

PRINTED & BOUND

A Newsletter for Bibliophiles

February 2016

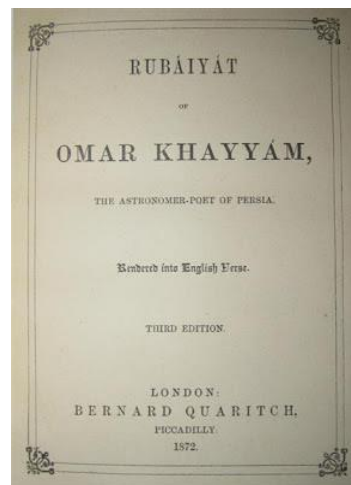
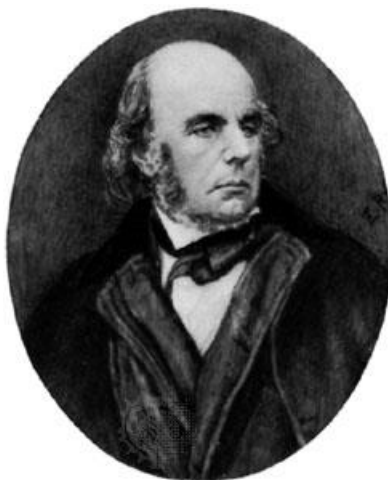
Printed & Bound focuses on the book as a collectible item and as an example of the printer's art. It provides information about the history of printing and book production, guidelines for developing a book collection, and news about book-related publications and activities.

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Above, left: Portrait of Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883). Above right: Title page of the third edition of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

IN THIS ISSUE...

If you would like to embark on a book collection that would offer virtually unlimited collecting opportunities, satisfy your desire for beautifully bound and illustrated books, provide you with fascinating hours of research into the world of Victorian literature and scholarship, and puzzle you with questions about the difference between translations and re-renderings, then you should consider collecting *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Turn to page 7 for an introduction to the world of Omar Khayyam and his famous quatrains.

Many editions of the *Rubaiyat* are beautiful indeed, but nothing can quite match the luxurious design and craftsmanship of the Lindisfarne Gospels. See page 2 to learn more about this breathtaking manuscript.

Long-time Book Club of Detroit member Maurice Barie is a champion backgammon player and a collector of useful, unusual, and rare books about the game. From the best books written about backgammon to those that are downright "horrible," Maurice Barie has them. In addition, he's an avid collector of backgammon-related items, from advertisements, photos, and other ephemera to prints and manuscripts. See page 3 for more.



Left: The original jeweled cover was lost, possibly during a Viking raid. This replacement was created in 1852. Below: A “carpet” page facing the “incipit” for the Gospel of Matthew. The Lindisfarne Gospels may be viewed in person at the British Library in London.



THE GORGEOUS LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

By Paula Jarvis

The time was around A.D. 700. The place was Lindisfarne (also known as Holy Island) off the coast of Northumbria (now Northumberland). The occasion may have been the exhumation of Cuthbert (later St. Cuthbert), former Bishop of Landisfarne, whose body was discovered to be “virtually uncorrupted.”*

