

William Morris and the Art of Everyday Life

Edited by

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**P U B L I S H I N G**

giving the word the emphasis it might have had in the poetry of Chaucer, and in performance forcing Morris's readers into the position of medieval listeners.

<sup>28</sup> Carole Silver, *The Romance of William Morris* (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 1982), 60.

<sup>29</sup> Boos, "Introduction," *The Earthly Paradise*, 20.

<sup>30</sup> This is why it is so shocking that the Pope's *hope* fails in "The Hill of Venus" when he hears the climax of Walter's story ("every hope / Failed with that last word," l. 1458-9). The Pope's conjecture about the blooming of his staff is a negative, and almost even a malediction: "just so much hope I have of thee / As on this dry staff fruit and flowers to see!" (l. 1461-2). In the spiritual sense, he has suddenly lost his faith in miracles; in aesthetic terms, he has lost his capacity to wonder.

<sup>31</sup> The envoi form addresses itself to a person or object. In the case of Morris's "Envoi," it is to both: first to the book, and then, beginning on line 50, to Chaucer himself (in words which Morris's singer is apparently teaching his book to recite).

<sup>32</sup> The metaphor is so organic that it may be simultaneously an example and an adaptation of Morris's active reading in one of his "master's" particular surviving works:

For out of olde felde, as men seyth,  
Cometh al this newe corne from yer to yere,  
And out of old bokes, in good feyth,  
Cometh al this newe science that men lere.

(Chaucer, *Parliament of Fowls*, *The Riverside Chaucer*, l. 22.)

<sup>33</sup> Morris, "The Beauty of Life [1880]," *Collected Works*, Vol. XXII, 56.

## CHAPTER THREE

### A CRITIQUE OF THE EMPTY PAGE: MORRIS'S "LESSER ARTS" AT THE KELMSCOTT PRESS

FLORENCE S. BOOS

In his *Critique of Everyday Life* (1947, 1961, 1981), the Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre construed ordinary human experience as a state of unstable equilibrium, troubled by unease, quiet alienation and repressed desires for radical change.<sup>1</sup> In language reminiscent of William Morris's impassioned pleas for an 'art of the people,' Lefebvre also called for new studies of "everyday life, with the idea, or rather the project (the programme), of transforming it," and a "[c]ritique of everyday life [which would] encompass ... a critique of art by the everyday, and a critique of the everyday by art."<sup>2</sup>

Few of Morris's endeavours might seem more remote from the ideals of his socialist engagement than his practices as the founder and manager of the Kelmscott Press. He himself, however, vigorously defended his undertaking as a utopian protest against capitalist practices which had destroyed the art of bookmaking, as they had destroyed—or corrupted—everything else. As William Peterson paraphrased this view in his introduction to *The Ideal Book*, "[o]ne cannot understand the moral intensity of Morris's typographical writings without realizing that he [did] not merely wish to improve the printing of books: in fact ... he want[ed] to alter the course of Western history."<sup>3</sup> In Jeffrey Skoblow's view,

to make beautiful things, for Morris, [was] to make unalienated things, to reclaim the thing-ness of things from the dilutions, adulterations, and abstractions of commodification—a material act nevertheless also 'the embodiment of dreams', a utopian vision that owe[d] as much to Keats as to Marx, the redemption of the senses.<sup>4</sup>

And in Elizabeth C. Miller's interpretation,

Morris's print work hearken[ed] back to an idealist tradition in which art occupie[d] a higher plane and serve[d] as an ethical model, but also dr[ew] on Aestheticism and Marxism to complicate that tradition by continually insisting on the artificiality of this ideal.<sup>5</sup>

Morris set forth his own aims for the press in a series of lectures and interviews in the early and mid-nineties. In 1893, for example, a reporter from the *Daily Chronicle* quoted Morris's conviction that "a book is nowadays perhaps the most satisfactory work of art one can make or have. The best work of art of all to create is a house.... A book comes next, and between a house and a book a man can do very well."<sup>6</sup> In more direct terms Morris told an interviewer for *Bookselling* in 1895,

I felt that for the books I loved and cared for there might be attempted a presentation ... which should be worthy of one's feelings. That is all. The ideas we cherish are worth preserving, and I fail to see why a beautiful form should not be given to them, as well as an ugly one.... Why should not every book be 'a thing of beauty'?'<sup>7</sup>

In "The Ideal Book," Morris expressed a closely related conviction that

[t]he picture-book is not, perhaps, absolutely necessary to man's life, but it gives us such endless pleasure, and is so intimately connected with the other absolutely necessary art of imaginative literature that it must remain one of the very worthiest things towards the production of which reasonable men should strive.<sup>8</sup>

Morris's views of the "lesser arts" were deeply and passionately intertwined with his historicist (and by main force of character, utopian-retrospective) conviction that

the earth which ... for many ages grew in beauty as men grew in numbers and power, is now growing uglier day by day.... [T]here was no effort or wonder about it when it [a Cotswold laborer's cottage] was built, though its beauty makes it strange now.... That was the natural course of things.... men could do no otherwise when they built than give some gift of beauty to the world: but all is turned inside out now, and when men build they cannot but take away some gift of beauty, which Nature or their own forefathers have given to the world.<sup>9</sup>

Decades later, Lefebvre described the twentieth-century's fall from such prelapsarian grace in similar terms:

How could we not grasp the works of the past? They interest us, they fascinate us, and we call upon them desperately to give us a sense and a style. In the name of the vast emptiness which is everyday life, our everyday life, we look towards everything which could point to or perpetuate a plenitude.... We perceive them as art objects, whereas in fact this art was not something external to the everyday or, as is supposed, high above it and trying in vain to enter it, but *a style of life*. What we perceive as theories and philosophies were in fact ways of everyday living.<sup>10</sup>

At times, however, Morris acknowledged the looming presence of a deeper question, which various simulacra of "the Social Revolution" might or might not answer: "How shall we set about giving people without traditions of art eyes with which to see works of art?"<sup>11</sup> In what follows, I will firstly ask whether Morris's practices at the Kelmscott Press were principled acts of heartfelt defiance or attempts to offer partial answers to these searching questions. I will then subject 'virtual' twenty-first-century representations of his works to a brief but earnest 'Morrisian' critique.

