This volume completes the history of Cambridge University Press from the sixteenth century to the late twentieth. It examines the ways by which the Press launched itself as a London publisher in the 1870s, building up its educational and academic lists. It charts how interests in America were advanced, how subjects were extended and the Press became an international organisation with authors and customers across the world, while at the same time developing both its printing and its publishing.

The volume explores changes in the printing industry, showing how the Press assumed a leading part in the typographical renaissance of the 1920s and 1930s, and built on this after the Second World War to acquire an international reputation for the quality of its work. In publishing as in printing, this book analyses both the pitfalls and the successes in a century of change.

The author has had full access to the Press's archives, and offers a major and innovative contribution to the history of universities and of education more generally, as well as to the history of the book.

A HISTORY OF

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

VOLUME 3

A HISTORY OF

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

VOLUME 3

NEW WORLDS
FOR LEARNING
1873–1972

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Fellow and Librarian
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PREFACE

This volume completes the planned three-volume history of University printing and publishing in Cambridge from the date when Henry VIII granted to the University the right to print *omnimodos libros*, all manner of books, to the reforms in the University Press introduced in the early 1970s. By beginning in 1534, with the legislation that made possible the appointment of the first University Printer in the 1580s – half a century after Henry VIII's licence – it thus covers a period even longer than the four centuries of University printing celebrated in 1984. In its long time-span it is unusual, and not just because Cambridge University Press is the oldest printer and publisher in the world. Although students of manuscripts have for generations been aware of the importance of the *pecia* system in the production of books for medieval universities in Bologna, Paris and Oxford in particular,[1] the later history of universities and their relations with the book trades – both manuscript and print – has emerged as a theme of widespread interest only comparatively recently. There now exists a growing body of work on individual universities. Hans Widmann's account of *Tübingen als Verlagsstadt* (1971) was part of a larger project on the history of the University of Tübingen.[2] In Italy, home of some of the earliest universities as we understand them today, the last fifteen years or so have seen (for example) exhibitions relating to Bologna and Siena.[3] In Paris, Francis Higman has examined questions of censorship in the sixteenth-century Sorbonne.[4] On the other hand, as long ago as 1884, the Société Archéologique Historique d'Orléans organised an exhibition on the University of Orleans and its relation to printing.[5] Anatole Claudin's work on the first Paris press, established in 1470,[6] and Falconer Madan's on the early Oxford press,[7] were bibliographical contributions to university history, replete with the history of the relationship between book production, learning and education. For a more recent period, and from a different angle, Christopher Wordsworth realised in the 1870s the importance of local printing to the academic life of eighteenth-century Cambridge.[8]

The press anniversary celebrations at Oxford in 1978 and at Cambridge six years later provoked work on this relationship between printing, publishing and the purposes and methods of universities over much longer periods.[9] Nonetheless, it remains the case that there have been remarkably few sustained examinations of the course of university and academic publishing, its affiliation with (and sometimes

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contradictions to) the course of research and teaching and the nature of its markets. The recent study by Valérie Tesnière of one tradition in French academic publishing, from the time of Félix Alcan in the Second Empire through to the late twentieth-century fortunes of the Presses Universitaires de France, has demonstrated something of such links.[10] University presses are both among the most obvious of all testimonies and witnesses to the aspirations and achievements of parent universities, and also frequently the means of those achievements. Such presses command central attention, and always in the contexts of their rivals commercial or otherwise, other means for the dissemination of knowledge, and wider publishing and printing history.

The three volumes on the history of Cambridge University Press have thus been written as far more than ordinary business or corporate history. Among the chronological, personal and thematic framework of a succession of private businesses, recast at the end of the seventeenth century as a corporate institution, are questions not just about the printing, publication and marketing of books produced under the University's auspices, but also about relations with other bodies – universities and schools, commercial firms, learned societies and government, besides printers' suppliers of all kinds, both in Britain and overseas. Like most activities, printing and publishing cannot be understood without contexts – personal, commercial, ideological, local, national and international. A measure of detail is essential to understanding such activities, and I have tried to show how this contributes to the larger thematic canvas. There are, of course, many omissions. Although I have made some attempt periodically to notice evidence of the use of the books, pamphlets and other products of the Press, much more remains to be done, for example, on the history of its markets. Much, too, remains to be explored in the history and influence of the journals published by the Press since the late nineteenth century. The organisation and execution of book printing in a large printing house, both in the nineteenth century and in the era of hot-metal printing, deserves greater space than could be allowed here, and the evidence for such a study is ample. On the other hand, in the absence of any recent convenient single account of the history of changes in book production in Britain, and their impact on the book trades, over four hundred and more years, I have introduced each volume with a survey providing in more general terms the manufacturing and trade contexts in which each chronological period needs to be read. In other words, this is in part a project concerning the history of the book trades in general, illustrated and tested by the fortunes of one unusually diverse and long-lived organisation.