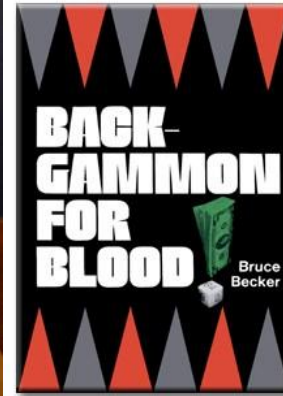
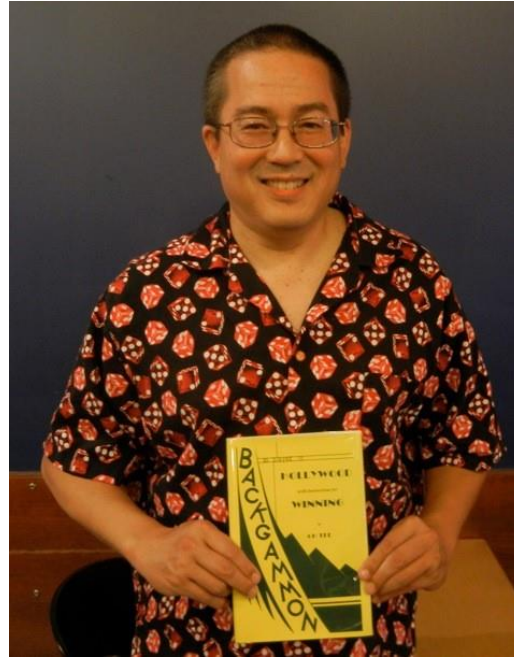
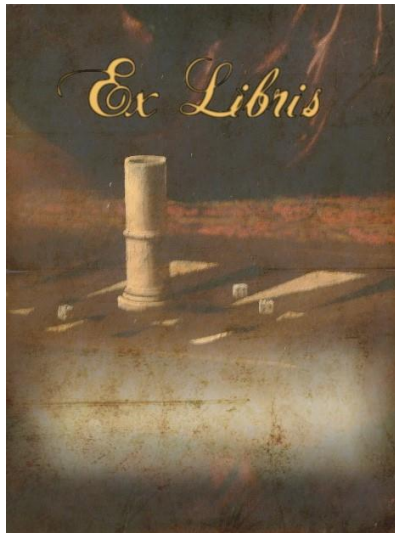
This seeming miracle may have inspired the commissioning of the Lindisfarne Gospels, a priceless volume that was undertaken by Eadfrith, Cuthbert’s successor as Bishop of Landisfarne. Unlike other illuminated volumes, which were produced by teams of scribes and illuminators, the Lindisfarne Gospels were written and illustrated by Eadfrith alone. We know this because Aldred, provost of Chester-le-Street near Durham and

translator of the Gospels, added a colophon on the final page saying that these Gospels were done for God and St. Cuthbert and that their author was Eadfrith.

This magnificent volume consists of 259 vellum leaves. Each Gospel begins with a “carpet” page (intricate decorations with no text), followed by an “incipit,” which consists of the first few words or lines of the Gospel with splendidly decorated opening words. The text is written in Latin, but in the tenth century Aldred wrote English translations between the lines of Latin.

The original binding—which featured gold, gems, and gilt-silver—was lost (possibly in a Viking raid), but a new cover was created in 1852. Today the Lindisfarne Gospel may be seen in the British Library in London.

*January 2016 issue of *Britain magazine*.



Above left, the author's bookplate. Center: The author with his facsimile edition of Backgammon As Played In Hollywood. Above right: Backgammon For Blood by Bruce Becker, which the author describes as "one of the worst backgammon books ever written" because of the risky strategies he advises. However, another book with the same title but written by Chris Bray is excellent.

BACKGAMMON: BEYOND THE HORIZON

By Maurice Barie

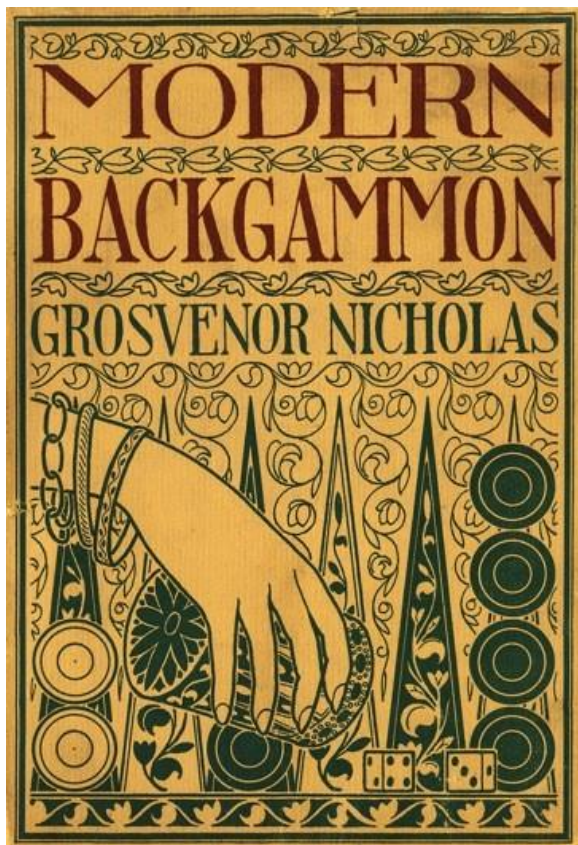
At around 5,000 years old, backgammon (or "tables," as many nations call it) is the second oldest game from the Middle East. (Mancala games are somewhat older.) The exact origin of the word "backgammon" is not known, though it is generally believed to be a derivative of a back game, one of the strategies in backgammon. Backgammon is a racing game to bring all of your checkers to your home board and be the first person to bear off all of them. Parcheesi, or Ludo, a much simpler variant of backgammon, is surprisingly only about 1,200 years old.

