Rediscovering Herbert Horne

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These were the years also of the Rhymers' Club and of its hero Verlaine's visit in 1893 to London, organized jointly by Horne and Symons. The part that Horne played among the Rhymers in the Club is difficult to determine. Having abandoned poetry, he did not contribute either to the first or the second of the Club's anthologies, but he was certainly prominent in club discussions. His interests, as we have seen, were far wider than most of the Rhymers. He was becoming well known in the world of architects and decorators, and whenever there was any question of a fine building being demolished, badly restored or decorated, Horne was certain to be among those who publicly protested.

In these years, also, he began to write prolifically on a wide variety of topics. The direction of such new interests can be gathered from an article on Venetian Missals published in 1894. Horne's ideal of book-production emerges from the concluding generalisation, and corresponds closely with the ideals of the Century Guild Hobby Horse. Remarking that the 1880s and 1890s had witnessed increased attention to book-
production in all its aspects, Horne still finds the result unsatisfactory when judged by the standards of the Renaissance. Few books "possess those qualities of repose, and of simple, effective decoration, which distinguish the illustrated books of Florence and Venice, during the great period of the printer's art." This article is important as the first manifestation of Horne's reaction against the movement of taste in the 1890s: it counters Art Nouveau and French influence on literature in its more radical effects.

In The Binding of Books (1894), a volume contributed to Alfred W. Pollard's Books About Books series (6.1), Horne disputes the statement—made not surprisingly by a Frenchman—that "La Reliure est un art tout française." His own ideal of repose and severity in binding, as in typography and architecture, Horne finds in the Italy of the sixteenth century. It is particularly the Venetian bindings executed for the great Jean de Servières Grolier, whose energies extended always to "scholarly sympathy and scrupulous taste," that capture Horne's admiration. Above all the Grolier bindings possess an architectonic quality, a quality progressively extinguished in the more technically sophisticated French tradition. Such an architectonic criterion is constant with Horne. He applies it to all forms of art and it is, as we know, the continuous theme of his critical articles in the Century Guild Hobby Horse.

Horne's book is dedicated to T. J. Cobden-Sanderson, who has "done for book-binding what Mr. William Morris has done for glass-painting, tapestry-weaving, and other decorative arts." The particular production Horne chose as representative of Cobden-Sanderson's work is a copy of T. J. Wise's facsimile edition of Shelley's Adonais. The binding is orange-red morocco and the surface is elaborately powdered with stars and flower-heads. Whatever the distinction of workmanship this design possesses, it certainly diverges from any ideal of severity and repose. Its principle is less architectonic than
decorative. Horne's eclecticism challenges his austerity of taste when he comments, "strictures may be passed upon his work" but "he has invented a distinguished manner of his own. . . In his hands, gilt-tooling has again become a living art."

Horne did not himself practice gilt tooling. The recognition then of Cobden-Sanderson's achievement in binding is faintly grudging. The Cobden-Sanderson Adonais, though not in a pronouncedly Art Nouveau mode, employs those stylized flower-forms. The rejection, or at most limited approval, of modern work in the applied arts involved rejection not merely of the practice, but also of the theory behind modern work. That involved "free" illustration, which is personal and subjective, rather than "architectural" in its composition. The notion that the ornament of a binding should emblematize or be in some manner expressive of a book's contents, Horne observes, can be traced back to the Middle Ages; but it is the French who have pursued this principle, though rarely with success, to its logical conclusion:

At the present day, the notion has been carried to its extreme by some designers, who, affecting the fashion of the Decadents, appear to work in a spirit akin to that of Arthur Rimbaud's sonnet, which finds, in colours, the definite sensations of language.

Rimbaud's sonnet on the vowels, whether or not the poet was in fact describing the coloured letters of a child's reading primer, as some have suggested, is, like Baudelaire's sonnet "Correspondences," one of the early crystallisations of symboliste doctrine. The implications of Horne's comments amount to a rejection of total art in the making of a book, a rejection not merely, say, of Charles Ricketts and Lucien Pisarro, the Vale and the Eragny Presses, but of Blake himself.

Horne and Image clearly owe more to the Arts and Crafts tradition than to Mackmurdo's proto-art book design. Horne's earliest design for his collection of poems Diversi Colores
(1891) is barely successful (6.2). The blue-grey paper of the cover derives from the brown paper covers of Whistler's designs for his own books. The design of the title-page is over-weighted and the lettering, as observed before, is split phonetically, though arbitrarily in the imprint. The model here is probably Image's cover design for *Primavera* (1890), an anthology of verses by four young Oxford poets, Laurence Binyon, Stephen Phillips, A. S. Cripps, and Manmohan Ghose. The motif Image settled on was a long-stemmed branch with free formalized flower buds. The title itself is broken up by the foliage. Morris's cover design for *Love is Enough* (1873), we may remember, furnishes an earlier example. The motif was to be repeated in Image's designs for Elkin Mathews's Shilling Garland series. Horne's design for Image's *Poems and Carols* (1894) is even less successful than *Diversi Colores*. The lettering once more splits arbitrarily and non-phonetically (6.3).