In 1966 the bibliographical world was made aware of one part of the riches of the surviving Press archives, with the publication of D. F. McKenzie's study of the Press between 1696 and 1712.[11] As they have become more accessible over the years since, other scholars have used them for their own purposes. Apart from papers for recent years, and therefore still needed close at hand, most of the archives are now in the University Archives, in Cambridge University Library. In 1984 the

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available Press archives already consisted of about ten times what had been listed by Elisabeth Leedham-Green in 1973.[12] Since then, their bulk has grown yet further. Authors' correspondence, 'Prizing books' (recording the production costs of each book as it passed through the Printing House), day books of work done, albums of reviews and of pulls from printers' blocks all naturally bulk much larger than the formal minute books of the Press Syndicate (the University-appointed governing committee) or the annual accounts.

Like any other business, the Press had little cause to retain what was not wanted for its daily work, and for its financial and legal record. Thus, for example, for the Printing House, once a job was done and paid for, the only reason to keep related papers was for the accountants; for this there was a legal requirement, but the period was limited. Fortunately, and the more so since printing and publishing records of this kind over an extended term are by no means common,[13] the University has taken a longer view, while the University's own position in local affairs has meant the survival of a wealth of contextual material on social and economic matters. On the other hand, while those responsible for finding space for long-term archival storage may feel grateful for relief, it remains that the destruction of most of the papers from the London end – Paternoster Row, Fetter Lane and Bentley House – is to be lamented. So, too, there remains very little systematic archival record of what passed through the Printing House from soon after the start of the Second World War: for this, there is next to no correspondence, and compilation of the so-called Prizing books, that had detailed every book, periodical and pamphlet passing though the Printing House since 1852, ceased when there were more important national concerns. One result is that there is now no comprehensive record, even in the briefest of lists, of the Printing House's achievements during the 1940s to the opening of the new Printing House in 1963, including the period regarded by many as its finest. But even in the years previously, the surviving record of Bible and Prayer Book printing is only intermittent. Nor do the archives contain a comprehensive long-term record of equipment bought during the last decades of letterpress printing. For the editorial and publishing side, while author files are voluminous (albeit vigorously if patchily weeded at various times in the past), detailed sales records apparently no longer survive apart from an incomplete series of annual summaries for the late 1930s to the early 1960s, written into special copies of the annual list and designed as records of payments to authors. Annual accounts and legal records have, not surprisingly, mostly been retained more systematically. For overseas business, correspondence entering the Pitt Building, especially that addressed to Roberts and to Kingsford, and by-passing London, remains some of the most valuable. But there is no general record of what was exported, or where. As in most businesses, internal memoranda have survived only fitfully.

If drives for waste paper, periodic attempts to clear space and the processes of removal, with the attendant need to throw away what was not needed, have each

been responsible for the disappearance of much, it nevertheless remains that much more has survived of the Cambridge archive than in most printers or publishers.

