

**Paul Chrzanowski**  
**Remarks from *Early Modern Bibliophilia: A Celebration of the Chrzanowski Collection***  
**November 15, 2019**

I've really enjoyed the presentations and discussions today. There's always something new to learn about these books. And it's wonderful to hear that others are enjoying these books as much as I have. It's a monumental task to comment on everything that's been said. Instead, let me personalize my overall reaction by telling three short stories.

Story #1: Starting the collection and restarting the collection.

I've always been a collector, and I became an Anglophile from time I spent in Oxford and Cambridge as a visiting postdoctoral fellow. In the mid 1980s I built up a nice collection of classic private press books and then looked for a new direction to go in collecting.

I was at Heritage Book Shop in Los Angeles in December 1990, and it might have been Ben Weinstein, who is in audience, that showed me a first edition of *Holinshed's Chronicles*. I loved Shakespeare and already owned a slightly imperfect copy of the Second Folio (now at the Clark). I bought the Holinshed, read it from cover to cover. That started the collection.

Books were more available then and less expensive, so the collection grew quickly. In a conversation in early 2008, I mentioned to Ben that I might eventually want to donate the collection. That "some time in the future" became a reality much quicker I originally intended. Ten years ago, in October 2009, I loaded up a rented van with 72 titles and drove from the San Francisco Bay area to the Clark Library. Bruce Whiteman (then the Clark Librarian) viewed books with wonderment as I unpacked them. I wasn't sure what was next for me. Maybe I was finished with early English books, maybe not.

The next day Michael Thompson and Carol Sandberg, who appraised the books, came to the Clark to view them. Michael informed me that he had a lead on a copy of a first edition of John Fox's *Acts and Monuments*—a Holy Grail of early English books. That settled it, the second part of building the collection began immediately. So, the *Holinshed's Chronicles* and the *Acts and Monuments* are very special books to me.

The *Holinshed* leads to my second story: show-and-tell.

I occasionally have visitors over to the house for a show-and-tell. These events have included shows for performers in local Shakespeare productions. It's a lot a fun figuring how to use the books to tell the complex story of the many changes that transpired in England through the long 16th century. One show was for a visitor that had just finished reading Neil MacGregor's *Shakespeare's Restless World: A Portrait of an Era in Twenty Objects*. I pulled out 20 books to show—aligned with the twenty object-associated stories told in the book. That worked nicely. I am very pleased that professors are using

the collection to show their students Shakespeare's England. It's an experience that too few people have opportunity to enjoy up close and personal.

My standard tour is to start out with *Holinshed's Chronicles*. (I can still do because I have at home a somewhat incomplete reading copy of the first edition.) I talk about the Shakespeare connection usually pointing out the anachronistic picture of the Scottish three witches in lovely Elizabethan dresses. Then I quickly switch to William Harrison's wonderful description of Britain. There I focused on the chapter "Of the degrees of people in the commonwealth of England."

Until this recent donation, my tour started with the royalty and Holinshed includes a several-page-long description of the Order of the Garter ceremony. You'll never guess what I showed. The chapter ends with "The several disorders and degrees amongst our idle vagabonds." Again, guess the book. I was delighted to see the presentations today basically started the same way my tours have.

My third story is finishing the collection—the end game.

I think I am finished buying books. Everything comes to an end, for some reason or other. For me, the time has come. The last several years of buying have been the "end game" and I set some informal priorities in the books I chose to purchase. To simplify, there are three of them and these categories have a lot of overlap.

1. Niche items: not very expensive things that are good stories, bring a smile, and just feel right. One example is Hentzner's *Itinerarium*. I'm glad that item was picked for one of the show-and-tells. Others in this donation and on display include: the Queen's proclamation about vagabonds and the *Gospels in Anglo-Saxon*. Another example, not displayed today, is the "The King's Book," printed in 1605. It includes the first speech King James gave in Parliament after the failed Gunpowder plot, the official description how the plot was uncovered, and the confession of Guy Fawkes and a co-conspirator.

2. Important items that "never" come up for sale: The great example is the Golding translation of *Metamorphosis*. I was pleased that Helen spoke about it today. The Golding translation is a very important book. The copy that I donated is the only one I have seen come up for sale since I started collecting. Another example (not on display today) is the Marlowe/Chapman *Hero and Leander*.

3. Filling large holes in the collection. If one were to examine a list of books that I've donated, one would notice rather gaping hole: English drama of the period other than Shakespeare. The only two other entries and *Jonson's Works* and the *Six Court Comedies* of John Lily—and only one quarto: the 1619 Pavier quarto of Shakespeare's *King Henrie the Sixt 2,3*. There are lots of reasons for this—the most obvious is that William Andrews Clark, Jr. built such a strong collection that area, it wasn't clear what I might add that would make much of a difference.

