

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-07339-4 - The History and Art of Printing
Philip Luckombe
Frontmatter
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The History and Art of Printing

Philip Luckombe (1730–1803), printer, author and shell-collector, published this work in 1771. (He had published a shorter version, *A Concise History of the Origin and Progress of Printing*, anonymously in the previous year.) Born in Exeter, he learned the printing trade there, and became a freeman of the city in 1776, but moved to London, where he wrote travelogues and several books on printing, edited dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and became an authority on shells. The first part of the book is concerned with the history of printing, including the various charters issued to the Stationers' Company, and the second with the practicalities of 'the art and mystery of printing' and 'the necessary materials used in a Printing House', including typefaces, presses and paper, and the duties of a warehouseman. This technical information continued to be used and quoted until the middle of the twentieth century.

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[More information](#)

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[More information](#)

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)



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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

T H E
H I S T O R Y and A R T
O F
P R I N T I N G.
I N T W O P A R T S.

PART I. containing

I. A Concise History of the Art from its Invention to the present Time; with the several Charters granted to the Company of Stationers.

II. Specimens of Printing Types of all Sizes, and various Languages, Music Types, Flowers and Ornaments.

PART II. treating of

I. The necessary Materials made use of in a Printing Office—Of the different Founts of Letter, their Properties, Size, and Application; with Tables to shew the Difference there is between the several Bodies of Letter, and how one gets in or drives out more than another.—Of Points, Quadrats, Spaces, Rules, Braces, Quotations, Flowers, &c. &c.

II. Of Printing Presses, their Construction and Use particularly described, with a Drawing of a Press, and of its several Parts, cut in Wood.

III. Of Wetting Paper, Knocking up Balls, Pulling, Printing different Colours, and other necessary Rules and Directions for the Pressman.

IV. Of the Compositor's Business, viz. Dressing of Chaces, Composing, Spacing, Tying up Pages, Imposing, &c. with a great Variety of Examples and useful Tables.

V. Of Correctors and Correcting, with Directions to Authors how to mark Corrections in their Proof Sheets.

VI. Of Casting off Copy.

VII. Alphabets and Characters of various Languages and Sciences.

VIII. Of the Business requisite to be done in the Warehouse, and the Duty of the Warehoufeman.

IX. An Explanation of Technical Terms used in Printing.

The Whole forming a more intelligible and complete Introduction to the Art of Printing than has been hitherto attempted, and containing a great Variety of Instructions and Examples that are not to be found in any other Performance.

By P. LUCKOMBE, M. T. A.

L O N D O N :

