Paris Imprints of the 1920s

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PARIS IMPRINTS OF THE 1920s
an exhibit for the
American Literature Club

Graniteville Room
Thomas Cooper Library
September 1999
This small-scale exhibit, with examples from each of the major American expatriate imprints of the post-Great War decade, complements the Ernest Hemingway centenary exhibit in the mezzanine gallery.

**Sylvia Beach**

& **Shakespeare and Company**

Sylvia Beach’s bookshop and lending-library on the Left Bank, Shakespeare and Company, was the major distribution point for English-language modernist books and periodicals, and, with its near-neighbor, Adrienne Monnier’s La Maison des Amis des Livres, a central meeting place for the expatriate literary community. Beach had founded her bookshop in 1919 on returning from work in Serbia during the Great War with the American Red Cross. Shown here are an advertisement for the two shops (from one of Monnier’s publications), a picture of the bookshop (from a USIS exhibit catalogue, 1960), Beach’s account of first meeting James Joyce (from her *Ulysses in Paris*, 1966), and the first periodical text of T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land* (from *The Dial*, 1922), promoted by Beach with a special window-display.

**James Joyce and *Ulysses***

In 1921, episodes from Joyce’s *Ulysses* published in the US in the *Little Review* were judged obscene, and Beach undertook to publish the work in Paris under the imprint of Shakespeare and Company, using Monnier’s Dijon printer Maurice Darantière. The first printing of 1000 copies was rapidly bought up, largely by collectors and dealers. Displayed here are copies of the first edition, 1922 (no. 890, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s copy with an inserted inscription by Joyce to Fitzgerald), the 5th printing, 1924 (in white wrappers), the 7th printing, 1925 (open to show imprint), the 8th printing, 1926 (in blue wrappers), and the
10th printing, 1928 (open to show the printing history). Another 1922 copy (no. 826) is in case 4 on the mezzanine. Also shown are photos of Beach with Joyce, from Sylvia Beach 1887-1962 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1963), and Joyce’s *Pomes Pennyech* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1927).

**James Joyce in transition**

Among literary reviews distributed by Shakespeare and Company was the new monthly *transition*, founded by the American poet and journalist Edward Jolas in 1927, which regularly offered its subscribers fresh installments of Joyce’s “Work in Progress” (subsequently *Finnegan’s Wake*). Shown here are the first two numbers of transition.

**Gertrude Stein and Plain Editions**

Gertrude Stein’s massive work of the 1920s, *The Making of Americans Being a History of a Family’s Progress* (1925) was distributed by Shakespeare and Company and published jointly by Robert McAlmon of Contact Editions and Bill Bird of Three Mountains Press, with huge cost overruns; F. Scott Fitzgerald’s copy, in original wrappers, is displayed in case 4 on the mezzanine. Shown here are two examples of the more modestly-produced Stein ‘Plain Editions’ that followed in the early thirties, *Lucy Church Amiably* (1930, in blue printed boards) and *How to Write* (1930, buff boards with printed label).

**Robert McAlmon and Contact Editions**

The Kansas-born Robert McAlmon had co-edited a little magazine titled *contact* in New York in 1920-1921. After marrying ‘Bryher’ (Winifred Ellerman, daughter of a British shipping magnate), McAlmon moved to Paris, where he met Beach, Joyce and Pound, and was able with Ellerman money to produce new literary works, including his
own. His imprint Contact Publishing was to specialize in books “not likely to be published . . . for commercial or legislative reasons.” The printing was done by Monnier's and Beach’s printer Darantiere. Actual printing Contact’s two most famous publications, Hemingway’s first book *Three Stories & Ten Poems* (Contact Editions, 1924) and Stein’s *Making of Americans* (1925) are both in the mezzanine exhibit. Shown here, all in original wrappers, are one of McAlmon’s own early, privately-printed books, *A Hasty Bunch* (Dijon: Darantiere, 1921), his poetry collection *Portrait of a Generation, Including the Revolving Mirror* (Contact Editions, 1926), and Robert M. Coates, *The Eater of Darkness* (Contact Editions, 1926).

**Bill Bird and Three Mountains Press**

William Bird, a journalist by profession, took up handprinting as a hobby after moving to Paris. His first publication, *A Practical Guide to French Wines* (shown in its third printing, inscribed by Bird), sold well, and 1923-24 he published in small runs a series of works by Pound. William Carlos Williams, Ford, and Hemingway (*in our time*, 1924, with only 170 copies for official release but 50 for review). As colophon, Bird adopted the image of Three Mountains. From 1924, Three Mountains worked with McAlmon’s Contact Editions for distribution, and on later works Bird hired help for printing and even (for Pound’s *Antheil*) outsourced the printing to Darantiere in Dijon. Bird sold the press in 1928 to Nancy Cunard. Shown here are Ford Madox Ford’s *Women & Men* (1923, no. 74 of 300) and Ezra Pound’s music criticism, *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (1924). While the wrappers read Three Mountains Press, on the title-pages the Three Mountains imprint has been covered with a label for Contact Editions, attesting to the collaboration.
Three Mountains Press:
Ezra Pound’s *A Draft of XVI Cantos*
... with initials by Henry Strater.
The most spectacular production of Bird’s Three Mountains Press was this lavish book, the first separate volume collecting Pound’s series of Cantos. Pound wrote to Kate Buss in May 1923 that it would be of “UNRIVALLED magnificence,” “one of the real bits of printing: modern book to be jacked up to something near level of medieval mss. No Kelmscott mess of illegibility.” Limited to 90 copies, the ‘scarcity’ factor of the Pound book was further ratcheted up by issuing five copies on Japan paper, fifteen on Whatman, and the remaining seventy on still a third paper variety, Roma, with a special Ezra Pound watermark, affording multiple collecting opportunities for Pound’s admirers and patrons. Shown here are sample unbound Whatman and Roma sheets.