### 'Everyday' Practices at the Kelmscott Press

Morris chose fifty-two works (in sixty-six volumes) for reprinting at his labor of love, the Kelmscott Press. The print runs ranged from two hundred (for *The Life and Death of Jason*) to fifteen hundred (for *Gothic Architecture*),<sup>12</sup> and many of his choices—including the tributes to William Caxton embodied in reprinting the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, *The Golden Legend*, *The History of Reynard the Foxe*, *The History of Godefrey of Boloyne*, and of course, *The Canterbury Tales*<sup>13</sup>—clearly reflected his personal preference for poetry and medieval texts. Free of orthodox Arnoldian prescriptions to single out "the best which has been thought and said,"<sup>14</sup> Morris reprinted Aesop, for example, but no Plato or Sophocles; from the Renaissance and seventeenth century no Bunyan or Milton, but More's *Utopia*, Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, *The Poems of William Shakespeare* and *Poems Chosen out of the Works of Robert Herrick*; from the eighteenth only a translation of the Georgian Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani's *Book of Wisdom and Lies*; and from the nineteenth *The Poems of John Keats*, *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* and *Poems Chosen Out of the Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, but nothing by Wordsworth or Byron.

By contrast, Morris's generously idiosyncratic list of medieval works included *Syr Percyvelle of Gales*, *Syr Isambrace*, *The Floure and the Leafe*, & *the Boke of Cupid*, *Sire Degrevaunt*, *The Order of Chivalry*, *Psalmi Penitentiales*, and *Laudes Beatae Mariae Virginis*, as well as his

own translations of *Beowulf*, *The Tale of King Florus and the Fair Jehane*, *The Tale of the Emperor Coustans*, *Of the Friendship of Amis and Amille*, *Child Christopher*, and *L'Ordre de Chevalerie*. Scenes from *Percyville*, *Isambrace* and *Degreveant* appeared in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's Oxford Union murals, and *Amis and Amille* may have formed the basis of an early draft of a tale for the *Earthly Paradise*.<sup>15</sup>

From the nineteenth century, Morris also reprinted Tennyson's *Maud: A Monodrama*, a favorite of his Pre-Raphaelite youth, and six works of his own poetry, as well as *A Dream of John Ball*, *News from Nowhere* and four historical romances. He also found room for the poetry of several friends and collaborators: A. C. Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon*, D. G. Rossetti's *Ballads and Narrative Poems* and *Sonnets and Lyrical Poems*, and—perhaps less happily—Wilfred Scawen Blunt's *Love Lyrics and Songs of Proteus*. Prose choices included Rossetti's *Hand and Soul*, Ruskin's "The Nature of Gothic," (with Morris's own "Gothic Architecture" as a companion piece), and *Sidonia the Sorceress*, a sensational favorite of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood he described to an interviewer as "Lady Wilde's translation of that wonderful story of the German witch-fever by Meinhold."<sup>16</sup> In none of the series' sixty-six volumes did he find any room for a 'realist' work of nineteenth-century fiction.

As for his editorial practices, as Charles LaPorte has observed, Morris was no editorial purist even by the latitudinarian standards of Victorian scholarly norms: "[His] design [for the Chaucer] entail[ed] a single, resonant text, while medieval manuscript culture afforded only fragmented and often contradictory Chaucer texts."<sup>17</sup> In this context, the following pre-publication exchange may be relevant:

[Interviewer:] And now, Mr. Morris, tell me of your Chaucer. What is the edition you intend publishing to be like? Old English or modern, bowdlerized or uncorrupted, including the things of which the authorship is questionable, or strictly adhering to what is Chaucer's beyond a doubt?

[Morris:] Old English, of course, and certainly not bowdlerized. I think I shall include the 'Romaunt of the Rose,' and in fact everything that is generally included in a good edition of Chaucer.<sup>18</sup>

In the event, Morris and his editor F. S. Ellis used the newly-minted scholarly edition by W. W. Skeat, Professor of Anglo Saxon at Cambridge, but omitted Skeat's apparatus, which noted variations between existing texts and queried the authenticity of certain works traditionally ascribed to Chaucer.<sup>19</sup>

Morris's broad responses to his interviewers and potential critics arguably reflected a personal belief in an eclectic and changing process of textual transmission expressed in his design of the *Earthly Paradise*, where Greek-speaking medieval Elders tell classical Mediterranean tales to shipwrecked northern Wanderers who reply with 'Scandinavian' and 'Germanic' counterparts, refracted through 'medieval' lenses and transmitted by a nineteenth-century author. Literary palimpsests (such as the aforementioned "Lady Wilde's translation of ... [the] story of ... German witch-fever by Meinhold") had an intrinsic value for Morris, and he understood more than most that what reader-response theorists now call "misreadings" and "misprisions" can have worthy lives of their own.<sup>20</sup>

### Idiosyncratic 'Design'

Morris in his role as director of the Press insisted on firm, clear typefaces and an "architecture," or harmoniously designed page, with relatively small upper margins, larger ones below, and slightly smaller ones at the side. The minuteness of some of his prescriptions reflected an intense response to detail:

[L]egibility is the first thing to be aimed at in the forms of the letters; this is best furthered by the avoidance of irrational swellings and spiky projections, and by the using of careful purity of line. Even the Caslon type when enlarged shows great shortcomings in this respect: the ends of many of the letters such as the *t* and *e* are hooked up in a vulgar and meaningless way, instead of ending in the sharp and clear stroke of Jenson's letters; there is a grossness in the upper finishings of letters like the *c*, the *a*, and so on, an ugly pear-shaped swelling defacing the form of the letter.<sup>21</sup>

He also rejected delicate contemporary typefaces and larger 'leadings' (or spaces between lines), and insisted on minimal letter-spacing, saturated black inks on white, crisp paper, and very bold typefaces, such as 'Troy' (Gothic), 'Golden' (Roman) and 'Chaucer' (a smaller Troy). No one who has ever looked at a Kelmscott book will forget the radiance of its paper and the sharp contrast of its dark letters. Morris also had firm things to say about an "ideal" book's size:

I wish to make a protest against the superstition that only small books are comfortable to read; .... a small book seldom does lie quiet, and you have either to cramp your hand by holding it, or else to put it on the table with a paraphernalia of matters to keep it down, a table-spoon on one side, a knife on another, and so on, which things always tumble off at a critical moment.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout his life, Morris sought to reconcile a kind of dialectical tension or *coincidentia oppositorum* between ideals of 'simplicity' and intricate 'ornamentation.' The former was most evident in the 'plainness' and immediacy of his essays and poetic diction, but he could be content with relatively unornamented pages if they seemed to him structurally handsome, and printed some longer works at the Press in this spirit. In a few instances, he even warned against 'gratuitous' ornamentation: "The essential point to be remembered is that the ornament, whatever it is, whether picture or pattern-work, should form *part of the page*, should be a part of the whole scheme of the book."<sup>23</sup> All the same, his enthusiasm for visual ornamentation was irrepressible, and many arabesques and flourishes found honoured places as "part[s] of the whole scheme." Indeed, ornament was one of Morris's special passions—a dialectical anti-synthesis, once again, to the synthesis of his remarkably direct and straightforward speech. In "The Ideal Book," for example, he asserted that "no doubt from [good] craftsmanship definite ornament will arise, and will be used, sometimes with wise forbearance, sometimes with prodigality equally wise."<sup>24</sup> And in "Printing," he praised woodcut-illustrated medieval books as amongst the most delightful works of art that have ever been produced," and asserted that if one "added really beautiful ornament and pictures, printed books might once again illustrate ... that a work of utility might be also a work of art."<sup>25</sup>