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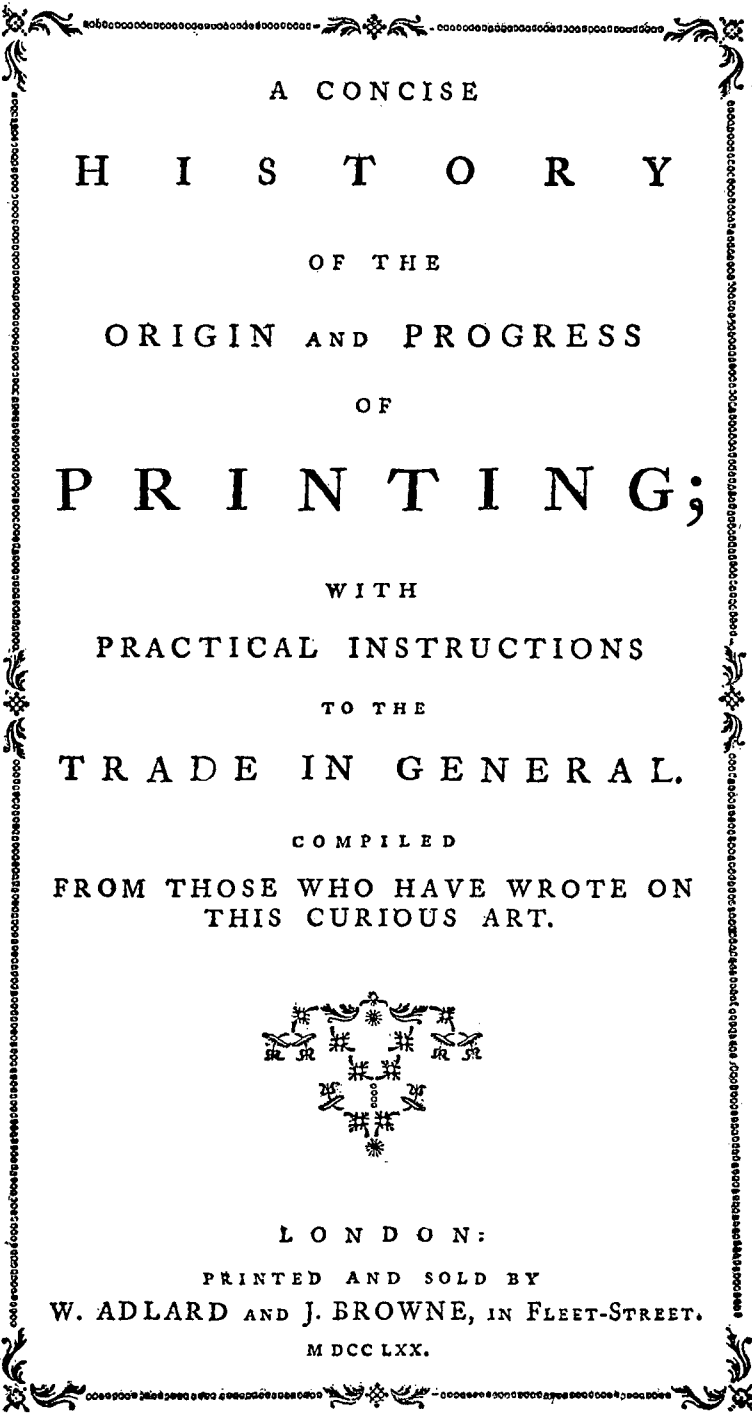
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Frontmatter

[More information](#)



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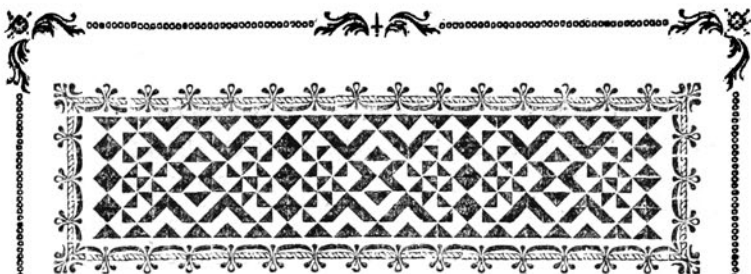
THE entire motive which induces the Editor to this publication, is to promote the Theory and Practice of the ART OF PRINTING, and not a lucrative view. Books on this important subject are become extremely scarce, owing to their being deposited in the libraries of the Curious, which make them but seldom seen in the common catalogues of Bookfellers, and when they are, their price is too high for the generality of readers. The Historical part is collected from the ingenious Mr. MOXON, and other able Writers on this noble Art, to the publication of the late industrious antiquary Mr. AMES, in his *Typographical Antiquities of Printing*, together with the collected judgments of the learned Dr. MIDDLETON, Mr. ATKYNS, Mr. WATSON, Mr. PALMER, &c. &c. wherein the pleas of the invention are impartially given. The Practical Instructions are the united opinions of the most experienced of the trade, from whose labours the knowledge of the origin and improvements in the Art have been conveyed to the present period, and from whose works we have made copious extracts, several of which are in the authors own words, though not pointed out as such.

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TO THE PUBLIC.