Harry Crosby and The Black Sun/Editions Narcisse
Harry Crosby, a decorated Great war veteran and Harvard graduate, went to Paris to work in the Morgan-Harjes Bank, conveniently owned by his uncle J.P. Morgan. With his wife Caressé, also a poet, Crosby soon plunged into Parisian literary life. At first, the Crosbys had their books privately printed by Darantière and others, but from 1927 they found a small printer, Roger Lescaret, to produce fine editions for issue under a new imprint, Editions Narcisse (named for Caressé’s dog), which in due course became Black Sun Press. Soon they were issuing works by other writers, including Poe, James, Wilde, Joyce and D. H. Lawrence. After Harry Crosby committed suicide in 1929, Caressé Crosby continued Black Sun Press and added also a new imprint of paperback reprints, Crosby Continental Editions.
The copy shown of Harry Crosby’s privately-printed Anthology (Dijon: Daran-tierre, 1924) carries an ownership inscription by Alfred Chapin Rogers of Columbia, dated to the year of publication. The small broadside with Harry Crosby’s thoughts on death (perhaps a commemorative piece after the suicide) is not in George R. Minkoff’s standard Bibliography of the Black Sun Press (1970). The three items in vellum wrappers are Kay Boyle’s Short Stories (Black Sun/Editions Narcisse, 1929), James Joyce’s Tales Told of Shem and Shaun (Black Sun, 1929, with the Brancusi ‘portrait’ of Joyce), and Ezra Pound’s Imaginary Letters (Black Sun, 1930). Also displayed is Joyce’s Collected Poems, published by Black Sun in New York in 1936. The photo of Harry and Caresse Crosby in 1927 is from Minkoff’s bibliography.

Three Paris Expatriate Periodicals
Shown here are the first number of Ford Madox Ford’s transatlantic review, January 1924 (with contributions by Pound, Conrad, T. S. Eliot and McAlmon); two numbers of Edward Titus’s recently-acquired review, This Quarter, from October 1929 (with contributions by Morley Callaghan and Countee Cullen) and December 1931 (open at Hemingway’s ‘The Sea Change’); and the satiric Paris monthly Boulevardier, for October 1928 (open at Charles Huse’s affectionate Hemingway parody “The Real Basques”).

Edward W. Titus and the Black Manikin
Along with running a rare bookshop, at the sign of the Black Manikin, Edward Titus published limited editions of several expatriate authors, subsidized initially by his estranged wife Helena Rubinstein of cosmetic fame. Displayed are: Ralph Cheever Dunning, Rococo (1926, the first

**Lady Chatterley in Paris: Titus, Obelisk and the Pirates**

Just as Shakespeare and Company profited in the mid-twenties from the illicit reputation of Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Titus profited from his courage in republishing Lawrence’s novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (first published in Florence in 1928), unexpurgated, though with Titus’s name discreetly absent from the title-page. Shown here are Titus’s edition (1929, with Lawrence’s preface on piracies for the pornography market, rebound), a contemporary pirated edition ("Paris: privately printed, 1930"), and a 1936 Paris edition from Obelisk Press. Obelisk, owned by the English expatriate Jack Kahane and soon to publish works by both Henry Miller and Anais Nin, was known chiefly for pornography.

**Expatriates in the Thirties**

Peter Neagoe’s important anthology *Americans Abroad* (The Hague: Servire, 1932, rebound) included virtually every expatriate American writer from the previous decade, with brief biographical information; Neagoe’s introduction contrasted the artistic freedom available in Paris with the constraints of American publishing, and shown here is the entry on Henry Miller, who “came to Paris to study vice,” and whose “last book, a novel, will be published anonymously.” Also displayed are Katherine Anne Porter’s *French Song Book* (Paris: Harrison, 1933, open to show the signed
limitation page), and the first volume of Henry Church’s new series Mesures (Paris, 1935), featuring a French translation of Dorothy Richardson by Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier.

**French printing/Anglo-American writers: Darantiere and others**
The three titles shown here provide samples of contemporary French book-production for comparison with the expatriate publishers. All three titles are beautifully preserved. *Sept poèmes des Barrack Room Ballads traduits* (Dijon: Darantiere, 1925) was a non-commercial private publication issued by the printer who also set Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Walt Whitman, *Feuille d’herbe*, 2 vols. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1922), and André Maurois’s pathbreaking Shelley biography, *Ariel* (Paris: Grasset, 1923) also illustrate French interest in English and American writers.

**Imprint searching in USCAN**
This kind of study, linking groups of texts and authors by place, date or publisher’s imprint, is facilitated by the keyword searching and search-delimiters in Thomas Cooper Library’s on-line catalogue, USCAN. To limit a search to the imprint field, add .260. immediately after the place, publisher, or date. The best searches will combine at least two search-terms. For example, to find books in the USC library system published in Paris in 1922, enter:

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  k paris.260. 1922.260.
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To find Special Collections books only, add suca. For example, to find Special Collections books published in Paris by Edward W. Titus, enter:

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  k paris.260. Titus.260. suca
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To find Special Collections books published by Three Mountains Press, incorporate the link-term “adj” (for adjacent):

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  k Three adj Mountains.260. suca
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