The Tamazunchale Press: A Bibliographic Checklist

CHARLOTTE M. SMITH

After collecting and studying miniature books (those less than three inches in height) for over twenty years, I decided to go a step further in this fascinating pursuit by entering the publishing field. My goal was to bring some of my favorite authors, both old and new, hitherto unpublished in miniature book form, to this small format. But first I would practice by publishing a piece of my own before tackling a major author.

And so Tamazunchale Press was born early in 1983. In 1939 Tom and I had spent one night on our honeymoon in a small Mexican village, Tamazunchale, which was named, we were told, for two silver prospectors: one Thomas, the other Charlie. As this town suggested our two names, it seemed fitting to borrow it with the Mexican spelling for our press.

I had first seen the work of Joh. Enschedé en Zonen of Haarlem, Holland, printers for over 275 years, in some of the elegant yet simple tiny tomes published by Achille St. Onge, the outstanding miniature book publisher of this century, now deceased. Tom and I met with a descendant of the founder of the Enschedé firm in Haarlem. They print all the stamps and paper money in Holland as well as books of all sizes. After discussing costs we selected paper, leather, end papers, and printing fonts for the printing and binding of our first publication, Book Interlude.

Nine months to a year elapse from the conception of a book until it is completed and in my hands. The selection of an appropriate story, suite of poems, or essay is determined by personal taste and length. For contemporary writers, copyright
permission is negotiated and royalties paid. Colors and textures of leather for bindings are chosen, along with appropriate marbled papers for end papers. All of our books that were printed by Joh. Enschedé en Zonen made use of Trinité type and were bound by Reliure d’Art du Centre S.A. of Limoges, France. These choices are sent with the manuscript to the printer for a price quotation, which might be two or three months in coming. There is a wait of three or four months for the proof copy and an equal length of time after the corrected galley is returned before I can expect the finished books. Each copy is then examined for improper gatherings and every book is given a number on the colophon page.

Some of the books have postage stamps as frontispieces. Stamps, because of their size, make interesting and colorful illustrations for small books. The Nathaniel Hawthorne and the Pearl Buck stamps used in David Swan and My Chinese Childhood were purchased at the time of their issue at the local post office. Three stamp companies provided the older 1940 Washington
Irving stamps for *A Literary Antiquary*. We saw the French postal depiction of Claude Monet’s “Women in the Garden,” which illustrates *Claude Monet*, when visiting Monet’s beautiful home and gardens in Giverny, France. The Antonín Dvořák stamps were purchased in Czechoslovakia by Janet Savin, the author of *Antonín Dvořák*. I affix the stamps with hinges opposite the title page.

The majority of Tamazunchale Press books are sold to collectors in this country, but individuals and dealers in Australia, Japan, Yugoslavia, Hungary, France, Germany, Holland, England, and Canada have bought them as well. Several universities and libraries have purchased our miniatures for author or subject collections. The University of Iowa and the Public Library of Des Moines, as well as 50 or more collectors, have complete collections.

To my knowledge Tamazunchale Press books are the only miniature books ever published in Iowa. It has been a learning, sometimes frustrating, mostly fulfilling experience to publish these small books.
CHECKLIST

1. BOOK INTERLUDE by Charlotte M. Smith. October 1983. Bound in full maroon leather with gold stamping, all edges gilt, Cockerell end papers. 2 3/4 x 1 7/8". 250 numbered and signed copies. 44 pages. Printed by Joh. Enschedé en Zonen, bound by Reliure d'Art de Centre. Iowa Authors Collection


papers. 2 1/2 x 2 3/8". 250 numbered copies. 33 pages. Printed and bound by Tabula Rasa Press. xPS3515.O3485H65 1985


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http://ir.uiowa.edu/bai/vol50/iss1


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