishing an oral history of the British book trade in book form is at once curious and yet entirely appropriate, acknowledges editor Sue Bradley in her introduction to *The British Book Trade: An Oral History*. Drawing on from more than 1,600 hours of interviews (now part of the British Library Sound Archive), Bradley has pulled together reflections from over 80 members of the English and Scottish book trade that provide insight into the life, changes and colourful anecdote that distinguished publishing in the U.K. through the 20th century. (Northern Ireland receives no specific attention, however, and interviews with designers and production workers were not yet transcribed and available for inclusion.)

At 300-plus pages, the book could be daunting without Bradley's helpful introduction. Seeking to create a coherent narrative from the diverse source material at her disposal, Bradley has fashioned a text in which speakers' words are part of a verbal tapestry. Interviews are stitched together with short descriptors of the speakers, and the interviewer's questions and comments are set in an unobtrusive italic face that gives centre stage to the reminiscences.

The narrative itself is readable and enjoyable: One discovers first-hand the delights of the stacks in pre-Blitz London (the big Simpkin, Marshall warehouse was destroyed on December 29, 1940, obliterating millions of books and miles of shelving), as well as the social attitudes and connections that saw conscientious objectors sacked and admirers of T.S. Eliot (such as young Anne Walmsley at Faber & Faber) the butt of laughter. The serious business aspects are covered, including a chapter on the ending of the Net Book Agreement in 1995 that opened up pricing in the book market.

Reading the anecdotes, one gets a fuller picture of a world slipping away as universities became enamoured of book history in the late 1990s. Bradley's interviews bring to life the context in which a chain like Waterstones could rise—to the ire of many—post-1995, and the pressures that led to the demise of the venerable Edinburgh bookseller James Thin in 2002. Having seen the current generation of the Black family making the rounds during a visit I made to England's A&C Black in spring 1996, Bradley's sources ring true about the ties of affection and honour, and not just company loyalty, that informed many shops through the transitions of the past century. "Trust, generosity and the ability to entertain" are among the highest-rated values Bradley's subjects note, and this book shares the impact of those values on book industry workers with readers of all stripes.

The British Book Trade: An Oral History also positions itself as a contribution to the history of the book now so much in vogue. Though larger multi-volume projects such as *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* and *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland* are covering the ground in comprehensive fashion, the interest they are stirring is yielding projects such as the present volume. Although the actual impetus dates as far