Most tellingly of all, Morris designed (according to Sydney Cockerell) no less than *three hundred and eighty-four* initials of various sizes and *six hundred and forty-four* designs for the Press, ranging from frames, borders, half borders, and title pages to line endings, printer's marks and decorative initial words.<sup>26</sup> In early Kelmscott books, for example, paragraph signs rather than spaces marked new beginnings. Like the heavy lead dividers of early Morris and Company stained glass windows, they divided their texts within pages and across openings, before smaller and more graceful leaves in two varieties replaced them in 1893. Many who have viewed Kelmscott designs in black and white reproductions may also be unaware of Morris's pervasive use of rubrication for contrast and simple emphasis. Not only were titles set in red, but also glosses, refrains, footnotes, chapter-headings, brief summaries at the sides of pages, and instances of indirect discourse.

The profusion of Morris's designs and devices also permitted him to vary the configurations from page to page. Nineteenth-century readers encountered such echeloned devices as initial S's in a column, or white-on-black and black-on-white initials on facing pages; or cascading leaves which set off a summary or "argument" from particular blocks of text.

Prose chapters and subdivisions were naturally graced with special titles and borders, but so also were tales, "books," and individual poems within larger units. In works such as the Kelmscott Chaucer, the fractal self-similarities become so complex that it becomes difficult if not impossible for a reader to discern whether they replicate each other.

All of this was broadly compatible with Ruskinian (or quasi-Ruskinian) principles of "savageness," "changefulness," "naturalism," "rigidity" and "redundance" set out in "The Nature of Gothic," a favorite text Morris reprinted for the Kelmscott Press. "Changefulness, or variety," for example, according to Ruskin must include periods of "darkness" and "repetition," for "monotony in a certain measure, used in order to give value to change ... is as essential in architectural as in all other composition; .... those who will not submit to the temporary sameness, but rush from one change to another, gradually dull the edge of change itself."<sup>27</sup> Ruskin's principle of "naturalism"—the demand for natural forms tempered by respect for "fact"<sup>28</sup>—also accorded well with Morris's verdant designs modeled on stylized representations of natural forms or their representations. According to Cockerell, Morris designed one of his new alphabets "with backgrounds of naturalesque grapes and vine leaves ... [after] a visit to Beauvais, where the great porches are carved with vines."<sup>29</sup> The most unequivocally Morrisian of Ruskin's principles may have been "redundance," which Ruskin defined as the

uncalculating bestowal of the wealth of its labour.... a magnificent enthusiasm, which feels as if it never could do enough to reach the fullness of its ideal; an unselfishness of sacrifice ... ; and, finally, a profound sympathy with the fullness and wealth of the material universe.<sup>30</sup>

A spirit of such "redundance" animated designs such as the elaborate opening of *The Earthly Paradise*, set into double borders with an inlaid background for a title whose tracery recalls Morris's earlier hand-illuminated manuscripts, and an assortment of line-ending designs and carefully placed leaves which intertwine to form a column (see figs. 3.1 and 3.2).

Thirty-three especially luxuriant initial words—the stately "Whan," for example, which opens the *Prologue of the Canterbury Tales*—appeared in the Press's three final volumes: *The Well at the World's End* (1896), *The Works of Chaucer Newly Imprinted* (1896), and the posthumous *Water of the Wondrous Isles* (1897), in some cases apparently designed for a single use.<sup>31</sup> Thorstein Veblen—a critic of the Arts and Crafts movement<sup>32</sup>—singled out the "impossibility of more than a single use" as one of the features of excess practised by a leisure class but as there are many

interpretations, so there are many uses. A few of Morris's ornaments—for example, the emphatically arched "L" of "Long ago" and inset assurance that "help is to hand in the wood perilous," in the frontispiece design of *The Well at the World's End*—seem expressions of yearning from a man whose life-force waned with each passing month. Others, by contrast—such as the rather lovely and elegantly patterned "O Hatefull" in the Lawyer's Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales* (see fig. 3.3)<sup>33</sup>—seem ironic or wryly humorous literary counterparts of the sardonic bits in stone-carved medieval caricatures.

In the first volume of *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel de Certeau praised patterns of "poaching" (*braconnage*) as decisions to cut across the prescribed preserves of everyday life. Reading, for de Certeau, was a prime example, as he remarked:

readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves.... reading [is] characterized ... by advances and retreats, tactics and games played with the text. This process comes and goes, alternately captivated ... playful, protesting, fugitive.<sup>34</sup>

Such acts of Schwejkian resistance may be rarer than Lefebvre or Morris hoped, but Morris's variations, flourishes and rubricated displays invited readers to "open the book and (re)write it in their own way."<sup>35</sup>

### Morris's Revisions of His Own Works

Several of Morris's deepest preferences animated his designs for the Kelmscott editions of his own works. He began with *The Glittering Plain* and *Poems by the Way* (1891), and later reprinted several of their predecessors in rough chronological order. *Sigurd the Volsung* was uncompleted at his death, but he made initial plans for the *House of the Wolfings* (1889),<sup>36</sup> and may have intended to follow it with a reprint of its successor, *The Roots of the Mountains* (1889). *Poems by the Way*, the second book issued at the Press, was 197 pages long in Golden type, and used—as Cockerell once again tells us—fifty-nine different initials, as well as letters in red typeface in several of its Scandinavian ballads—"The Wooing of Hallbiorn," "Hildebrand and Hellelil," "The King of Denmark's Sons," and "Hafbur and Signy"—which marked forebodings or sinister events in their refrains.<sup>37</sup> In "The Wooing of Hallbiorn," for example, a tale from the Icelandic *Landnámabók* with many resemblances to *The Earthly Paradise's* "Lovers of Gudrun,"<sup>38</sup> red highlights appeared

in the fiddler Snaebiorn's refrain, "*So many times over comes summer again, / What healing in summer if winter be vain,*" to presage the bride Hallgerd's future suicide and Snaebiorn's bloody falling out with his brother Hallbiorn, Hallgerd's husband. Rubrication of the refrain "*So fair upriseth the rim of the sun. / So grey is the sea when day is done*" played a similar role in "The King of Denmark's Sons," and rubrication-as-premonition appears in other non-Scandinavian works such as "Verses for Pictures," "For the Briar Rose," "Tapestry Trees," and political parables such as "A Death Song" and "The God of the Poor." By contrast, Morris used large, dignified black initials in the Kelmscott reprint of poems such as "Love Fulfilled," "Meeting in Winter," "A Garden by the Sea," "From the Upland to the Sea" and "Thunder in the Garden," previously included in the early hand-illuminated "Book of Verse" (1870),<sup>39</sup> as well as in more bleakly elegiac and meditative love poems reprinted from the *Commonweal* versions of *The Pilgrims of Hope*: "The Message of the March Wind," "Mother and Son," and "The Half of Life Gone."