Backgammon had great popularity in the 1890s in the United States, enjoyed a resurgence in the 1920s and 1930s, became popular yet again in the 1970s and 1980s, and now has more players than ever, though mostly online.

ENTHRALLED BY THE GAME

Board games in general, and backgammon specifically, have enthralled me for a long time. A syndicated weekly backgammon column written by Alfred Sheinwold appeared in the local newspaper. I wrote him, asking if he knew of locations where backgammon was played at a higher level. A few weeks later he wrote back and said there were seven backgammon clubs in Michigan at that time. My choice was the Plymouth Club, where players were using a six-sided doubling cube with which I was not familiar. Later I learned that the doubling cube was a key component to making the game of backgammon perhaps 75% skill and 25% luck and was responsible

(continued on page 4)



BACKGAMMON (continued from page 3)

for the resurgence of backgammon popularity. A standard doubling cube has the numbers 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, and 64 on the sides, though in tournament play it is infrequent for the cube to be doubled past four. The doubling cube is doubled to the next higher number, not rolled. (Many people have the misperception that backgammon is all luck.)

“Who is the best player in the club?” I asked, and everyone pointed to one player. For five Wednesdays I came by and only watched this player and his handling of the doubling cube. On the sixth week, I decided to play in the backgammon tournament, and by beginner’s luck I came in second place and won \$83. After the tournament, many players gambled, playing for \$3 per point. Seven other players played against me in what is known as “La

Chouette.” On one game I won 192 points, a backgammon, because my opponents still had checkers in my home board and I had safely removed all my checkers. (This was at a time when my wage was only \$125 per week as a student assistant.)

STARTING MY COLLECTION

It was at this time I decided I was going to purchase every backgammon book I could get my hands on. My theory was, “If I learn even one bit of information, the book will pay for itself.” I was already a book collector, so becoming a niche collector of backgammon books was not unreasonable.

It took six years of study and play to have a firm grasp of the doubling cube. The doubling cube, which is used in tournament play and in money play, originated in the United States sometime between 1925 and 1927. Grosvenor Nicholas was the first author to mention the doubling cube in his book *Modern Backgammon*, published in January 1928. The doubling cube makes for a much faster game because most games do not go to completion; usually your opponent will resign if the odds of winning are not sufficient to accept the doubled stakes. A gammon will double the stakes, and a backgammon will triple the stakes. (A gammon is defined as one player having all of his or her checkers taken off the board and the opponent having one or more checkers in the outer board or having not taken off at least one checker. A backgammon is defined as one player having taken off all of his or her checkers and the opponent still having a checker in the inner home board or on the bar of the opponent.) Until recently, almost all backgammon literature was written at a beginner or intermediate level, especially in regard to the doubling cube. A few books, such as Barclay Cooke’s *Paradoxes and* (continued on page 5)



BACKGAMMON (continued from page 4)

Probabilities, Tim Holland's *Better Backgammon* and *Backgammon For Players Who Hate to Lose*, and Joe Dwek's *Backgammon for Profit*, were written at a higher level. The best reference book by far was Paul Magriel's *Backgammon*, the most comprehensive book on all aspects of backgammon in a single volume.

MY COLLECTION GROWS ALONG WITH MY BACKGAMMON SKILLS

I started buying out collections from people who were retiring from the game, but the profits mostly went to purchase other backgammon books that I did not have in my collection, not only in hardcover but also in very scarce dust jackets. Since backgammon books are reference books, many people discarded the dust jackets. For example, Grosvenor Nicholas' book *Modern Backgammon*, published in 1928, is common to find for under \$25 but fetches \$275 with dust jacket. One seller on addall.com is asking \$900 for this book with dust jacket.

