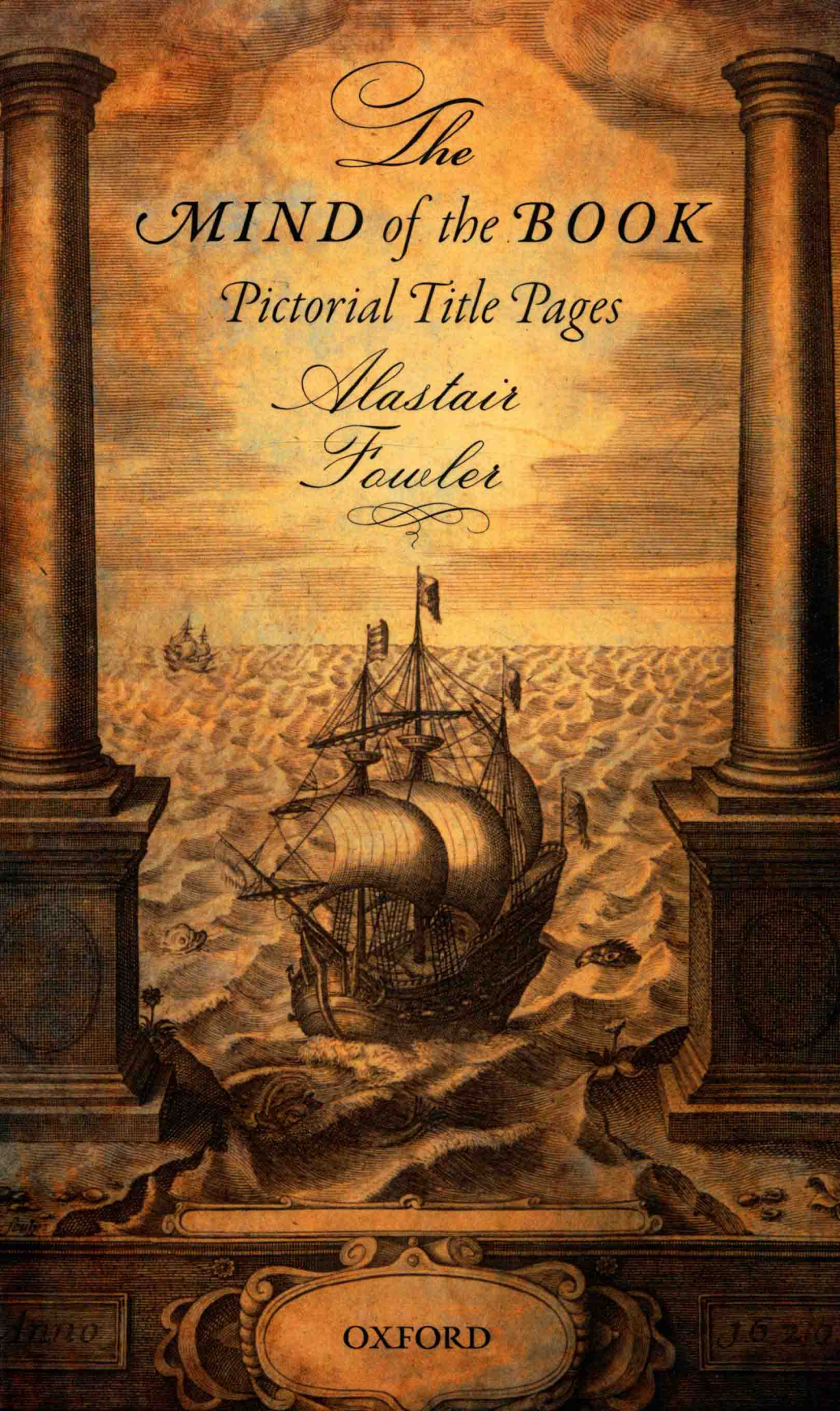
The
MIND of the BOOK
Pictorial Title Pages
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THE *MIND* OF THE *BOOK*

For my son, David

PREFACE

This book began as a response to Marjorie Corbett and Ronald Lightbown's *The Comely Frontispiece* (1979). That inspiring and provocative work appeared before the History of the Book was much written about. So it seemed a worthwhile enterprise to situate the pictorial title page within that history. In the course of exploring this project, two hypotheses emerged. First, that some features of the title page have remained constant, or at least recurrent, over very long periods: author portraits, for example, go back to antiquity, and can still be seen on many dust jackets today. Second, the front matter of books—what is sometimes called paratext—has undergone so many metamorphoses in response to technological change (script to print to mass production), let alone changes of taste and fashion, that it can be hard to recognize the continuities.