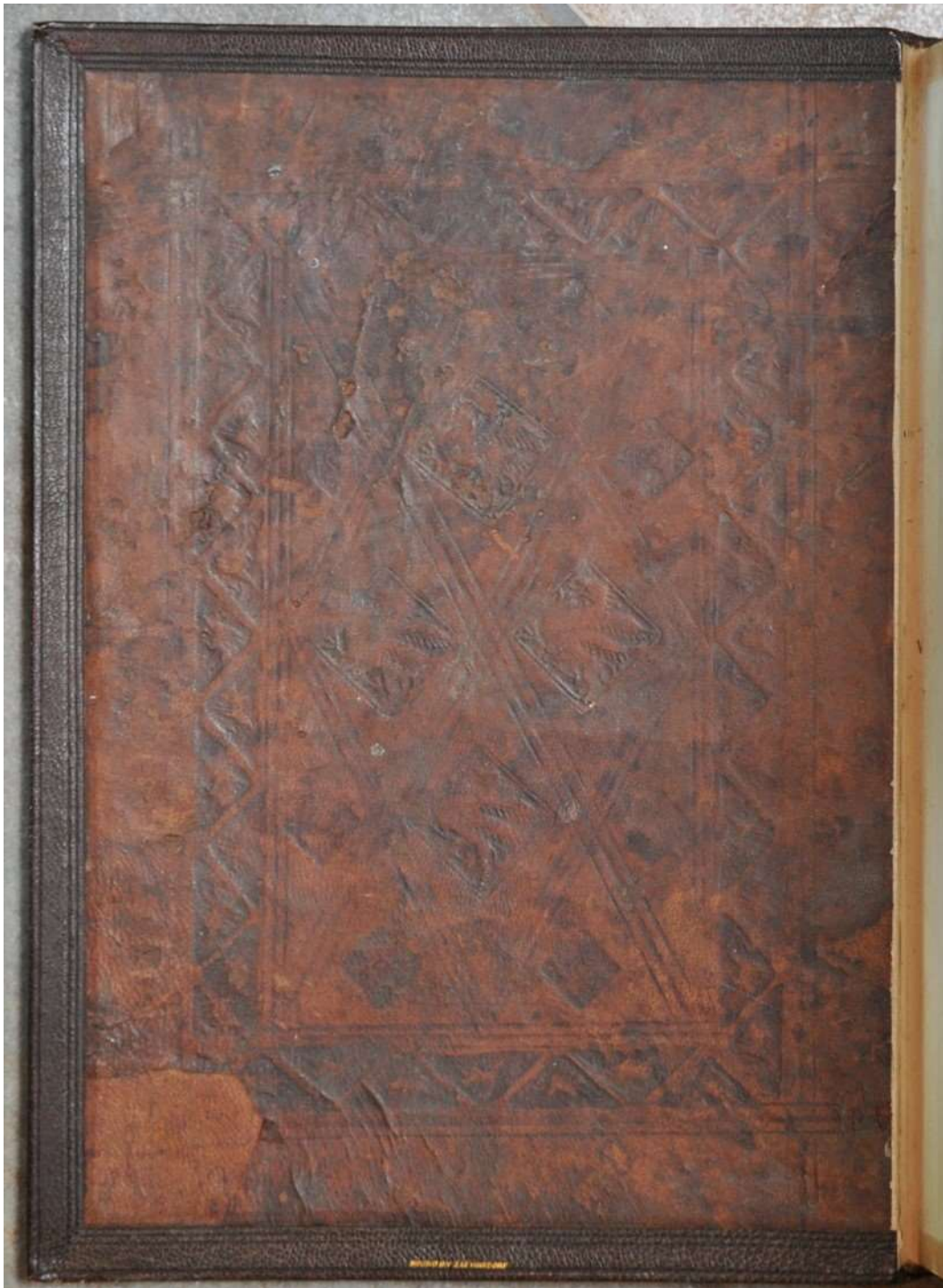
And then Marston's *Scourge of Villanie* came up for sale in auction—a book, that as you heard—made a tremendous impact on the direction of Stuart drama. I was very pleased it was one of the books highlighted today. It's my complementary contribution to Clark's wonderful collection of Stuart and later Restoration drama.

Before I conclude, I would like to take the opportunity to not answer a question that I might likely be asked: which is your favorite book?

I usually respond with a compound question: Do you have more than one child, and if so, which is your favorite?