Over time my acquisitions grew to include almost all English language editions in hard cover with dust jackets from the late 1920s to present. A recent acquisition is *Backgammon Standards* with dust jacket by Wallace and Hiss from 1930. I would have been willing to pay over \$200 for it but got it for \$9. Some of the British and Australian dust jackets have nicer designs than the American editions, and I get these too. The foreign literature acquisitions increased as well because the best technical publications were coming from Germany with *Das Backgammon Magazin* and Costa Rica with Antonio Ortega's *Fascinante Backgammon*.

After six years, my playing skill level rose to Championship level, which I attribute mostly to the backgammon literature. In the late 1980s The Gammon Press by Bill Robertie began printing very informative limited print run books. Of course I purchased and studied each one. (continued on page 6)

BACKGAMMON (cont. from page 5)

Fascinante Backgammon had all of the mathematical formulas needed to make a more precise decision rather than an intuitive decision, but *Backgammon Costa Rica 1993* was the book that improved my game the most at that time, so much so that I reread it twelve times. One of the top level Championship players, Michael Senkiewicz, made a move that I did not understand at all. It seemed counter-intuitive. I hand-rolled out the position over 400 times, going over the 36 possible dice permutations for each side, and by the time I finished I had a much greater understanding of theory, strategy, and doubling cube psychology.

Grosvenor Nicholas published the excellent *Winning Backgammon* in 1930, another example of a fairly common book, but I believe I have the only known copy with the dust jacket. Bruce Becker's *Backgammon For Blood* ranks as one of the worst backgammon books ever written, yet for some reason the title appealed to people, and I sold perhaps two dozen copies.

(NOTE: Another book with the same title, but written by Chris Bray, is excellent.)

Gaby Horowitz wrote the horrible *Dynamic Cube Strategy*, the first book to deal with the psychological aspects of the doubling cube. He was a notorious cheat and got banned from the game. He is most famous for his marriage to prosecutor Marcia Clark. Susan Perry's *How to Play Backgammon* is an extremely difficult title to find, especially with dust jacket. For some reason her book has the same ISBN as a book of the same title written by Arman Ratrip. Roy Friedman's *World Class Backgammon Move By Move* deserves more respect because it is an excellent book, but he was an unknown backgammon author and player. His book last sold on eBay for \$84. Kit Woolsey and Hal Heinrich co-authored *New Ideas in*

Backgammon, the first book to use exhaustive computer rollouts to challenge contemporary "human" playing theory, which changed the way the backgammon of today is played.

PLAYING AT CHAMPIONSHIP LEVELS

In 1996, I cashed in seven of the eleven tournaments I had entered in the U.S. backgammon circuit, winning in New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, Nevada, and Indianapolis. In 1998, I won the Michigan Summer Championships and finished third overall in the U.S. on the American Backgammon Tour. I also played in Monte Carlo in the World Championship and in Switzerland at Badrutt's Palace. The last time I checked, I was still 58th place all time, and I have not been active on the backgammon tournament circuit in over seven years.

BEYOND BACKGAMMON BOOKS

My backgammon book collection has expanded to include early photographs, advertisements, pamphlets, postcards, early ephemera, backgammon implements, checkers, magazines, photos of celebrities playing backgammon, original manuscripts, original wood block prints, etc. from the early modern period and older. (I define the modern era of backgammon publication, when the advanced concepts were just coming out, from 1978 to 1995.) My private collection of backgammon items is now one of the finest in the nation.

Contrary to the publishing trend, more backgammon books than ever before are being published, almost all of Championship calibre. Computers have made analysis much easier and have also made publishing easier. Prior to the computer age, most of my backgammon books were purchased by visiting used book
(continued on page 12)



COLLECTING THE RUBAIYAT OF OMAR KHAYYAM

By Paula Jarvis

One of the best-known works of Persian poetry is also one of the most popular works of English literature. In fact, if it weren't for the efforts of translator Edward FitzGerald, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* might be read today only by Orientalists and students of Persian literature. Nonetheless, once FitzGerald's translations became known and loved by Victorian readers, illustrators and publishers soon vied to outdo each other in creating the most alluring editions possible. No one knows just how many different editions have since been published, but the number is clearly large enough to occupy collectors for a lifetime. (The examples on these pages represent only a tiny portion of these attractive volumes.)