In short, title-page forms are so multifarious it would take several tomes to cover them all. This book is only an essay sketching some outstanding topics and illustrating them with plates and attendant commentaries. The hope is to raise interest in frontispieces and title pages usually passed over with a cursory glance. They deserve a closer look, if not quite the intense scrutiny they received in an earlier age, when they were committed to memory.

In what follows, many specialisms are touched on and at least as many debts incurred. If some are not acknowledged, it is not intentional, but merely the result of faulty memory.

Bill Bell first made me aware that the History of the Book had grown to be a distinct discipline of thought. Michael Bath taught the place of inscriptions in decorative art, and much else. John Manning—and other emblem specialists at the 1993 Pittsburgh conference—opened up perspectives on this most elusive of genres. On particular periods, the best guides were, for the seventeenth century, the much missed Robert M. Cummings; for the eighteenth

century, Paul Cheshire; and for the nineteenth, Susan Cruikshank. On art-historical matters, and especially on the history of prints and printmaking, the indispensible guide was Michael Bury. The late William Bellamy taught me much about chronograms, and other covert features of title pages.

Dr Emily Goetsch collected images for the illustrations and arranged for permissions. Her contribution was supported in part by the Edinburgh University School of Literature, Languages, and Cultures, who facilitated our work in many ways.

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2016

ABBREVIATIONS

Cave and Ayad	Roderick Cave, and Sara Ayad, *A History of the Book in 100 Books* (London: British Library, 2014)
Corbett and Lightbown	Marjorie Corbett and R. W. Lightbown, *The Comely Frontispiece: The Emblematic Title-page in England 1550–1660* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979)
EETS	Early English Texts Society
Herford and Simpson	*Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925–52)
Hill and Pollard	Sir George F. Hill and Graham Pollard, *Renaissance Medals at the National Gallery of Art* (London: Phaidon for the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1967)
Johnson, *Catalogue*	*A Catalogue of Engraved and Etched English Title-Pages down to . . . 1691* (Oxford: Bibliographical Society and Oxford University Press, 1934)
Luborsky and Ingram	Ruth Samson Luborsky and Elizabeth Morley Ingram, *A Guide to English Illustrated Books 1536–1603* (Tempe, AZ: MRTS, 1998)
MRTS	Medieval and Renaissance Text Society
OCB	*Oxford Companion to the Book*
OCD	*Oxford Classical Dictionary*
ODEP	*Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, 3rd edn
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*
OGCM	*Oxford Guide to Classical Mythology*
OHLTE	*The Oxford History of Literary Translation in English*
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*
STC	*Short Title Catalogue*
'Twickenham Pope'	Alexander Pope, *Poems*, ed. John Butt et al., 11 vols in 12 (London: Methuen; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939–69)

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Historical Setting

In the ancient world texts had no titles in the modern sense, and therefore no title pages. This applied even to the manuscript known as the *Roman Virgil* (AD 470–500), whose only paratexts (preliminaries) are pairs of framed illustrations. Before the *Aeneid*, for example, the surviving illustration immediately before the title page (fo. 77^{r}) represents the storm at sea (*Aeneid* 1.81–123). The first text page (fo. 78^{r}) comprises eighteen lines, majuscules throughout, solely distinguished from following pages by rubrication of the first three lines and enclosure within a roughly executed frame.[1]

In general, titles were of little importance in manuscript books. Throughout the Middle Ages the beginning of a manuscript was usually marked, if at all,

[1] See David H. Wright, *The Roman Vergil and the Origins of Medieval Book Design* (London: British Library, 2001), 27.