I am not going to talk about a favorite, but I would like to introduce to you one of the sleeping beauties in the collection.

The book is the *Floure of the Commandments*. It was printed by Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton's successor, in 1510. It is a wonderful read. Basically, the book covers each of the ten commandments, explaining what each means, and presenting stories of the graces that are bestowed if you obey the commandment and the punishments follow if you break it. People remember things through stories and I'm sure the book was used by priests (and, later, ministers) for homilies at church services.

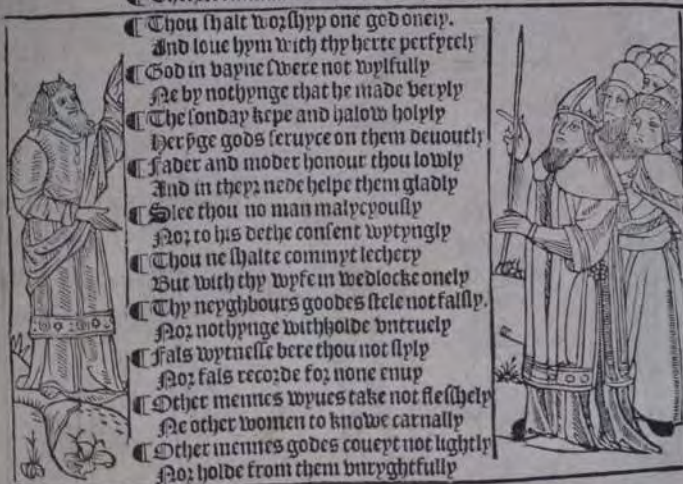


The binding is nice but not spectacular except for the doublures—the inside covers—which are a treasure. They are large fragments of the original covers. From the tooling, the work is identified as that of the so-called Caxton binder, who worked in Westminster near or possibly as part of Caxton's printing shop. This is one of only 36 identified examples of his work and must have been near his last. The known examples span from 1477 to 1510.

Ihesus.

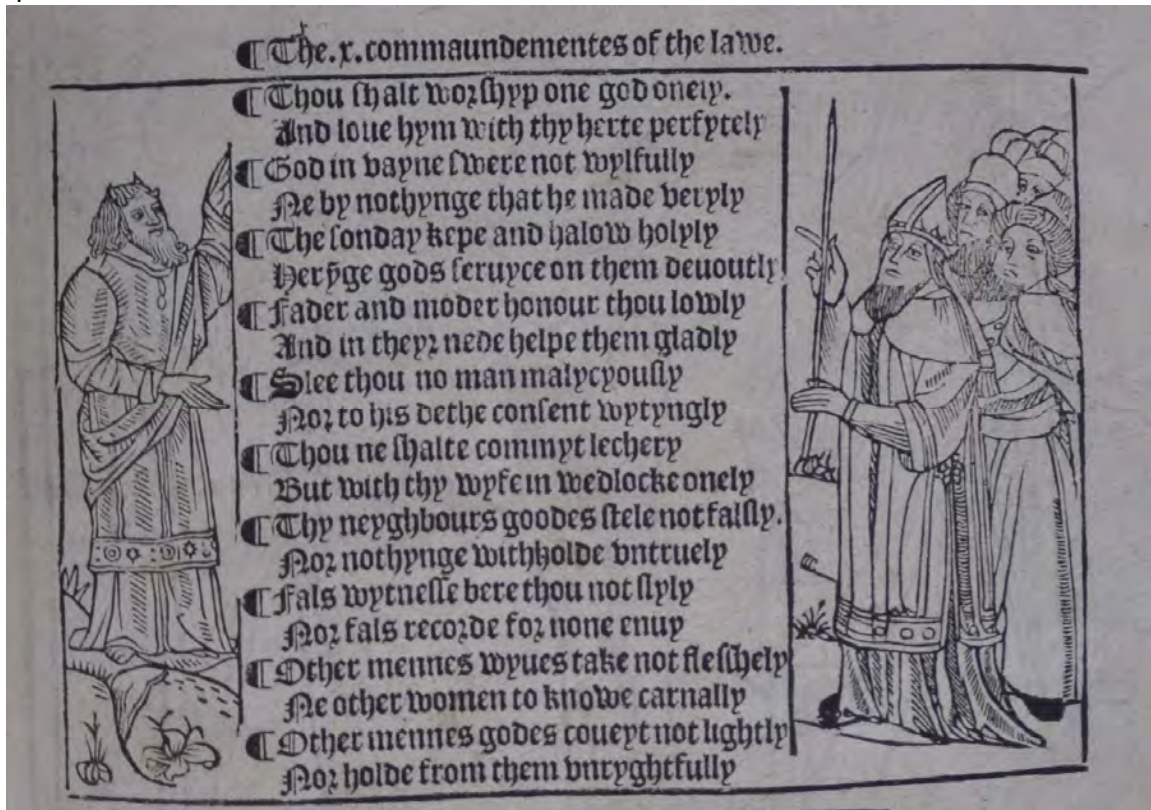
The floure of the commaundementes of god With many exam-  
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The .x. commaundementes of the lawe.