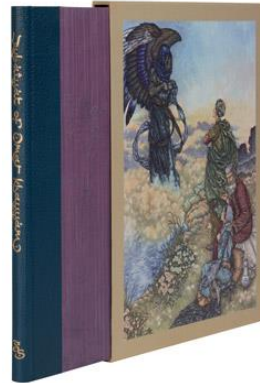
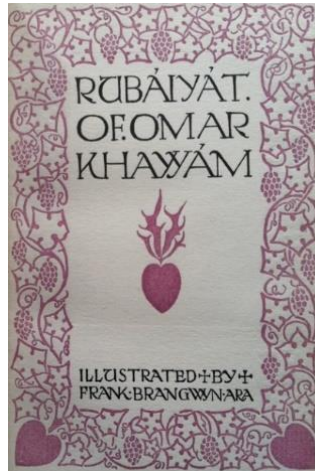
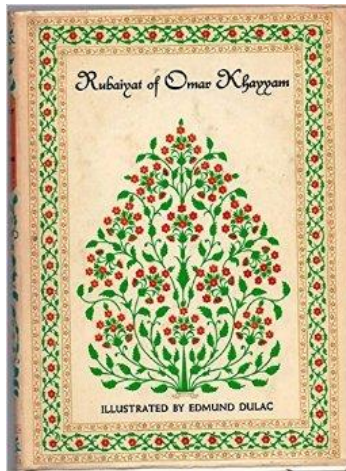
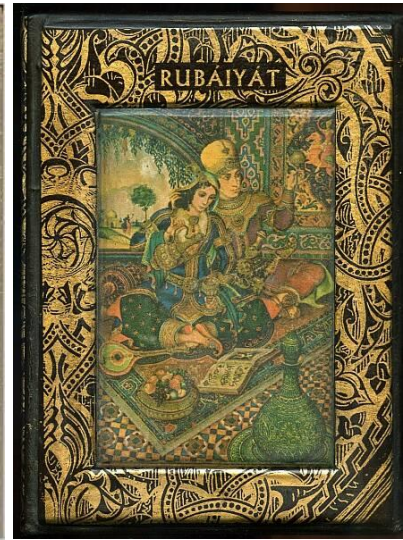
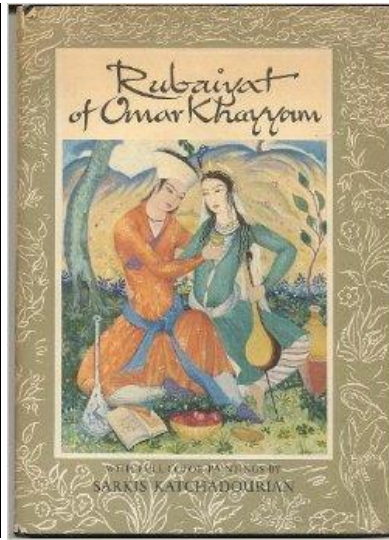
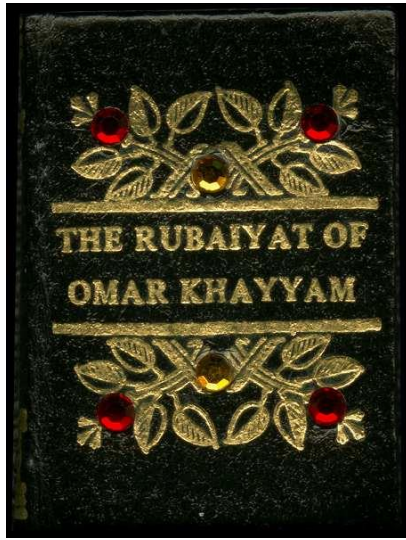
Edward FitzGerald (March 31, 1809–June 14, 1883) was born Edward Purcell in Suffolk, England. The family changed their name to FitzGerald (spelled Fitzgerald by some) when Edward's mother, whose maiden name was FitzGerald, inherited a fortune after her father's death. With the

exception of a brief marriage that lasted only a few months, FitzGerald was a life-long bachelor who enjoyed flowers, music, and literature.