To move from resources, at the head of which are of course the books and other publications themselves, to the contents of this volume and its companions, is to move not just into different kinds of questions, but also into a different framework. Amongst several motifs, one is obvious: the extent to which a history of a single university press can usefully contribute to the history of publishing, printing, the making, use and influence of books and journals more generally. In one sense it is modest. Academic publishing represents a very small proportion of the cash turnover in the book industries as a whole. Its use of paper, the best measure for printing activity, is similarly low in the national scale, even if newspaper and magazine publishing is set aside. Apart, perhaps, from some parts of Oxford University Press's general list, most bookshops during most of the twentieth century stocked few books from university presses other than Bibles, Prayer Books and reference books. As one reminder of scale, in 1974, just after the close of this volume, there were between seventy and eighty university presses in America, amongst a total of about 3,600 publishers in the country overall.[14]

If the place of histories of academic printing and publishing in the history of scholarship and education is widely accepted, their place in the history of the book more generally requires careful definition. They often transcend the boundaries of national histories of the book, and instead raise questions, for example, of linguistic frontiers and cultural expansionism. Like other kinds of publishing, they are subject to regional or subject-led contraction as well as growth. Their government and their purposes differ from other kinds of publishers, and their outlook therefore varies. For Cambridge University Press, enjoying no subsidy and with no endowment other than its own earnings, commercial issues were no less than for most other publishers; but they have usually been defined in the tensions between educational or scholarly idealism and the realities of the market-place. These three volumes have accordingly been written with several groups of interests in mind. In that they grew out of the Press's own wish to know more of its history, they have their own corporate impulse. But also, both in their content and in their methods, they are designed as an impetus to further research in the history of the book more generally, not just as a celebration of past achievements.

In little more than thirty years, between the close of this volume and today, the Press has changed as much outwardly as it has in its internal arrangements. The Printing House, completed in 1963, was still referred to by most people as the 'new' printing house at the time this volume ends in 1972. It stands looking very similar beside the railway line today. The most obvious outward differences are that it has been extended to the south to accommodate a larger binding department, and the fascia lettering has been renewed. Internally, however, the layout has been transformed, to meet changes in printing technology, in the Press's needs and in office design. Even before they entered the new building, in 1963 visitors were reminded by David Kindersley's lettering that they were arriving at a place where

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legibility and type design were of defining importance. Business was conducted from a succession of small offices, many now thrown together into larger ones. But the Monotype keyboards and the noisy excitement of casters have gone, replaced today with computer screens. So, too, have gone the foundry for making stereotype plates, and the space for melting type and recasting it as ingots for re-use by the casters. Stores of metal and plastic plates, of blocks and of standing type no longer exist. No space is needed to make up formes of type, for hand composition, or for hundreds of cases of type in store. In the press room there is much more space, partly because, for all their size, the machines are more compact. The Printing House was built to be adaptable, but no one could have guessed the scale of what that would mean within less than a generation.

This third and (for the present) last volume of the history of Cambridge University Press takes the narrative down to living memory. Like its companions, it deals with a world that is only partially recoverable. Unlike its predecessors, for which I have depended wholly on material records, in this one I have benefited from the memories of people who worked in the Printing House with its noises of the Monotype casters and the presses, besides the smell of letterpress ink; in the Monotype works near Redhill, on which so much depended; in Bentley House in Euston Road; in the old Pitt Building when it was still an editorial and publishing office; in a business world that relied on correspondence, telegrams and the telephone. I am the more grateful to those who have supplemented and corrected my own interpretations and recollections of these places in the last years of an era that looked for some of its most fundamental technology back to the fifteenth century.

A few of those still with the Press today were with it during the closing years of this account; there are many more who remember the same years, and who are now in their retirement. A very few recall it even long before the Second World War. Such memories are both a benefit and a difficulty. People have been liberal in giving their time whenever I have asked for enlightenment. This book could not have been written without such help, and I am deeply grateful to them. On the other hand, and quite apart from the deceptive tricks that can be played by memory, the conundrums faced by Tacitus at the outset of the second century AD, in writing about Tiberius and events of only seventy or eighty years previously, stand as a reminder of some of the perplexities inherent in writing the history of recent times.

Whereas the ancient historian has few critics – nobody minds if he over-praises the Carthaginian (or Roman) army – the men punished or disgraced under Tiberius have numerous descendants living today. And even when the families are extinct, some will think, if their own habits are similar, that the mention of another's crimes is directed against them. Even glory and merit make enemies – by showing their opposites in too sharp and critical relief.[15]

Inescapably, the historian is interpreter, and rarely seems even-handed. Whatever the differences – in scale as well as in nature – between imperial Rome and

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Cambridge University Press, personal and collective memory has played a large and sometimes formative part in the later parts of this volume. If it has demonstrated less personal animus than Tacitus contemplated, that is itself a tribute to an organisation that has inspired great loyalty in people of firm and often independent opinions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A few of those who figure most prominently in the following pages have recorded their memories and interpretations of events in print. S. C. Roberts, Brooke Crutchley, Michael Black and John Dreyfus are among those who have chosen this path, some more comprehensively than others. C. J. Round, in London, produced a few copies for private circulation of what has proved to be a record of unusual value in that it was detailed and covered ground almost entirely undocumented in any other form.