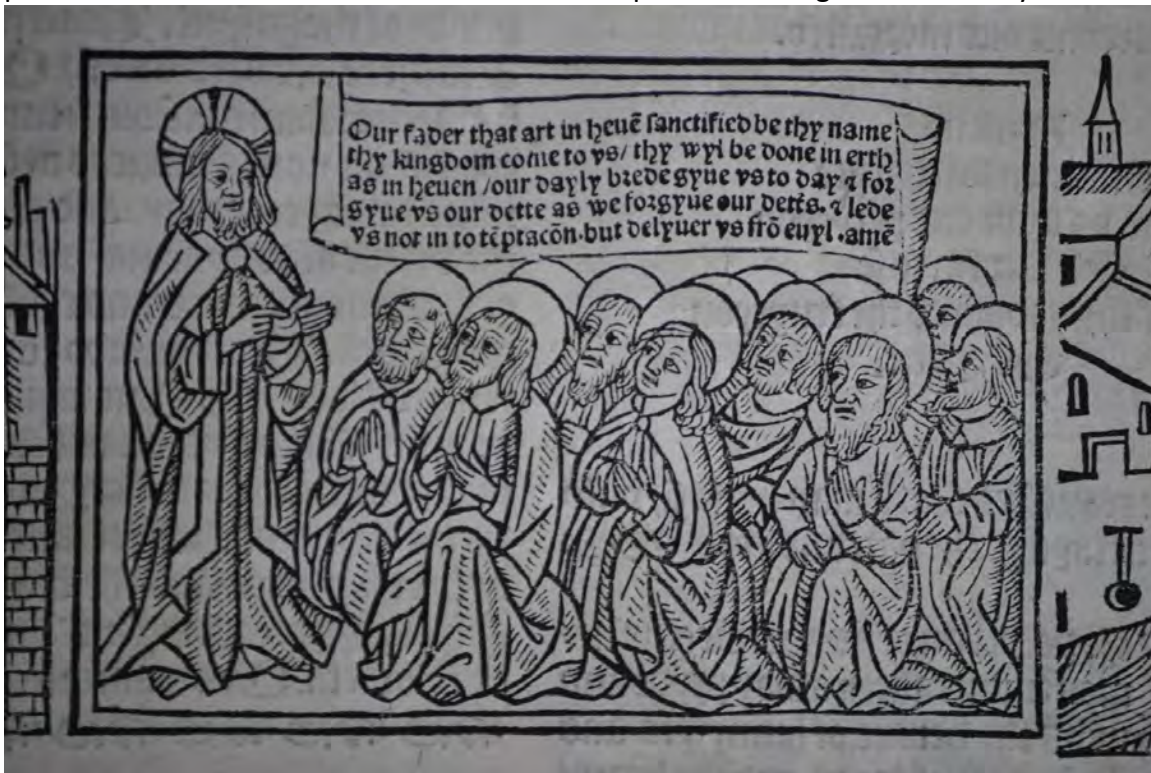
The title page is attractive and includes the Ten Commandments in doggerel form. This is one of first printings of the Ten Commandments in English. It also appeared in a quarto of de Worde's about the same time.



The verso of the title page is a beautiful woodcut of the Crucifixion.



There are a few additional woodcuts in the book—not many. This one is particularly prominent and memorable. It is Jesus with the Apostles reciting the Lord's Prayer.





Finally, here is an example spread from the book. It's a bit hard to see but there is one spot here where the word "pope" has been dutifully crossed out. There are also "purgatories" in the book similarly deleted.





I purchased this book from Ben Weinstein, in the audience. I owe more to Ben and Lou in Heritage Book Shop than anyone else for helping me build the collection. They sold to many wonderful books, gave me very helpful counsel, and at numerous very significant auctions they bid for me and allowed me to pay them off in installments. I don't talk about favorites, but Ben has many times told me, "this is one of the three best books he has ever handled." And they've handled a lot of great books.

Similarly, I broadly offer thanks to the community of rare book dealers. It's been a wonderful journey. I also thank for the Clark Library for watching over these books and sharing them scholars, apprentice scholars, and all that that are interested through their many outreach activities. And, thank you, speakers and listeners.