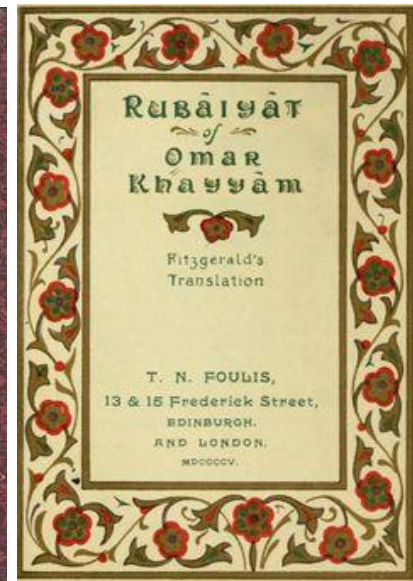
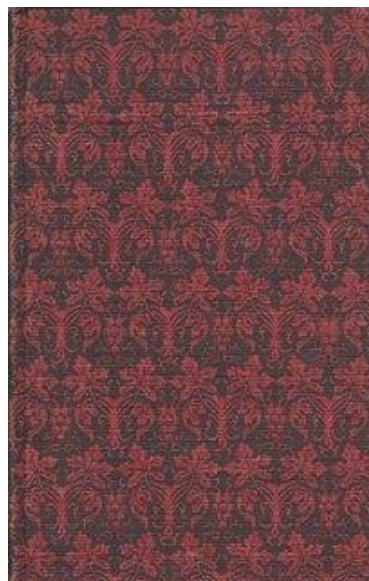
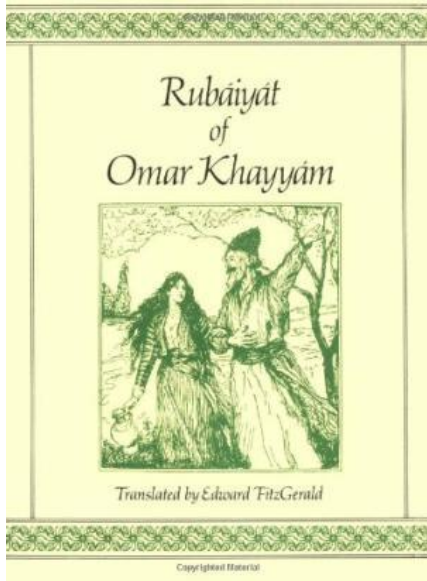
As an independently wealthy man, FitzGerald was able to pursue a variety of interests, including the study of the Persian language. When his teacher, Edward Cowell, told him about a recently acquired Persian manuscript at Oxford University's Bodleian Library, FitzGerald soon embarked on the first of five translations of what became known as *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. (NOTE: The "the" is sometimes omitted before Rubaiyat.)

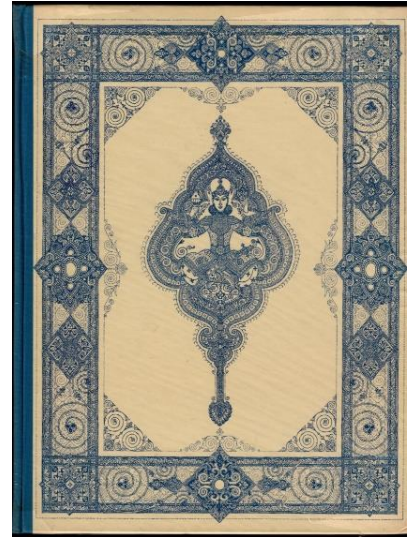
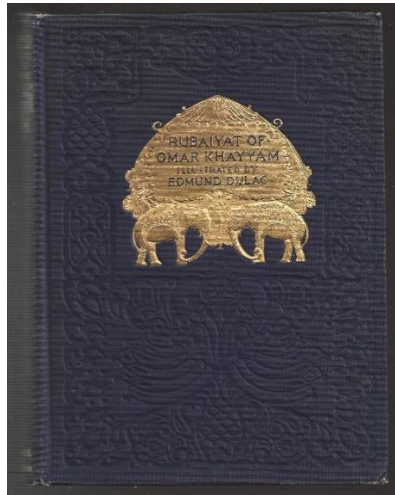
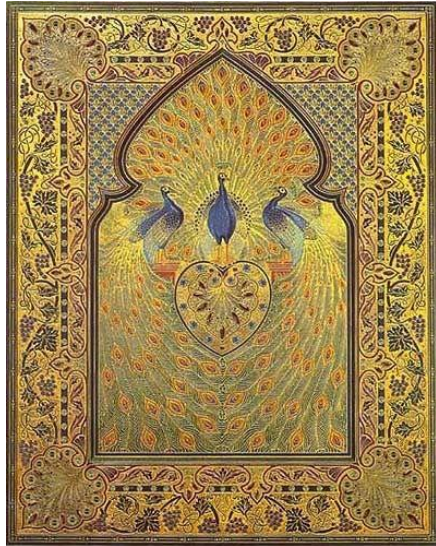
WHO WAS OMAR KHAYYAM?