Morris had just completed the first two works he printed at the Kelmscott Press—so that they were, in effect, first editions—and others followed in the rough order of composition mentioned earlier. The first page of *The Defence of Guenevere* (1892) was set entirely in full capital letters, and Guenevere's soliloquy in *terza rima* appeared without the usual white space between stanzas. Oddly syncopated hyphenations at the ends of lines reinforce Guenevere's agitated mental state as she confronts the possibility of death. Enjambments, omissions of stanza breaks, and idiosyncratic line-overlaps which are justified rather than indented created interesting superpositions of prose cadences and rhythmic free verse. Red typeface again reinforced the urgency and dramatic intensity of particular passages and refrains in seventeen of the volume's thirty poems as well as the running notes and stage directions of "Galahad: A Christmas Mystery" and "Sir Peter Harpdon's End." The ominous effects of such heightening are especially striking in the long refrains of "The Wind" and "The Blue Closet," so much so that the thirteen poems which appeared in black typeface—"The Defence of Guenevere" among them—seem sober, even stark by comparison.

Also in 1892, Morris (re)published his great political romances *News from Nowhere* and *A Dream of John Ball*. *A Dream of John Ball*, relatively short at 126 pages, is graced by Edward Burne-Jones's oft-reprinted frontispiece "When Adam Delved and Eve Span" and the elegant borders of the work's opening page. Morris also utilized the text's many paragraph-marks as conversational shifts, often arranged to form patterns on a page, and large capitals appeared in three extradiegetic passages. The

first highlighted a coded password ("JOHN THE MILLER, THAT GROUND SMALL, SMALL, SMALL / THE KING'S SON OF HEAVEN SHALL PAY FOR ALL"). The second served as the inscription on a cup (IN THE NAME OF THE TRINITY FILL THE CUP AND DRINK TO ME). And the third, an end-marker, closed the work's final line (HERE ENDS A DREAM OF JOHN BALL). Morris also employed fairly complicated patterns of linked initials—large and small, white and black, in letters chosen from different alphabet-sets, and arranged in alternately symmetrical and asymmetrical designs. He abbreviated chapter titles in rubricated running letters but reserved red typeface in the body for notes and indirect discourse in three places: the banner of "When Adam delved and Eve span"; in scholarly glosses of a pennon in the left margin of page 41; and the words "forestaller" and "regrater" on page 91.

At 305 pages, *News from Nowhere* was the longest of Morris's works issued at the press to date, and in it he deployed the greater range of initial letters he had by this point designed. Even more widely reprinted than "When Adam delved" has been C. M. Gere's frontispiece-woodcut of Kelmscott Manor, *Nowhere's* journey's end, inscribed "THIS IS THE PICTURE OF THE OLD HOUSE BY THE THAMES / TO WHICH THE PEOPLE OF THIS STORY WENT." Flowers and a small leaf frame the inscription, and the text's marginal headers provide glosses as well as chapter titles.<sup>40</sup> The volume's most striking use of red typeface is in the inscription on the side of the Coach House ("Guests and neighbors . . . Drink a glass to the memory [of the Socialist League]! May 1962") but Morris also employed it to designate the speakers in an interpolated prose dialogue ("Hammond" and "I"); in explanatory glosses—of "elegant" as opposed to "genteel", for example (p. 143); and to mark the transition to the speaker's final vision in the passage which begins, "I lay in my bed in my house in dingy Hammersmith thinking about it all" (p. 304).

*The Wood Beyond the World* (1894) opened with a Walter Crane frontispiece which depicted a tall graceful woman—presumably the "Maid"—in a forest, her head adorned with flowers, and each of *The Wood's* thirty-six chapters began with a different border design of intertwined leaves. Morris's new Troy Gothic type and set of graceful black initials gave him a new palette of ornaments to work with, and he began to use alternating leaf designs as graceful paragraph and quotation markers. Red typeface disappeared entirely from its text, but survived in the volume's elaborate chapter-openings, whose borders, large initials and black Gothic-letter text were interspersed with more delicate leaves and initials.

*The Life and Death of Jason* (1895) was the last of Morris's major poetic works to appear in his lifetime. Its handsome quarto volume in Troy type was again graced by a pair of Burne-Jones woodcuts, the first a frontispiece, in which Jason seizes the Fleece while Medea diverts its guardian dragon, and the second an end piece in which Medea stands before the prophetess Circe as the latter reads a book which presumably records her fate. The work's final device was a new "Kelmscott" colophon, engraved in large Gothic letters (fig. 3.4). An interviewer for *Bookselling* praised the "noble-looking volume" as follows:

Mr. Morris allowed us to examine the volume, the pages of which glistened again with the beautiful black type on the choice white paper. We have seen many of Mr. Morris's Kelmscott Press editions, but none to our mind that excelled this for nobility of appearance and beauty of effect.<sup>41</sup>

The volume's seventeen internal "book"-numbers appeared in each page's margin in red, and each such book began with a red title, large initial, and elaborate border for the first page. Especially large and detailed borders framed the volume's first and last pages, and the first page's abrupt line-divisions resembled those of the Kelmscott *Guenevere*. Small leaves demarcated the poem's stanzas, and its large pages provided space for more complicated designs. Morris's *Jason* also deepened and heightened the original role of Orpheus, whose songs heartened the fearful Argonauts and accompanied their quest. Morris designed special ornaments to pay homage to these poems within the poem (see fig. 3.5). Special borders in the inner right margins, for example, identify the antiphonal responses of Orpheus and the Sirens in book XIV.

