

# **A CENSUS OF CAXTONS**

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A census of Caxtons by Seymour de Ricci

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**SEYMOUR DE RICCI**

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OF CAXTONS**





*Engraving of an Author, possibly CAXTON,  
Presenting a Book to Margaret, Duchess of Burgundy,  
prefixed to the Chatsworth copy of the 'Recuyell'.*

A  
CENSUS OF CAXTONS

BY  
SEYMOUR DE RICCI

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## PREFACE

IT may be stated with confidence that, during the last twenty years, hardly an English bibliographer has opened William Blades's admirable 'Caxton' without regretting that a new edition has not been published. Blades's rehandling of his favourite theme, twice published, in 1877 and 1882, is distinctly disappointing. Not only did the author, in more than one instance, refuse to acknowledge the remarkable results of Henry Bradshaw's patient and accurate investigations, but also he was obliged, for want of space, to condense into an inadequate compendium the priceless census of copies.

With the possible exception of some 'Shakespeariana', no books are more highly cherished, more ardently coveted by the English and American bibliophile, than Caxton's. Since the eventful days of the Roxburghe sale nearly a century has elapsed; but whereas, in 1812, a thousand guineas was deemed a ridiculous price for the 'Recuyell', we have seen since 1880 no fewer than six Caxtons, if I am right in my reckoning, fetch over £1,800 in the auction-room, the highest price yet reached being the £2,225 paid by Mr. Pierpont Morgan for the Bedford 'Ryall Book'.

The history of Caxton collecting is therefore one of the most interesting branches of English bibliography, and it seems remarkable that no attempt has been made of late years to revise and bring up to date Blades's admirable census.

The present work was begun in the summer of 1905 at the instigation of Lord Amherst of Hackney, whose collection of Caxtons was one of the most remarkable existing in private hands in the United Kingdom. He lent me for several months his annotated copy of Blades, allowed me to make use of his important bibliographical



library, and gave me a valuable collection of English auction catalogues collected by him from 1863 to 1905.

I then worked through 'Book Prices Current' from 1886 to 1906, and through Livingston's 'Auction Prices of Books', and thus obtained references to every Caxton sold in English and American auctions during the last twenty years. Mr. B. Quaritch's kindness in placing at my disposal his enormous collection of bibliographical slips, incorporating, as I believe, Lowndes's own collections, also supplied me with a number of valuable references to various sales and catalogues.

Other sources of information I have been able to make use of are Ames's own copy of his 'Typographical Antiquities' in the British Museum; Herbert's own copy of his revised edition in the same collection; Bradshaw's copy of Blades's 'William Caxton' at Cambridge; and, above all, Blades's own copy of his great book interleaved throughout, copiously annotated, and now preserved at Saint Bride Foundation Institute in Fleet Street.

Blades rarely mentions the bindings of the various copies and pays little attention to the presence or absence of the original blank leaves. I therefore felt obliged to examine as far as possible the Caxtons existing in the various English and foreign libraries, and have seen for myself over three hundred and fifty Caxtons at London, Cambridge, Oxford, Manchester, Glasgow, Chatsworth, Didlington Hall, Wilton, Paris, Chantilly, Ghent, and the Hague.

It would be no easy task for me to name here every person to whom I am indebted for information of various kinds. A number of owners of Caxtons have sent me descriptions of their books, among whom I may quote Lord Herries, Lord Peckover, Lord Beauchamp, Lord Carysfort, Mr. A. H. Huth, Mrs. Buxton, Mr. Fitzroy Fenwick, Mr. Boyd Thacher, Mr. Church, and the late Sir Thomas Brooke. The Earl of Pembroke has been kind enough to let me inspect the Caxtons preserved at Wilton. The Duke of Devonshire has allowed Mrs. Strong to show me the Chatsworth library. Lord Amherst's Caxtons have passed several times through my hands. A number of librarians have helped me to collate the volumes entrusted to their care:

Mr. Pollard and Mr. Esdaile at the British Museum, Mr. Peddie at the Blades library, Mr. Madan at Oxford, Mr. Jenkinson and Mr. Sayle at Cambridge, Mr. Guppy and Mr. Vines at the John Rylands library, Mr. Byvanck at the Hague, Mr. Vanderhaeghen at Ghent, Monsieur Macon at Chantilly, Mr. Ferguson at Glasgow, and many others.