Omar Khayyam—Persian astronomer, mathematician, and writer of possibly as many as one thousand four-line verses called *rubá-í* (plural: *rubáiyát*)—was born in the little town of Naishapur in AD 1048. He died in AD 1123 and is buried in the town of
(continued on page 9)



Near left, Folio Society 2012.





RUBAIYAT (continued from page 7)

his birth. (At least one other source gives his date of birth as 1044 CE.) Because Khayyam means “tent maker,” historians believe that Omar was born into a family of tent-makers. Thus, he is often called “Omar the Tent Maker,” although he apparently never worked at that craft himself. Nonetheless, he often used tents as symbols in his verses.

During Khayyam’s lifetime and for many years afterward, his poems garnered little notice in his homeland, and his name was not included among the top poets of Persia (now known as Iran). However, that changed in the 19th century when the publication of FitzGerald’s translations and their subsequent popularity in the Western world brought renewed—and favorable—attention to Khayyam’s verses in Persia.

FITZGERALD’S FIVE VERSIONS

When talking about “editions” of FitzGerald’s Rubaiyat, it’s important to note that the word can refer to FitzGerald’s five translations (or five editions) or to the many editions (or reprints) produced by various publishers. This section refers to FitzGerald’s five translations.

FitzGerald’s first edition of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* was little more than a pamphlet with paper covers, containing translations of 75 of Khayyam quatrains. Only 200 copies (or 250 copies, depending on your source) were printed, but at one shilling (or five shillings, again depending on your source) they didn’t sell, so they were eventually remaindered and priced at one penny. According to Terry Stillman of Stillman Books (who uses the lower-case “g” Fitzgerald spelling), “If, after publication in 1859 by London bookseller Bernard Quaritch, Whitley Stokes hadn’t later passed by Quaritch’s bookshop and plucked a copy from the ‘penny box,’ Fitzgerald’s book would have died on Picadilly Street. If Whitley Stokes, well-known as a Celtic scholar, had not given a copy of Fitzgerald’s Rubaiyat to his friend Dante Rossetti on the 10th of July, 1861, then the translation would not have been introduced to the influential literati of the day.” Fortunately, Rossetti was enthralled by the verses. Before long, George Meredith, Swinburne, William Morris, the Brownings, (continued on page 10)

RUBAIYAT (continued from page 9)

and other leaders in the world of Victorian art and literature shared his enthusiasm, which rapidly spread from England to America and finally across the globe. Soon those penny copies of FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* had become highly desirable. In fact, just 70 years later (in 1929), Jerome Kern's copy of FitzGerald's little pamphlet sold for \$8,000.

FitzGerald, who paid for the printing of the first edition himself and issued it anonymously, went on to write four more versions of the *Rubaiyat*, three of which were published during his lifetime. The second edition (1868) had 110 quatrains but the third (1872) and fourth (1879) had 101 quatrains. (The third and fourth editions are almost identical. Only 17 words and 18 punctuation marks are different.) The fifth edition, which was published in 1889 (six years after FitzGerald's death), also has 101 quatrains and is substantially the same as the third. The most popular versions of the *Rubaiyat* are the first and fifth, which are sometimes included in the same volume. During his lifetime, FitzGerald did not allow his name to appear on any of these editions, but this changed after his death in 1883 when he could no longer object.