*The Earthly Paradise* (1896-7) appeared posthumously in eight volumes and 1,467 pages but the "idle singer"'s famous (and often misinterpreted) "Apology" ("Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time / Why should I strive to set the crooked straight") was excised.<sup>42</sup> The last four volumes were "Printed by the Trustees of the late William Morris at the Kelmscott Press" but a final note informed readers that Morris himself had designed all the work's borders but one, prepared at his direction by R. Catterson-Smith. In all likelihood, he also corrected proofs for the first few volumes, and designed most of the work's frontispieces and page-designs as well as the earlier sections' arrangements of initials. Morris's longest work may briefly be characterized as a vast imbrication of frames within frames. An outermost "singer" offers twelve "poems of the months," and each month has a prologue and two tales—one medieval and one classical—told by native Greek "Elders" and their guests, Scandinavian "Wanderers" in flight from the Black Death. Interspersed

between the tales are passages in which the outer frame's singer interprets the inner audience's response, each month's tales conclude with an epilogue, and the work ends with a valedictory "envoi."

As I mentioned earlier, the work's specially elaborate first opening (fig. 3.2), includes an ornamented border, an 'argument' in full capitals, a title framed by leaves, and an initial "F" (for "Forget") which blends into the border's other designs. The first lines are divided by diagonally patterned leaves, and the 'poems of the months' are decorated by borders which isolate and separate them from the text. Each tale's title is set in red typeface, as in previous volumes; red type returns once again from time to time, to mark names of speakers and the titles and refrains of songs (cf. "Outlanders, whence come ye last? / The snow in the street and the wind on the door" in vol. 5, pp. 75-77), and signals the emotional charge of certain direct quotations—for example, the missive ordering Michael's death in "The Man Born to Be King," which Cecily reads and rewrites to save his life (vol. I, p. 178-80).<sup>43</sup> Red type in the Bellerophon tales also highlights Proteus' order to Bellerophon to undertake a lethal adventure and Philonoe's letter in which she warns him of a secret plot and professes her love. The latter is also decorated with the sole set of red leaves to appear in all of Morris's published writings (vol. 7, 139-40; vol. 8, 19-20, 50).

The last few Kelmscott volumes also included two of his prose romances, *The Well at the World's End* (1896), and *The Water of the Wondrous Isles* (1897).<sup>44</sup> Morris reportedly prepared all the designs for the latter but two: large initials for "Whilom" and "Empty," completed once again by R. Catterson-Smith. Both volumes employed borders and red typeface to accent chapter headings but no red within the text. Striking in both volumes is their use of large woodcut initial words (not letters) surrounded by ornamental borders. Each of *The Well at the World's End's* four 'books' begins with such a woodcut, an illustration by Edward Burne-Jones and a frontispiece with a woodblock for the caption underneath the illustration. One of Morris's best interspersed poems appeared in *The Well at the World's End* (pp. 250-53), and each volume concluded with the new colophon used earlier in *Jason* (fig. 3.4).

*Love Is Enough*, Morris's medieval masque of spiritual longing and the Press's last volume of his poetry, appeared in octavo and Golden type in 1897. Probably in accordance with Morris's wishes, the printers used red highlighting for stage-directions and speakers' names, and subtle blends of black, white, blue and red to decorate the interventions of "Music," the work's internal narrator. Nine months before his death, Morris wrote that

a book which I am making ready for printing, and in which I shall put all I know, is my *Sigurd*. I don't want to say much about it now, but of all my books, I want to have this one more especially embodied in the most beautiful form I can give it. Burne-Jones will illustrate it, and it will be printed in the Troy type, and on a folio sheet. I am even looking forward myself to seeing it finished.<sup>45</sup>

Sadly he did not live to finish his plans for *Sigurd*, or for *The House of the Wolfings*, a work of poems linked by prose passages which might have offered a generically eclectic literary miniature of Wagnerian *Musikdrama*.<sup>46</sup>

### A 'Virtual' Ideal Book?

The exquisite intricacy of the Kelmscott Press's designs raises an obvious probing question posed by Morris's contemporary interviewers. *How*—if at all—can one possibly construe these works as examples of "popular" art? Most of Morris's published works are now available online in some form via Google, Kindle and the Gutenberg Project, as well as in reprints and on compact disks, and electronic "archives" of the works of other Victorian poets are in various stages of development in several countries. My own efforts to create an edition of the works of Morris (<http://morrisedition.lib.uiowa.edu>) have forced me to confront the limitations of such editions in general, and their compatibility or incompatibility with Morris's exacting views of the "lesser arts" in particular.

The best *raison d'être* for such editions derive from their potential *social* value. Digital reproductions of scholarly texts sold by information-delivery corporations such as JSTOR, Project Muse, Google Books, and Kindle are profit-making ventures whose corporate owners are free to ignore the express desires and original intentions of their authors. The Morris Online Edition and comparable sites would—or at least should—take authorial desires and intentions seriously, and make their texts and images available to all without elaborate licensing arrangements, and without fee.<sup>47</sup>

Here, I believe, the spirit of Morris would vigorously concur. The Kelmscott Press was an expensive bibliophilic undertaking, but Morris worked tirelessly to make his writings on art, architecture and socialism available at low cost, in many print formats, and in more than one language,<sup>48</sup> and told an interviewer for the *Daily Chronicle* in 1893 with obvious regret that "I wish—I wish indeed that the cost of the books was less, only that is impossible if the printing and the decoration and the paper and binding are to be what they should be."<sup>49</sup> Much depended and depends



on the modal and ethical nuances of what “should” be, and the boundary conditions of what is “possible.” To an interviewer for the *Pall Mall Gazette*, who asked him the obvious question about the production of fine books beyond the means of ordinary people, he responded as follows:

you see if we were all Socialists things would be different. We should have a public library at each street corner, where everybody should read all the best books, printed in the best and most beautiful type. I should not then have to buy all these old books, but they would be common property, and I could go and look at them whenever I wanted them, as would everybody else. Now I have to go to the British Museum, which is an excellent institution, but it is not enough.

[Reporter] It would give us a hundred British Museums instead of the one, you mean, Mr. Morris?