While these publications have been my almost constant companions, I am first and foremost grateful to the more lively help accorded by past and present members of the Press's staff over a period of twenty and more years. Michael Black steered this project through the Syndicate in 1984, then nurtured it with documentary underpinning, and has since read and commented on chapters at critical periods. His own private memoirs have been of crucial help. Brooke Crutchley, who died shortly after this book was delivered to the publishers, discussed with me over many years questions about the Printing House, and allowed me to use passages from his private diary, most of which has now been destroyed. Our talks on the subject go back to the years when he was still University Printer, and his sense of humour, as well as his sense of balance, made it easier to understand how so much had been achieved. The late Leonard Gray's clear and detailed recollections of printing at the Press, since the time he joined as a fourteen-year-old apprentice in 1926, made much intelligible that was otherwise all but forgotten. His death even as the last pages of this book were being written leaves the book the poorer. John Dreyfus, at once sympathetic to the interests of different parts of the Press and also keenly aware of what this meant, was the best of guides, listeners and critics. He too read parts of the book, and I wish that he had lived to read further. For the American chapters, I have been immeasurably helped by Ronald Mansbridge, whose memories of the Press stretch over four decades. For the more recent period in particular I am grateful for Jeremy Mynott's ready support, both in providing primary materials and in reading draft chapters, while Sir Geoffrey Cass has been generous in sharing his analysis of how the fortunes of the Press were changed for the better in the early 1970s.

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Volume 3: New Worlds for Learning, 1873–1972
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of others no longer alive, I pay tribute in particular to Peter Burbidge, Charles Carrington, Dick David, Sir Geoffrey Elton and George Salt for their conversations at early stages in this project. In the Printing House, the late Percy Hester introduced me to an environment that was still much as it had been designed for letterpress printing. More recently, and other than those already named in the last paragraph, in the Press itself I have called on the interests of both those very much at work and those who are now retired.

Portions of this book were delivered as the Sandars lectures in Bibliography at Cambridge in 2001, and I am grateful both to the electors and my audience for the opportunity to air questions that have since been both refined and extended. Other than talking to the Press's own employees, most of the research has been done in Cambridge University Library, where the University Archives are also held, and in Trinity College, Cambridge. Further enquiries have been followed up at Amsterdam University Library, the Bodleian Library, the British Library, the Firestone Library at Princeton, New York Public Library, the University Library at the University of Pennsylvania, the St Bride Printing Library and the Widener Library at Harvard. I am indebted to the staffs of all these places both for answering my questions and for the readiness with which material has been found. In Melbourne, Cecily Close has been notably generous in her help with the Lothian papers.

For support of many and various kinds, some professional and some personal, I also record here my gratitude to Nicolas Barker, Alan Bell, Andrew Brown, Ken Carpenter, Penny Carter, Jacky Cox, Nora David, Bill Davies, Ian Donaldson, Trevor Dunkley, Simon Eliot, John Freeman, Lynn Hieatt, Elizabeth James, Gareth Jones, Wallace Kirsop, Mathieu and Constance Lommen, James Mosley, Paul and Ruth Needham, Nigel Roche, Richard Russell, Jack Schulman, Nicholas Smith, Penny Souster, Sarah Stanton, John Trevitt, Jos van Waterschoot, Ian Willison and Richard Ziemacki. Once again, Les Goodey has shouldered most of the photographic work with exceptional skill. Most particularly, I thank Elisabeth Leedham-Green, who has not only saved me from many pitfalls but also repeatedly shown where paths can be built. Once again, I would have missed much had I relied on libraries and archives alone; and I am commensurately grateful to the innumerable second-hand booksellers in several countries whose shelves, tables, chairs and floors have produced books and pamphlets of often unexpected significance. As usual, those who have lived closest to this long project have also been the most important in its gestation. Sometimes by their explicit observation or contribution, sometimes unwittingly, and always by encouragement, my daughter and my wife have between them helped to ensure that this is a better book.