*Poèmes sans rimes* by Olivier Georges Destrée (1894) is the first of Horne's achieved designs (6.4). Grey Ingres paper is used for the cover. The title-page, typography and initial letters are all by Horne. A somewhat pictorial woodcut design was printed on hand-made paper. The floral motif interrupts the title, date and imprint, and actually bisects in the apostrophe of "L'Auter." Possibly there was some French influence, not inappropriately, for Destrée was a Walloon. The layout of the page here is an example of the positive use of white space.

The design of Lionel Johnson's *Poems* (1895) is finely austere, answering the persona presented by Johnson in that volume (6.5). The centre of the title-page is occupied by a rubricated version of a rectangular fifteenth-century woodcut representing William of Wykeham, founder of St. Mary's College at Winchester, while Johnson in his dedication describes himself as a Wykehamist come of Wykehamists. The first poem has for its subject the school, and the note of the poems is hieratic, Latin Catholic, medieval. In the list of con-
tents, the page numbers of individual poems immediately follow the titles (6.6), a practice now widespread, but one which Horne appears to have initiated with his design for Symons's *Silhouettes* of 1892. In the large paper presentation copy of that volume, Horne wrote "The text of this book was already in type when Symons asked me to look to the printing of it. Except for designing the title, I only managed the pages, heading, etc. and composed the 'contents."

In 1895 also, Horne designed the cover, title-page and contents page for Frank Harris's *Elder Conklin and Other Stories* (6.7, 6.8). Like the Johnson *Poems* this was commissioned by a commercial publisher. The cover design includes wittily in Ricketts's manner four of the short story titles arranged according to visual harmony and concluded by an elaborate "&c." The printing, as in all of Horne's earlier designs, was accomplished by the Chiswick Press. Their colophon, rubricated on the final page of Johnson's text (6.8), is now placed at the centre of the title-page. The typical severity and repose of this title-page are somewhat offset by stylized leaves, prolonging the shorter lines of the title.

The designs of Horne's middle period include the urn on the title-page of *The Golden Urn*, a private magazine edited by Bernard Berenson and Logan Pearsall Smith and published at Fiesole between 1897 and 1898. Horne may also have had a hand in the layout. In 1903 there followed an edition of Sir Henry Wotton's *The Elements of Architecture*, commissioned by Longman's Green (6.9). The cover once more was of blue-grey Ingres paper, with an affixed label on the spine. Horne designed the title-page, with three stylized flowers rubricated, the ornaments including the urn already furnished for Berenson's periodical, and initials rubricated within a stylized circular stem. In 1902, moreover, Horne had furnished the cover design for the *Burlington Magazine*, in whose foundation he had assisted, which survived for more than thirty years.
In 1909 the prospectus of the Riccardi Press Book was printed in the Riccardi type designed by Horne and based, so the prospectus tells us, on the larger of the two faces used in the famous first edition of Horace printed in Florence in 1492 by Antonio Misconsino. In the Anthanaeum of November 1909, however, Horne demurred to the description, suggesting that it was better termed "an attempt to produce a modern equivalent of the Misconsino fount." Of the Riccardi, and the two other types Horne at this time designed—the Montallegro and the Florence (6.10)—Robert Steele in his The Revival of Printing (1912) observes that all three "show a continuous tendency to a richer line, and I may be permitted to say here that the latter is, to my mind, as nearly perfect a letter in the style [Horne] aims at as can be imagined." The Revival of Printing, it may also be observed, was printed in Riccardi for the Riccardi Press.

Marius the Epicurean (1913), also from the Riccardi Press and using Riccardi type, was a tribute to an old master. The border on the title-page probably relates to late-eighteenth-century woodcuts, while the letter forms attempt to follow the spiral of Renaissance inscriptive lettering (6.11). The rectangular shape is familiarly Century Guild but without rubrication, while the close-knit arrangement of text pages is in keeping with the preferences of designers of the private press movement for a strongly textured page, coupled with wide margins (6.12). The source here is Whistler's arrangement in his various volumes, though Whistler has rather disconcertingly arranged his footnotes flanking the text on both sides. A similar arrangement can be found in the Wotton volume, but here the seventeenth-century original is responsible.