[Morris] Just so.<sup>50</sup>

Morris’s ‘utopian’ answer was forced in this context, but he knew that “a hundred British Museums” would hardly provide the “street corner” access he envisioned. Jeffrey Skoblow has commented mordantly on the strait gate of even scholarly access to Kelmscott books:

To engage the Kelmscott Press directly, to take the books in hand, one generally must go to one of the great plutocrat libraries—the British, say, the Morgan, or the Huntington.... I have sat with the books in these places, calling their weighty delicacies forth from hidden stacks, attended by instructions and prohibitions—a bit more carefully managed, perhaps, than pleasure is pleased to be.... Such an encounter with the Kelmscott Press is itself a kind of activity beyond reading, though the materiality of the event is, as it were, extraneously somewhat clotted, fraught with questions that are hardly the books’ own.<sup>51</sup>

By contrast: capitalists and the Pentagon created and built the internet (as the “arpanet”), and capitalists and the Pentagon (or their counterparts elsewhere) can corrupt it or take it away. But until they do, high school students and schoolteachers with internet access will be able to encounter the visual splendor of *Poems by the Way* at any virtual “street corner” in the world. Scholars will also be able to see and compare dozens of Morris’s lucidly written manuscripts as clearly as the original, and enlarge works and letters at will. Nothing may replace the “aura” of the original—the splendour in the grass, the glory of the flower. But we may well find strength in what remains behind—beautiful reproductions which may be consulted and collocated without damage or harm to the original texts.

A case has been made that no one would actually want to *read* an entire book in its ‘excessively’ large and ornate Kelmscott format. Admittedly, I have no immediate plans to read through a Kelmscott edition of the *Biblia Innocentium* or *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*. But weightless and luminous pages of texts I *do* want to read, or *have* read and deeply admire—*A Dream of John Ball*, say—fly beneath my cursor, free of the constraints of careful placement of large volumes in carefully watched locations.

All complex undertakings are of necessity cooperative projects which require the combination of many ‘artisans’—in the case of electronic editions, site designers, image editors and writers of code and assorted metadata, as well as the scholars who supervise them. Part of the enjoyment of working on such projects derives from contributions of others and the serendipity of the unexpected—a communal process Morris deeply admired and readily acknowledged (“A work of art is always a matter of cooperation,” as he put it to the *Daily Chronicle* interviewer in 1893.)<sup>52</sup> Cooperation was deeply embedded in the praxis of Morris and Company and his other endeavours, including the Kelmscott Press, with its paper-suppliers, font-makers, compositors, press-workers, not to speak of its secretary, authors, editors, illustrators and engravers. A partial portrait of the Kelmscott Press staff in 1895 showed Morris with a group of fifteen collaborators.<sup>53</sup> For Morris such skillful cooperation had been the essence of medieval labour, as well as the source of the finest books ever made. “A harmonious work of art,” for example, as he described it in his lecture on “The Woodcuts of Gothic Books,” was the collective product of “the designer of the picture-blocks, the designer of the ornamental blocks, the wood-engraver, and the printer, all of them thoughtful, painstaking artists, and all working in harmonious cooperation for the production of a work of art.”<sup>54</sup>

My modest website—prepared with minimal resources of time and skill, and dependent on the limited conventions of present-day web design—hardly exemplifies the revolutionary qualities Morris ascribed to true “art.” But it is *not* (I hope) a utilitarian project “limited by commercial exigencies” of the sort Morris mocked in “The Ideal Book,” such as “a work on differential calculus [or] a treatise on manures.”<sup>55</sup> And *it does*, I believe, put in service to a good end some of the internet’s more striking attributes: its luminosity, potential for finely graduated contrast, and the relative ease with which images and designs may be added to its “pages.” At their best, these attributes provide for preliminary approximations to Morrisian ideals of simplicity, clarity and ornamentation, and recall Ruskin’s somewhat condescending injunction to

[d]o what you can, and confess frankly what you are unable to do.... [I]t is, perhaps, the principal admirableness of the Gothic schools ... that they thus receive the results of the labour of inferior minds; and of fragments full of imperfection, and betraying that imperfection in every touch, indulgently raise up a stately and unaccusable whole.<sup>56</sup>

For electronic editions, after all, are not *books*—the world's best instruments for conveyance and retrieval of ideas and information for more than two millennia. Books are concise, durable and portable. They require no special power-sources for access, are readable from front to back, or in any other order which may be convenient, and are eminently 'searchable' ("The passage I'm looking for was about a third of the way through, on the left hand side toward the top"). They also record in homely and moving ways the physical ravages and triumphs of passage—a folded page, smudge on the cover or long-dead reader's annotations on the one hand; and the crispness of Kelmscott type impressed into a firm linen page on the other—in ways digital reproduction can only represent in mediated form.

There is also the danger digital reproduction might "murder to dissect." For Morris, each book was an integral whole and potential work of art—a "pocket cathedral," as Burne-Jones put it.<sup>57</sup> But the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven is currently advertised and sold on assorted commercial sites as an aggregate of snippet-length 'songs,' and mediocre electronic editions can present individual poems and pages of text as discrete pedantic "objects," confusingly alienated from the larger works ("*Gesamtkunstwerke*") in which their authors arranged and embedded them. Good electronic editions should therefore provide the chance to engage in genuine "browsing," and "turn pages" of books and manuscripts from "cover" to "cover." Offences such as gratuitous site-descriptions and left-justified poetic line-numbers would evoke from Morris the sort of scorn he visited on the cluttered typographical practices of his day.

Deeper problems may arise from the vulnerability, planned obsolescence and ephemeral nature of the electronic media themselves. Successors of the huge consortia which have purchased the rights to scan and disseminate the contents of entire national libraries, for example, could easily suppress or distort these records in incremental ways. (Think of the bank embezzler who diverts a single cent from every hundred dollars.) Less insidiously, the "world wide web" as we know it may soon become obsolete in its turn—unlike books and manuscripts we have set out to preserve, which have physically survived and will continue to survive for several centuries to come. If so, our endeavours will suffer in their turn the fate of Morris's other "lesser arts," "whereby men make the

things which they intend shall be beautiful, and shall last [only] somewhat beyond the passing day."<sup>58</sup> But before they vanish from the face of the earth, well-crafted 'virtual' reproductions of Morris's books may encourage more readers than he ever imagined to set aside for a moment the "blank everyday," contemplate his hopelessly utopian ideals, and hope with him "that real history ... [may be] no dead thing, but the living bond of the hopes of the past, the present, and the future."<sup>59</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *The Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*, vol. 2, trans. John Moore (London: Verso, 2002), 347: "In our view, the link between the tragic and the everyday is profound; the tragic takes shape within the everyday, comes into being in the everyday, and always returns to the everyday."

<sup>2</sup> Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 2, 2, 19. In the "Apology" to *The Earthly Paradise*, the poet's speaker refers to himself as "the idle singer of an empty day."

<sup>3</sup> William S. Peterson (ed.), *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book by William Morris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), xxiii. See also Peterson's *The Kelmscott Press: A History of William Morris's Typographical Adventure* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Jeffrey Skoblow, "Beyond Reading: Kelmscott and the Modern," *The Victorian Illustrated Book*, ed. Richard Matthews (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 241-42.