Fig. 1. *Chi Rho* incipit, *Book of Kells*, MS58, fo. 34^{r}. Courtesy of Trinity College Library Dublin.

only by decoration of the first phrase. This phrase, the *incipit* ('here begins'), was often taken to refer to the manuscript as a whole, much as we use a title.

It was a different matter with sacred scriptures such as the *Book of Kells*, whose pervasive decoration was among the foremost cultural achievements of the period (Fig. 1).

Even considering these and other grand exceptions, R. B. McKerrow was not wrong in his broad generalization that the title page—defined as 'a separate page setting forth in a conspicuous manner the title of the book which follows it, and not containing any part of the text of the book itself' was 'very seldom used in manuscripts before the date of [its] introduction in printed books'.[2] By about 1500, however, some sort of title page was common, even in manuscript books.

The increased use of title pages is now regarded as a consequence of the mass-production methods necessary with printing. Individual manuscripts, being invariably made on commission and produced on a one-off basis, could be bound at once. By contrast, printed books were for economic reasons made in large numbers. About 180 copies were printed of the Gutenberg Bible; of the more than 760 editions of Books of Hours between 1485 and 1530, perhaps 300 of each was printed; and probably as many as 20,000 copies of the 1539 *Great Bible*.[3] The new technology required that copies not immediately sold must be kept unbound, perhaps for years, or else transported in barrels, boxes, chests, or bales to a distant bookseller.[4] A blank leaf at the beginning of the book served to protect it during the interval between printing and sale. This protective blank naturally called for some means of identification, and acquired it at first in a simple label title.

Soon, additional features accrued to the label title. With promotion as the driving force, information about the printer was added. Then, in Venetian title pages of the 1490s, decorative text borders began to be introduced. This

[2] Ronald B. McKerrow, *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 88.

[3] Christopher de Hamel, *A History of Illuminated Manuscripts* (1996; rev. edn London: Phaidon, 1997), 176.

[4] See Margaret M. Smith, *The Title-Page: Its Early Development 1460–1510* (London: British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000), 18.

was not a necessary reform: *incipits* and colophons together were perfectly adequate.[5]

Printed books, however, naturally retained many customary features of the manuscript book: the opening sentence or phrase (now sometimes abbreviated to a title);[6] the *incipit* (often signalled by a large or decorated initial capital); and some sort of framing decoration. Usually, 'a decorative emphasis' passed 'from the opening words of the manuscript text itself to the title and [...] to the identity of the producer' of the book.[7]

Early titles were like *incipits*, running to length and cumbrousness, as in William Caxton's translation of the anonymous *Image du monde*, wrongly attributed to Vincentius. The title of Caxton's *Mirrour of the World* (1481) is embedded in a wordy *incipit*:

> Here begynneth the table of the rubrics of this present volume named the Mirrour of the world or thymage of the same. The prologue declareth to whom this volume apperteyneth and at whos reequeste it was translated out of French in to englissh. After foloweth the prologue of the translatour declarying the substaunce of this present volume. After foloweth the book called the Myrour of the world and speketh first of the power and puissance of God.

Reducing such preambles to brief, sometimes very brief, titles called for careful thought and sometimes an attempt at wit.

Soon this led to more consciously contrived titles, of poems as well as books. The poem titles in George Gascoigne's *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowres* (1573) show this development in progress. Some are external and descriptive: 'An absent lover doth thus encourage his Lady'; 'Three Sonets in sequence'. Others, such as 'Gascoigns Anatomie' and 'Gascoignes wodmanship', seem more integrated, more incorporated with the poems they designate.

This development went beyond conventions of presentation. The very concept of titling was itself in process of change. By the seventeenth century,

[5] For a fuller account, see Smith, *Title-Page*, 18–26; Alfred William Pollard, *Titles and Colophons: Last Words on the History of the [Early] Title-Page with Notes on Some Colophons* (London: Nimmo, 1891; repr. Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar, 2015).

[6] On the matter of abbreviation, see Walter J. Ong, SJ, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958); Smith, *Title-Page*, 22, 27.

[7] Ibid. 23.