Horne was active also in the design of book plates (6.13), and three examples of his work are given in the Studio of 1893. The first is a woodblock: the initial "H" set among leaves in Kelmscottian mode. Of the other two designs, that for Fred
fig. 6.2 *Diversi Colores*, title-page design
fig. 6.3 *Poems and Carols*, title-page design
fig. 6.4 *Poèmes sans rimes*, title-page design
POEMS
BY LIONEL JOHNSON

1895

LONDON • ELKIN MATHEWS
BOSTON • COPELAND & DAY

fig. 6.5 Poems, title-page design
CONTENTS.
WINCHESTER: P. 1.
TO MORFYDD: P. 5.
PLATO IN LONDON: P. 6.
IN FALMOUTH HARBOUR: P. 7.
A FRIEND: P. 9.
A BURDEN OF EASTER VIGIL: P. 11.
BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS: P. 12.
OUR LADY OF FRANCE: P. 15.
IN MEMORY: P. 16.
HILL AND VALE: P. 20.
Gwynedd: P. 22.
MYSTIC AND CAVALIER: P. 30.
PARNELL: P. 31.
IN ENGLAND: P. 33.
TO OCEAN HAZARD: GIPSY: P. 38.
UPON A DRAWING: P. 39.
THE ROMAN STAGE: P. 40.
"TO WEEP IRISH": P. 41.
SUMMER STORM: P. 41.
TO A TRAVELLER: P. 42.
IN MEMORY OF M. B.: P. 42.
HAWTHORNE: P. 43.
GLORIES: P. 44.
LINES TO A LADY UPON HER THIRD BIRTHDAY: P. 45.
CELTIC SPEECH: P. 47.
WAYS OF WAR: P. 48.
THE COMING OF WAR: P. 49.
IRELAND'S DEAD: P. 51.
HARMONIES: P. 52.

fig. 6.6 Poems, contents page design
fig. 6.7 Elder Conklin and Other Stories, title-page design
CONTENTS.

ELDER CONKLIN: P. 3.
THE SHERIFF AND HIS PARTNER: P. 77.
A MODERN IDYLL: P. 107.
EATIN' CROW: P. 151.
THE BEST MAN IN GAROTTE: P. 159.
fig. 6.9 The Elements of Architecture, title-page design
And if you set him beneath as good a man as himself at the table: that is against his honour. If you do not visite him at home at his house: then you know not your dutie. Theis manner of fashions and behaviours, bring men to such scorne and disdaine of their doings: that there is no man, almost, can abide to beholde them: for they love them selves to farre beyondemeasure, and busie them selves so much in that, that they finde little leisure to

La lunghezza di decta chiesa insulata e braccia decento sexanta: la quale di fuori e tucta di uarii marmi incrustata, con statue di marmo et porphiri molto adornata per mano di nobili sculptori; maxime di Donatò ui e il gigante primo, dalla porta della Assumptione marmorea per mano di Johanni Banchi, sopra la Annuntiata di musiuo per mano di Domenico Grillandaro. Nella facciata dinanzi e uno euangelista a sedere et una statua di uno che si piegha, et in sul cantone uno uecchio, tucte per mano di Donato. Ma a dir ti la uerita, decta facciata, la quale Lorenzo de' 

and it is no exaggeration to say that in no printed book between the closing years of the fifteenth century and those of the nineteenth was any attempt made to obtain them all, though the traditions of good craftsmanship ensured that some of them were preserved in many cases. The fifteenth-century book was avowedly an imitation of a fine manuscript; its type was a copy of the current writing hand, the arrangement of its page was that of a manuscript, its spacing

fig. 6.10 Montallegro, Florence, Riccardi 
Horne's designs
fig. 6.11 Marius the Epicurean, title-page design
PART THE FIRST

CHAPTER I. "THE RELIGION OF NUMA"

As, in the triumph of Christianity, the old religion lingered latest in the country, and died out at last as but paganism—the religion of the villagers, before the advance of the Christian Church; so, in an earlier century, it was in places remote from town-life that the older and purer forms of paganism itself had survived the longest. While, in Rome, new religions had arisen with bewildering complexity around the dying old one, the earlier and simpler patriarchal religion, "the religion of Numa," as people loved to fancy, lingered on with little change amid the pastoral life, out of the habits and sentiment of which so much of it had grown. Glimpses of such a survival we may catch below the merely artificial attitudes of Latin pastoral poetry; in Tibullus especially, who has preserved for us many poetic details of old Roman religious usage.