Upon the whole, in the course of the work will be given the Origin and Progress of the Art, with a concise but accurate Historical Account of the MASTER PRINTERS, from the year 1440 to 1600, during which time every thing worthy of observation will be taken notice of, and a great number of curious and antique anecdotes relative to PRINTING introduced. In the conclusive part of the work will be explained the use and properties of Metal Types, together with various Tables of Calculations, Schemes for Imposing, Method for Casting off Copy, Use of Metal Flowers, Mathematical, Physical, Musical, and Astronomical Sorts; with many other requisite directions necessary for attaining a perfect insight into the Theory and Practice of the ART OF PRINTING; likewise useful Hints to Authors and Compilers, how to prepare copy and correct their own proofs; the whole calculated for the improvement of those who have any concerns in the Letter-Press. To which will be added, necessary Instructions for the Press and Warehouse-men; and at the end will be inserted an Explanation of the abstruse Words and Phrases that are used in Printing.

As this work treats of the Letter-Press only, we think it needless to apologize for not decorating it with Copper-Plates, judging it not pertinent in a work of this kind to make use of the workmanship of any other artists than compositors; or introduce any thing but what is cast by ingenious Letter-founders, and may therefore create employment for the Letter-Press Printer.



T H E
 P R E F A C E.

IT appears from reason and ancient history, that in the most early ages of the world, mankind had industriously invented other means of communicating their ideas, than merely by the voice, not only that they might with freedom converse at a distance, but also to enable them to preserve and transmit to their posterity the most valuable deeds, and most useful discoveries made in the world; they esteemed books, those curious repositories of the sentiments and actions of men, as a real treasure, and the happy possessors, who well understood the subjects they contained, were caressed by the wise and favoured by the great, and consequently were the only truly learned, with whom all prudent princes and philosophers chose to advise.

Books being thus useful and curious, the learned thought it worthy the chief labour of their lives, either to compile, or collect those valuable tracts, and imagined themselves distinguished from mankind more or less, as they excelled in the bulk or goodness of their libraries: of which I cannot produce a greater instance, than what Dr. Conyers Middleton says in the

Life

Cambridge University Press

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Philip Luckombe

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E.

Life of Cicero, p. 136, and 137. “Nor was he (speaking of Cicero) less eager in making a collection of Greek books, and forming a library, by the same opportunity of Atticus’s help. This was Atticus’s own passion, who, having free access to all the Athenian libraries, was employing his slaves in copying the works of their best writers, not only for his own use, but for sale also, and the common profit both of the slave and the master; for Atticus was remarkable, above all men of his rank, for a family of learned slaves, having scarce a foot-boy in his house, who was not trained both to read and write for him. By this advantage he had made a very large collection of choice and curious books, and signified to Cicero his design of selling them; yet seems to have intimated withal, that he expected a larger sum for them than Cicero would easily spare; which gave occasion to Cicero, to beg of him in several letters, to reserve the whole number for him, till he could raise money enough for the purchase. Pray keep your books, says he, for me, and do not despair of my being able to make them mine; which, if I can compass, I shall think myself richer than Crassus, and despise the fine villa’s and gardens of them all.” Again, “Take care that you do not part with your library to any man; how eager soever he may be to buy it; for I am setting apart all my little rents to purchase that relief for my old age.” In a third letter, he says, “That he had placed all his hopes of comfort and pleasure, whenever he should retire from business, on Atticus’s reserving these books for him.” Again, in p. 453, “Atticus lent him two of his librarians to assist his own, in taking catalogues, and placing the books in order; which he calls the infusion of the Soul into the body of his house.

And among other writers on this subject, Mr. Watson, in his History of Printing, tells us, from an epistle of Antonius Bononia Becatellus, surnamed Panorme, to Alphonus king of Naples and Sicily, Lib. .5. Epist. *Significasti mihi nuper ex Florentia,*

P R E F A C E.

Florentia, &c. “ You lately wrote to me from Florence, that the works of Titus Livius are there to be sold, in very handsome books; and that the price of each book is 120 crowns of gold: therefore I intreat your majesty, that you cause to be bought for us Livy, whom we use to call the king of books, and cause it to be sent hither to us. I shall in the mean time procure the money, which I am to give for the price of the book. One thing I want to know of your prudence, whether I or Poggius have done best; he, that he might buy a country-house near Florence, sold Livy, which he had writ in a very fair hand; and I, to purchase Livy, have exposed a piece of land to sale: your goodness and modesty have encouraged me to ask these things with familiarity of you. Farewell, and triumph.” There are several passages which shew the great value and esteem of manuscripts, and that the manner of their conveyance was by notaries, as lands, &c.