Fellow workers in the bibliographical field have supplied me with a considerable amount of valuable information: Mr. W. Roberts has lent me a large collection of cuttings relating to Caxton; Mr. V. H. Palsits at Albany has sent me lists of Caxtons in America, and has obtained information for me from a number of librarians; Mr. A. G. E. Phillips has examined for me Lord Crawford's Caxtons, and Dr. Johann Joachim those at Göttingen; Messrs. Quaritch, Sotheran, and Tregaskis have made clear several obscure points in the history of various copies. I also owe much useful information to R. Ranshaw, Dr. G. C. Williamson, Professor A. H. Church, Mr. F. Haverfield, Mr. W. Jaggard, Mr. Strickland Gibson, Mr. Payne, Miss Edith Brinkmann, Dr. James H. Canfield, &c., and I must thank the editor of the *Athenaeum* who was kind enough to publish a letter announcing my census and asking for information. I am glad to say that I received quite a number of interesting answers to it.

Lastly, a special note of thanks is due to Mr. E. Gordon Duff, who has supervised the writing of this census from beginning to end, has continually supplied me with documents and references, has lent me his notes on the Pierpont Morgan Caxtons, has read through the proof-sheets of the census, and has practically dictated to me the portion relating to Caxton's 'Indulgences'. The proofs have also been revised throughout by Mr. Pollard, Mr. Jenkinson, Mr. Sayle, and Mr. Graves, who have supplied me with many valuable corrections to my description of copies at the British Museum, at Cambridge, and at Britwell.

The plan adopted in the following census is exceedingly simple; the hundred known works from Caxton's press are classified in the same order as in Mr. Gordon Duff's excellent book on Caxton, published by the Caxton Club at Chicago. First the Bruges books, then those from the Westminster press, each series being in alphabetical order.

After the Bruges books printed by Caxton himself, I have inserted the two or three Bruges books printed in Caxton's types, but probably not by Caxton, and, at the end of the whole list, I have added half a dozen early Wynkyn de Wordes, printed just after Caxton's death, with the master's types, and which have been so often reckoned as Caxton's that they could not be omitted from this census.

The paragraph relating to each book contains the following entries :—

A. The exact title of the book, as far as possible in Caxton's own words and spelling.

B. The collation (number of leaves ; blanks ; signatures), chiefly according to Mr. E. G. Duff's researches ; also the height and breadth in millimetres of a normal page of type, exclusive of headlines, signatures and catchwords, measured from the top of the tallest letter to the bottom of the longest one.

C. References to Blades's great work, to the 1882 abridgement (quoted as second edition), to Hain and Copinger, and to the three editions of Ames's 'Typographical Antiquities' (quoted as 'Ames', 'Ames-Herbert', and 'Ames-Dibdin').

D. The list of copies of which the present owner is known. In the case of private collectors a few of these copies may have changed hands of late years. I have not written to every owner of a Caxton to know if he still had it.

For each copy I have quoted :—

1. The 'early owners', chiefly from the notes on the fly-leaves.
2. The subsequent owners, with a direct reference to the sales and catalogues in which the book has been mentioned. I have endeavoured to quote everywhere the page and number in each catalogue. If the page is not stated, it may be taken for granted that I have not seen the catalogue myself.
3. The present owner.
4. The imperfections of the copy, the presence or absence of the original blanks being noted for nearly all the copies I have myself examined. All copies styled *nearly perf.* are those which want one or