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth C. Miller, "William Morris, Print Culture, and the Politics of Aestheticism," *Modernism/Modernity* 15.3 (September 2008), 478.

<sup>6</sup> "Art, Craft, and Life: A Chat with Mr. William Morris," *We Met Morris: Interviews with William Morris, 1885-96*, ed. Tony Pinkney (Reading: Spire Books, 2005), 78.

<sup>7</sup> "The Kelmscott Press: An Interview with Mr. William Morris," *We Met Morris*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> Morris, "The Ideal Book," *The Ideal Book*, 73.

<sup>9</sup> Morris, "The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization," *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, ed. Norman Kelvin (Mineola, N. Y.: Dover, 1999), 60, 62, 64.

<sup>10</sup> Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 2, 322.

<sup>11</sup> Morris, "The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization," 67. For Morris at least, a necessary if not sufficient answer to this unanswerable question was that authentic 'popular' art should never be imitated in servile forms. At the end of an 1895 lecture on "The Early Illustration of Printed Books," he was reported as warning "those of his audience who were engaged in art work in any way to guard against the folly of imitating this early art... [T]hat time had clean passed away, and however real the continuity of history, they must recognize the enormous gulf between that period and the present. ... [L]et them do their own work for

themselves, and realize for themselves ... what kind of listening to beauty it was they wanted to express." (Peterson, *The Kelmscott Press*, 22-23).

<sup>12</sup> After Morris's death *Sigurd the Volsung* was brought out in 150 volumes on paper plus six on vellum. See W. S. Peterson, *A Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984). In addition to paper copies, six vellum copies of *Jason* were printed, and 45 vellum copies of *Gothic Architecture*.

<sup>13</sup> See Joseph Dunlap, *William Caxton and William Morris: Comparisons and Contrasts* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 1976).

<sup>14</sup> Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*, ed. Samuel Lipman (Yale: Yale University Press, 1994), 48.

<sup>15</sup> May Morris wrote: "Mr. Edmund Gosse mentions that 'more than twenty years ago I heard the poet read in his full, slightly monotonous voice a long story of Amis and Amyllion (I think those were the names) which has never, to my knowledge, appeared in print.'" (*The Collected Works of William Morris*, vol. III, London: Longman, Green & Co, 1910-1915, xii-xiii).

<sup>16</sup> *We Met Morris*, 70. Wilhelm Meinhold (1797-1851) was a German writer, theologian and pastor.

<sup>17</sup> Charles LaPorte, "Morris's Compromises: On Victorian Editorial Theory and the Kelmscott Chaucer," *Writing on the Image: Reading William Morris*, ed. David Latham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 210. LaPorte also observed that Morris reprinted Chaucer's "Retraccioun" in a format which suggested that it was one of his minor poems (211), and illustrated it with a Burne-Jones engraving of "Poesis" as a virgin-mother. Morris also preserved aspects of the original spelling but not its capitalization, revealing therewith in LaPorte's view, "the limits of his willingness to present a medieval text in all its foreign oddness" (213).

<sup>18</sup> "The Poet as Printer: An Interview with Mr. William Morris," *We Met Morris*, 57.

<sup>19</sup> LaPorte, "Morris's Compromises," 209-219.

<sup>20</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, ed. Vincent Leitch (New York: Norton, 1995), 1466-70; Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Jerome McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> Morris, "Printing," *The Ideal Book*, 63.

<sup>22</sup> Morris, "The Ideal Book," *The Ideal Book*, 72.

<sup>23</sup> Morris, "Printing," *The Ideal Book*, 65, original emphasis.

<sup>24</sup> Morris, "The Ideal Book," *The Ideal Book*, 72.

<sup>25</sup> Morris, "Printing," Peterson, *The Ideal Book*, 65-66.

<sup>26</sup> Sydney C. Cockerell, "A Short History and Description of the Kelmscott Press," *The Ideal Book*, 85.

<sup>27</sup> John Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," *The Genius of John Ruskin*, ed. John Rosenberg (London: George Allen, 1963), 188-89.

<sup>28</sup> Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," 192.

<sup>29</sup> Cockerell, "A Short History and Description of the Kelmscott Press," *The Ideal Book*, 85.

<sup>30</sup> Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic," 194, 195.

<sup>31</sup> Cockerell, "A Short History and Description of the Kelmscott Press," *The Ideal Book*, 85.

<sup>32</sup> In *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, first published in 1899, Veblen wrote: "Hence has arisen that exaltation of the defective, of which John Ruskin and William Morris were such eager spokesmen in their time.... And hence also the propaganda for a return to handicraft and household industry" (New York: Huebner, 1919, 162). Veblen seems to ignore Ruskin and Morris's critique of the conditions of labor under industrialism.

<sup>33</sup> Other word-initials in the Chaucer are "Whan," "Whilom," "There," "In," "Noght," "Among," "Pro," "At," "The," "Almighty," "Many," "Alas," "I have," "Little," "After," "Glory," "Thou," "Now," "By," "God," "Out," "But," and "Aprochen"; of these several are used more than once.

<sup>34</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 174-75.

<sup>35</sup> Paraphrasing Morris, "[S]hut the book and tell it again in your own way" (*Collected Works*, vol. III, xxii).

<sup>36</sup> Peter Stansky, *Another Book That Never Was: William Morris, Charles Gere, The House of the Wolfings* (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1998), 7.

<sup>37</sup> Other examples include "The Raven and the King's Daughter," "Agnes and the Hill-man," "The Son's Sorrow," "The Lay of Christine," and "Knight Aagen and Maiden Else," though the latter lacks a refrain. "The Raven and the King's Daughter" is the only one provided with a happy outcome, in which the king's daughter and her lover Olaf are united, though after a period of separation and bloodshed.

<sup>38</sup> *The Book of Settlements, Landnámabók*, trans. Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba press, 1972), 72-74.

<sup>39</sup> Illustrated initials in "A Book of Verse" anticipate the placement of large ornamented initials in the Kelmscott *Poems by the Way*.

<sup>40</sup> In Chapter Fifteen alone, for example, "Of Nations," "Politics of the district," "The Politics of haymaking," "Majority & minority," "How the majority is found," "Is democracy dead?" "Substitutes for democracy," and "Mutual gain & loss."

<sup>41</sup> *We Met Morris*, 122.

<sup>42</sup> One reason for the omission may have been a desire on Morris's part to begin with the elaborate title page of the opening tale, "Prologue: The Wanderers."