Nor was it in Italy only that books were sold at this enormous price, but in France also, as appears by what Caguin wrote to one of his friends who had sent to him from Rome to procure a Concordance for him: “ I have not to this day found out a Concordance, except one, that is greatly esteemed; which Paschafius, the bookfeller, has told me is to be sold, but the owner of it is abroad; and it may be had for a hundred crowns of gold.”

The late Mr. Ames had a folio manuscript in French verse called, *Romans de la Rose* (from whence Chaucer’s translation) on the last leaf of which is wrote, *Cest lyuir costa au palas de Parys quarante coronnes dor, sans mentyr*; that is, This book cost at the palace of Paris 40 crowns of gold, without lying. (About 33l. 6s. 6d. sterling.)

Galen says, in his Commentary upon the Third of the Epidemicks, and upon the First Book of the Nature of Man,

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P R E F A C E.

that “ Ptoleus Philadelphus gave to the Athenians fifteen talents, with exemption from all tribute, and a great convoy of provisions, for the Autographs and Originals of the Tragedies of Eschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Brassicanus says, “ The emperor Frederick III. knew no better gratuity for John Capnion, who had been sent to him on an embassy by Edward of Wittemberg, than by making him a present of an old Hebrew Bible. Upon the whole, Manuscripts, or rather Books, were so scarce in those days, that they were not sold but by contracts, upon as good conditions and securities as those of an estate: among many other instances of the like kind there is one in the library of the College of Laon, in the city of Paris, made in the presence of two notaries, in the year 1332. In those times the opulent only could procure books, the poor being entirely debarred by their excessive price; whereas now, by the art of Printing, books may be procured on every science, and the inventions and improvements of every art may be attained by people of small fortunes.

Another instance of the high estimation in which books were held in old times, is to be seen in the front of the Manuscript Gospels belonging to the public Library of the University of Cambridge, written in an old hand in Latin and Anglo-Saxonic, given to the University by the learned Theodore Beza. “ This Book was presented by Leofric, Bishop of the Church of St. Peter’s in Exeter, for the Use of his Successors.” This Leofric was Chancellor of England in the reign of Edward the Confessor, and died in 1071 or 1072; and by his bequest may be clearly perceived its value.

About the time of king Henry II. the manner of publishing the works of authors was to have them read over for three days successively before one of the universities, or other judges, appointed

P R E F A C E.

appointed by the public; and, if they met with approbation, copies of them were then permitted to be taken, which were usually done by monks, scribes, illuminors and readers, brought or trained up to that purpose for their maintenance.

At the time that Printing was introduced, and a little after, the scribes used their utmost efforts to excel, being willing to keep their places, and would say, such a book was old and would add unprofitable; but such an one was new, neat, elegantly wrote, easy to be read, &c. which method of proceeding, by the way, may have occasioned the loss of many a good composition. Indeed, before this noble art of Printing by separate types made of metal was found out, there were but few authors in comparison to the great increase of learned men since. But as the method of increasing and propagating books by writing was excessively tedious and expensive, so that few could encourage it but sovereign princes, or persons of great wealth, the bulk of mankind was in a manner deprived of those truly valuable advantages resulting from books; which alone sufficiently shews, how greatly we are indebted to the inventors of that useful, or, as it may justly be said, divine art of Printing. We have now no occasion to wait the slow result of the transcriber, but with a little labour and easy expence may store our libraries with all the knowledge of our learned progenitors; and have it in our power, with a little study, to be masters of those arts, which they only attend to with the greatest labour and industry. And if any one would be at the trouble to compare the present body of our people, in regard to literature and their capacities in affairs, with those of our ancestors, who flourished 400 years ago, when there was no printing, they will readily acknowledge, that this curious art hath not a little contributed to the benefit and improvement of mankind.