At mihi contingat patrios celebrare Penates,
Reddereque antiquo menstrua thura Lari:
—he prays, with unaffected seriousness. Something liturgical, with repetitions of a consecrated form of words, is traceable in one of his elegies, as part of the order of a birthday sacrifice. The hearth, from a spark of which, as one form of old legend related, the child Romulus had been miraculously born, was still indeed an altar; and the worthiest sacrifice to the gods—the perfect physical sanity of the young men and women, which the scrupulous ways of that religion of the hearth had tended to maintain. A religion of usages and sentiment rather than of facts and belief, and attached to very definite things and places—the oak of immemorial age, the rock on the heath fashioned by weather as if by some dim human art, the shadowy grove of ilex. passing into which one exclaimed involuntarily, in consecrated phrase. Deity is in this place! 'Numen Inest!'—it was in natural harmony with the temper of a quiet people amid the spectacle of rural life, like that
fig. 6.13 Book plates: Horne's 'H'
Constitution Club, Fred Trehawk Davies
Trehawk Davies consists in a rondel made up of three hawks facing outward set against a series of diminishing circles, perching on stems that curve into the client's initials. This is an attractive offsetting. The Constitutional Club design is more formalised: a crown surmounting a crossed sword and cane reversed with a knob, capitalised "c" and the same letter reversed, the whole, surrounded by rose and thistle foliage. Unlike Anning Bell's bookplates featured also in the same issue of the Studio, Horne's are not merely decorative and picturesque, with visual puns and precise content; they acquire some emblematic force. This appears to run counter to Horne's criteria for the book, but tradition sanctioned such features for what was a highly personal sign. Among Horne's correspondence with his friend Randall Davies, moreover, is a design and interesting comment on how the designer arrived at his results.

Horne also made designs for several gravestones. One is in Gli Allori, an attractive cemetery just southwest of Florence. The plain rectangle with lettering in Renaissance script commemorates his mother Hannah Louisa Horne, who died in 1903. This design accords with Horne's later ideals. A letter of 29 May 1895 from a New College contemporary of Lionel Johnson, the Rev. William Busby, a contributor to the Century Guild Hobby Horse (at the time curate of St. Faith's, Norwich), records that Horne had designed a cross for the grave of his client's son. Busby invites Horne to make a drawing for his aunt, Antonia Whately: "in a circle like the other, and in the same Lombard lettering."

The architectonic principle is once more invoked in an article on "The Strand Improvements." Here, Horne applies an aesthetic based on chiaroscuro in painting to architecture and ultimately to complexes and town-planning. The aberrations of nineteenth-century London architecture can be equably measured against the ideals of the High Renaissance, but
judgment of some of Michelangelo's masterpieces demands very delicate criteria. At once the consummation and for the purist perhaps the betrayer of the Renaissance *symmetria magna*, Michelangelo in such a work as the ante-room of the Laurenziana Library might seem to an orthodox admirer of Renaissance serenity to have committed an act of heroic bad taste. Horne, reviewing Symonds's work on the master, recognises, as he does in St. Paul's though without altogether approving, the structural paradoxes of the ante-room. We must not of course assume that Michelangelo is in any sense incompetent. Horne adduces typically the grammatical errors in Michelangelo's poetry as in no way proving him to be a poetaster:

The boldness of the staircase, with its strange triple ascent to the half-pace; the extraordinary subtlety of the order which rises above it, the reticence of the superior order, here scarcely begun, there almost completed, the rough timbered roof hastily thrown across the walls, as if merely intended to keep out the weather, forcibly arrest the attention, like one of the unfinished figures in the neighboring sacristy... The strong, almost violent forms which compose the staircase, the oval steps, the ellipse on the half-pace, justify the use of the consoles, placed beneath the recessed columns, which are ranged about the walls; and the gradual transition from the boldness of these curves to the reticence of the upper order, seems to lend the whole work a kind of unity. I say that this appears to be so; for the effect intended by the whole work, when finished, cannot be concluded from this fragment.8

Horne, unlike Burckhardt, at least recognises Michelangelo's seriousness and this is admirable close criticism of the disturbing interior of the ante-room. To stress the incompleteness of the work is perhaps too facile an escape from the spectatorial uneasiness, an uneasiness which—whether or not one accepts Pevsner's categorisation of the Laurenziana as "Mannerist"—is clearly intended by the architect.9
The intensified journalism of the years from 1894 on owes something to the collapse of the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* and Horne's release from editorial pressures, not to mention the need for money. As we know, for years the *Century Guild Hobby Horse* had been running not merely at a loss, but on unbusinesslike lines. So did its successor, the *Hobby Horse*. Horne owed Mackmurdo money, or at least Mackmurdo thought he did. An inaccurate account of the bitterness that flared up between Mackmurdo and Horne and later between Horne and Image is given by Ernest Rhys in his two volumes of reminiscences, *Everyman Remembers* and *Wales England Wed*:

> When I first met him Horne talked of Image with boyish idolatry... Years went on, and then, to my dismay, I heard there had been a break between Horne and Image. A marked change came over Horne from the days he first met Oscar Wilde, and I believe his alienation from his old friend may be traced to the years when he fell under that evil spell. The worst Image ever allowed himself to say was, it was Horne's want of loyalty that hurt him most.¹⁰

Image, in fact, was in the awkward position of mediating between Mackmurdo and Horne, and as Horne seems to have owed Mackmurdo money it is not surprising that Image should have taken Mackmurdo's part.¹¹ A letter from Image to Mackmurdo of 19 September 1895 pathetically reads: "Can't we settle up and sign and seal this blooming agreement 'twixt you and H without further delay! H will most likely be going away shortly, and the lawyer may get troublesome. . . . I desire peace and quiet for us one and all."¹²

For Horne to have built up his collections on relatively slender resources and to have devoted himself so single-mindedly to the life of the connoisseur involved a certain ruthlessness and detachment. As late as 1900 he writes to
Edgar Jepson, who was at that time occupying Horne's rooms at 4 King's Bench Walk during the winter and spring months:

Would you kindly make a point of forwarding to me any letters bearing the name of G. D. Freeman, Solicitor, 16 Paul St., Finsbury Square, stamped on the envelope. This worthy person has been sent by Mackmurdo to extort more money out of me, in connection with the Hobby Horse. If you receive any visits, please know nothing except that I am abroad.\footnote{15}

Like the \textit{Germ}, the \textit{Century Guild Hobby Horse} died in a context of financial squalor. We do not know enough about its finances or about the nature of the agreement between Mackmurdo and Horne to judge the moral issue. It seems certain that Mackmurdo's attempts to belittle Horne's part in the Century Guild and its magazine stem from their quarrel. Of Image, Horne writes to Jepson on 21 December 1900: "All I have done is like the gentleman in the psalms—to hold my tongue and say nothing. I am very sorry but I do not see what else I could have done under the circumstances."\footnote{14} The tone is milder certainly, but it is clear that Horne had rejected his "aesthetic" past and that both of his mentors were too much associated with that past, though he remained friendly with Image.

As early as 1895 in his \textit{Saturday Review} articles, Horne had reacted against the Art Nouveau tendencies of the Guild. On 7 August 1900, reviewing the Exhibition of Art Students' Drawings for the National Competition, he wrote:

Instead of being encouraged to draw from the life, the students are set to make patterns and invent ornaments in the latest and most meretricious school of decorative design which had its origin in the "Arts and Crafts" Exhibitions, and which has now found a home in Tottenham Court Road.
And of the *Studio* and other contemporary German magazines:

In emulation of their exemplars, they impart to the forms of all natural objects—be they figures or flowers—the convolution of loames and entrails. The whole thing is a trick which anyone with a little gift for drawing can acquire in a very short time; that no doubt, is one of the secrets of its immense popularity. But the invention of ornament, even when it is fine ornament, is but a small part of decorative art.\textsuperscript{15}

On 14 August, Horne returned to the theme:

As long ago as the early eighties, a designer little known to the public at large, Mr. A. H. Mackmurdo, had invented and fully developed what I called "the swirl and a blob" manner of pattern-making. He, if I mistake not, was its real originator; though I believe he derived some of his ideas from Mr. Gilbert, the sculptor. And not only did he then design wallpapers and cretonnes, but furniture, and even houses, in a way that would allow them to pass today with the newest production of the school. From Mr. Mackmurdo, Mr. C. F. A. Voysey derived bodily all his ideas of architecture and decoration.\textsuperscript{16}

From 1894 on, then, Horne wrote regularly for the *Saturday Review*, and we can trace from such reviews and articles the change in his interests. The subjects treated include "Bach and the Harpsichord" (15 December 1894), "The Sforza Book of Hours" (Supplement, 15 December 1894), and "Botticelli and Savonarola" (13 August 1898).

Towards the turn of the century, Horne was contributing to the *Review of the Week* and as "H" he was writing weekly "Art Notes" for the *Morning Leader*, while still contributing to the *Saturday Review* and the *Star*.\textsuperscript{17}
ALESSANDRO FILIPEPI
COMMONLY CALLED
SANDRO BOTTICELLI
PAINTER OF
FLORENCE

BY
HERBERT P. HORNE

LONDON
GEORGE BELL & SONS
M·D·CCCCVIII

fig. 7.1 Alessandro Filipepi, title-page design