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ABBREVIATIONS

In the following list of abbreviations and in the notes all books are published in London unless otherwise stated.

Barker, *Stanley Morison*   Nicolas Barker, *Stanley Morison* (1972)

Black, *Cambridge University Press*   M. H. Black, *Cambridge University Press, 1584–1984* (Cambridge, 1984)

Brooke, *History*   Christopher N. L. Brooke, *A history of the University of Cambridge*, IV: *1870–1990* (Cambridge, 1993)

Crutchley, *To be a printer*   Brooke Crutchley, *To be a printer* (1980)

Dreyfus, *Nonesuch Press*   John Dreyfus, *A history of the Nonesuch Press, & a descriptive catalogue* (by David McKitterick *et al.*) (1981)

Herbert   A. S. Herbert, *Historical catalogue of printed editions of the English Bible, 1525–1961, revised and expanded from the edition of T. H. Darlow and H. F. Moule* (1968)

Historical register   J. R. Tanner (ed.), *The historical register of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1917)

JPHS   *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*

Kingsford, *Publishers Association*   R. J. L. Kingsford, *The Publishers Association, 1896–1946* (Cambridge, 1970)

Legros and Grant, *Typographical printing-surfaces*   L. A. Legros and J. C. Grant, *Typographical printing-surfaces; the technology and mechanism of their production* (1916)

McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library*   David McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library; a history. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (Cambridge, 1986)

McKitterick, *Cambridge University Press*, II   David McKitterick, *A history of Cambridge University Press*, II: *Scholarship and commerce, 1698–1872* (Cambridge, 1998)

Mitchell, *British historical statistics*   B. R. Mitchell, *British historical statistics* (Cambridge, 1988)

Roberts, *Adventures with authors*   S. C. Roberts, *Adventures with authors* (Cambridge, 1966)

[More Information](#)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Roberts, *Cambridge University Press, 1521–1921*   S. C. Roberts, *A history of the Cambridge University Press, 1521–1921* (Cambridge, 1921)

Round, *Round and about*   C. J. Round, *Round and about the London publishing office of the Cambridge University Press, 1902–1953* [1960]

SIS   Cambridge University Printing House, *Staff Information Sheet*

Sutcliffe, *Oxford University Press*   Peter Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press; an informal history* (Oxford, 1978)

Tebbel, *History of book publishing*   John Tebbel, *A history of book publishing in the United States*, 4 vols. (New York, 1972–81)

UA   University Archives, Cambridge University Library

Willis and Clark   R. Willis and J. W. Clark, *The architectural history of the University of Cambridge and of the colleges of Cambridge and Eton*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1886)

NOTE ON CURRENCY

The following may be useful to those unfamiliar with British currency before the Decimal Currency Act, 1971, when the pound was newly divided into 100 pence.

$$2 \text{ halfpence} = 1 \text{ penny (1d.)}$$
$$12 \text{ pence} = 1 \text{ shilling (1s.)}$$
$$20 \text{ shillings} = 1 \text{ pound (£1)}$$
$$1 \text{ guinea} = £1.1s.0d.$$

Sums of money are conventionally written, for example, as £5.13s.4d.

FORMATS AND PAPER SIZES

All measurements in this table are in inches.

Size	Folio	4to	8vo	12mo	16mo
Foolscap	$13\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$	$8\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{3}{4}$	$6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{1}{2} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$	$4\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$
Crown	15×10	$10 \times 7\frac{1}{2}$	$7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$	5×5	$5 \times 3\frac{3}{4}$
Demy	$17\frac{1}{2} \times 11\frac{1}{4}$	$11\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$	$8\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$	$5\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{5}{8}$	$5\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$
Royal	$20 \times 12\frac{1}{2}$	$12\frac{1}{2} \times 10$	$10 \times 6\frac{1}{4}$	$6\frac{5}{8} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$	$6\frac{1}{4} \times 5$