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P R E F A C E.

These proceedings for the advancement of learning and knowledge alarmed the ignorant and illiterate monks; inso-much that they declaimed from the pulpits, “ There was a new language discovered called Greek, of which people should beware, since it was that which produced all the heresies: that in this language was come forth a book called the New Testament, which was now in every body’s hands, and was full of thorns and briers: that there was also another language now started up which they called Hebrew, and that they who learned it were turned Hebrews.” Here in England, the great Erasmus tells us, his publishing the New Testament in its original language met with a great deal of clamour and opposition, that one college in the University of Cambridge, in particular, absolutely forbade the use of it. “ These, says he, object to us the feigned authority of synods, and magnify the great peril of the christian faith and the danger of the church, which they pretend to support with their shoulders, who are much fitter to prop a waggon. And these clamours they disperse among the ignorant and superstitious populace, with whom, having the reputation of being great divines, they are very loth to have their opinions called in question, and are afraid that when they quote the Scripture wrong, as they often do, the authority of the Greek and Hebrew verity should be cast in their teeth, and that by and by appear to be a dream, which was by them given out for an oracle.” Accordingly the Vicar of Croydon in Surry is said to have expressed himself to the following purpose in a sermon which he preached at Paul’s Cross about this time, “ We must root out Printing, or Printing will root out us.”

The discovery of Printing contributed greatly to the production of learned men in Europe. Lord Herbert, in his Life of King Henry VIII. p. 147, supposed that Cardinal Woolsey stated the effects of this Art to the Pope thus: “ That his holiness could not be ignorant what diverse effects this new inven-

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

P R E F A C E.

invention of printing had produced : for, it had brought in, and restored books and learning ; so together it hath been the occasion of those sects and schisms, which daily appeared in the world, but chiefly in Germany ; where men begin now to call in question the present faith and tenets of the Church, and to examine how far religion is departed from its primitive institution. And that, which particularly was most to be lamented, they had exhorted lay and ordinary men to read the Scriptures, and to pray in their vulgar tongue ; and if this was suffered, besides all other dangers, the common people at last might come to believe, that there was not so much use of the clergy. For if men were persuaded once, they could make their own way to God, and that prayers in their native and ordinary language might pierce heaven as well as Latin ; how much would the authority of the mass fall ? For this purpose, since printing could not be put down, it were best to set up learning against learning ; and by introducing able persons to dispute, to suspend the laity between fear and controversy. This at worst would yet make them attentive to their superiors and teachers."

It may shew upon the whole, the notions which prevailed, and what the contenders had to say, for the space of 120 or 130 years ; which takes in a period of time the most remarkable of any which our annals afford, a period when BRITANNIA roused herself from amidst various superstitions, and sat down on the seat of liberty, where she now remains. Besides which, the Art of Printing had no small share in the glorious Reformation. The Holy Scriptures were printed in our mother tongue ; and the people themselves saw the impositions of the monks, &c. This art in its infancy was patronized by the learned and great ; and they encouraged our first printer, William Caxton, to begin and carry on so laudable and useful an undertaking, and he gratefully and honestly owned it in his books.

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P R E F A C E.

The usefulness of the art is so universally acknowledged, it needs no proof; every one knows, without the invention of this Art, the productions of great men would have been confined in the possession of a few, and of no utility to posterity. In short, What would the Moderns know of the sciences, did not Printing furnish them with the discoveries of the Ancients? All the elogiums we can bestow on the invention, and the honours we pay it, are far deficient of its merit; and, we believe, few will deny it when they consider the vast expences which our forefathers were at to procure manuscripts, of which we have given a few instances.

We have endeavoured to make this book as useful as the limits that an Octavo Volume will admit of, by concisely shewing the Origin, Progress, and gradual Improvements of this Art. In our account of the most eminent men, we have added all their privileges, licences, patents, &c. which were granted to them; together with the name of the place, and sign at which they dwelt; the encouragements and discouragements they met with; as also the charter of the company of Stationers.

T H E E D I T O R.