<sup>43</sup> Other examples include vol. 1, pp. 173 and 178; vol. 3, p. 111; vol. 4, pp. 32-33, used for the fateful scroll read by the doomed king in "The Watching of the Falcon," and p. 128; vol. 5, pp. 143 and 169, where it is used for the voice of the oracle, "Acontius will I wed today"; vol. 5, p. 219 and p. 233, for the words on a tablet; vol. 6, for the subtitles in "The Lovers of Gudrun"; and vol. 7, p. 177, to label a song.

<sup>44</sup> Other titles published in 1895 were *Syr Perceyelle of Gales*, D. G. Rossetti's *Hand and Soul*, and Morris's translations, *Child Christopher and Goldilind the Fair* and *The Tale of Beowulf*. In 1896 appeared Robert Herrick's *Poems*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Poems*, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer Newly Imprinted*,

*Laudes Beatae Mariae, The Flour and the Leaf*, and Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calendar*.

<sup>45</sup> *We Met Morris*, 121. The two designs by Burne-Jones appear in the 1898 Kelmscott *Sigurd the Volsung*, which was printed on folio pages as Morris intended.

<sup>46</sup> See Stansky, fn. 50. Of Morris's major original works, this would have left only *The Roots of the Mountains*, a natural sequel to *The House of the Wolfings*.

<sup>47</sup> In addition Marxists.org is a non-profit volunteer organization which provides access to Morris's published socialist works on-line.

<sup>48</sup> Eugene LeMire's *A Bibliography of William Morris* (London: Oak Knoll Press and the British Library, 2006), lists his publications in a wide variety of newspapers and periodicals in addition to *Commonweal* and the *Hammersmith Socialist Society Record*, among them *To-Day*, *The English Illustrated Magazine*, *The Fortnightly*, *Justice*, *True Blue*, *Women's Union Journal*, *Our Beautiful World*, and the publications of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and several foreign translations appeared in his lifetime. His *Chants for Socialists* and essays in pamphlet form such as "True and False Society," "Monopoly" and "How We Live and How We Might Live," were widely distributed at cost.

<sup>49</sup> *We Met Morris*, 71.

<sup>50</sup> *We Met Morris*, 56.

<sup>51</sup> Skoblow, "Beyond Reading," 246.

<sup>52</sup> *We Met Morris*, 77. See also Jessica DeSpain, "A Book Arts Pilgrimage: Arts and Crafts Socialism and the Kelmscott Chaucer," *Journal of William Morris Studies* 15.4 (Summer 2004): 74-90.

<sup>53</sup> Peterson, *The Ideal Book*, 109.

<sup>54</sup> Morris, "Woodcuts of Gothic Books," *The Ideal Book*, 40.

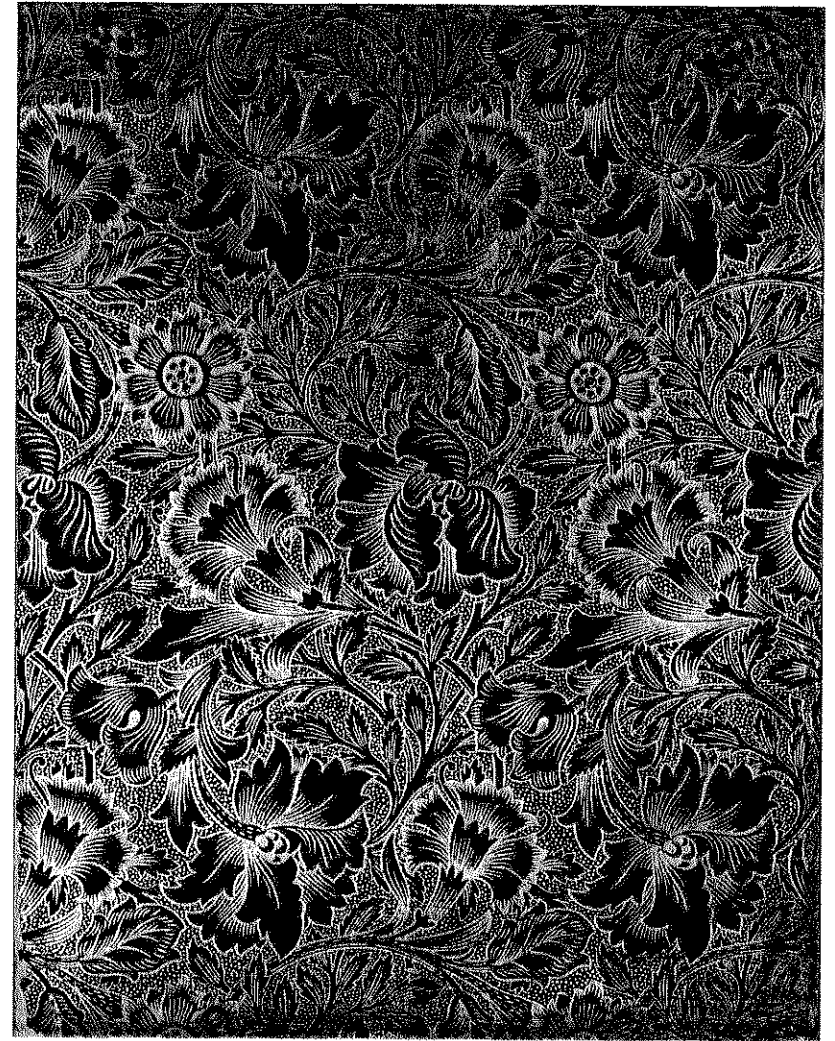
<sup>55</sup> Morris, "The Ideal Book," *The Ideal Book*, 67.

<sup>56</sup> Ruskin, "The Nature of the Gothic," 176-77. Morris reiterated a similar point in "Gothic Architecture": "if material or skill fail, the rougher work shall so be wrought that it also shall please us with its inventive suggestion" (*William Morris: Artist, Writer, Socialist*, ed. May Morris, Vol. I, Oxford: Blackwell, 1936, 275).

<sup>57</sup> Burne-Jones to Charles Eliot Norton, 1894, quoted in Paul Needham, Joseph Dunlap and John Dreyfus, *William Morris and the Art of the Book* (London: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1976), 139. In a discussion after his talk, "Woodcuts of Gothic Books," Morris is reported as responding: "But there was one thing in favour of the possibility of having beautiful books; they were self-contained" (Peterson, *The Ideal Book*, 43).

<sup>58</sup> Morris, "The Prospects of Architecture in Civilization," 56.

<sup>59</sup> Morris, "The Origins of Ornamental Art," *William Morris on Art and Socialism*, 167.



1.1. *Poppy wallpaper* (also known as *Pink and Poppy*). Designed by William Morris, 1880. Printed by Jeffrey & Co. for Morris & Co. Block-printed in silver paint and lacquer. © V&A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum, London [Museum no: E.521-1919].