THE RUBAIYAT AS ART

What was first published as a paper pamphlet soon attracted the interest of book designers and illustrators, who found unending inspiration in the sensual verses set against the richly decorative background of ancient Persia. During the 20th century alone, Edmund Dulac, Willy Pogany, Frank Brangwyn, Sarkis Katchadourian, Elihu Vedder, Adelaide Hanscom, Gilbert James, Charles and T.H. Robinson, Arthur Syzk, and René Bull were among the artists who were inspired to illustrate the *Rubaiyat*. Typographers and bookbinders added their

artistic vision as well to create books of incomparable beauty.

Perhaps the most luxurious copy is one that can no longer be viewed, for it lies at the bottom of the Atlantic. It was lost in the sinking of the *H.M.S. Titanic* in 1912.

Three years earlier, in 1909, Sangorski & Sutcliffe, a famous British bookbinding firm that is still in business, was commissioned to re-bind an American edition of the *Rubaiyat*. The bookbinding firm says of the project: "The book was undoubtedly the most ambitious bookbinding ever undertaken by any bookbinder at any period in history. It boasted over a thousand precious and semi-precious jewels, thousands of separate leather onlays and it took the firm two years of continuous work to finish." Among the jewels were rubies, emeralds, amethysts, and topazes. The front cover featured three peacocks (symbolic of Persia). In addition, the design included gold embroidery. To protect their masterpiece, the binders enclosed the volume in an oak slipcase.

Although many in England wanted the book to remain in their own country, the coal strike there apparently discouraged British collectors from bidding during the March 29, 1912, auction at Sotheby's. Thus, it was an American dealer, Gabriel Wells in New York, who was able to buy it for just £405 (worth \$2,025 at that time), which was less than a third of its intrinsic value. A few weeks later, Sotheby's consigned the book to the White Star Line for transit to America on the maiden voyage of the *Titanic*. The beautiful Sangorski & Sutcliffe edition of FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* sank with the ship and has never been found.

TRANSLATION OR RE-RENDERING?

Edward FitzGerald himself called his versions of Omar Khayyam's quatrains
(continued on page 11)



In 2014, Oxford University's Bodleian Library published a special edition (above left) with illustrations from René Bull's 1913 edition. (The Bodleian Library originally planned to issue the book with a peacock cover, shown above center, but decided that the crescent design better reflected René Bull's illustrations. Thus, although the peacock design appeared in some of the Bodleian's pre-publication publicity, the crescent design was the one chosen for actual publication.) In 2009, England's Folio Society, which has issued the Rubaiyat in many different designs throughout the years, published the edition shown above right, with illustrations by Niroot Puttapipat. It had 220 pages, measured 13 inches by 9 3/4 inches, and was limited to 1,000 copies. In 2012, a smaller, less expensive version (not limited) was issued. See page 8 for this edition.*

RUBAIYAT (continued from page 10)

"transmogrifications," rather than translations. In a letter to E. B. Cowell dated September 3, 1858, FitzGerald wrote, "My translation will interest you from its form, and also in many respects in its detail: very un-literal as it is. Many quatrains are mashed together: and something lost, I doubt, of Omar's simplicity, which is so much a virtue in him." In another letter to Cowell, dated April 27, 1859, he wrote, "I suppose very few People have ever taken such Pains in Translation as I have: though certainly not to be literal. But at all Cost, a Thing must live: with a transfusion of one's own worse Life if one can't retain the Original's better. Better a live Sparrow than a stuffed Eagle."

Many people other than Edward FitzGerald have translated the Rubaiyat into other English versions (including prose translations) as well into other languages, yet no version has achieved the popularity of any of FitzGerald's "tranmogrifications." He took a loosely organized array of random poetical musings and converted them into one of the most beloved and quotable pieces of English literature—and for that we are most thankful.

*A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!*

*Since 1955, the Folio Society has published five different editions of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Some Rubaiyat collectors form sub-collections of these Folio Society editions, which are renowned for their superb design, printing, and illustrations, as well as their beautiful bindings.

BACKGAMMON (continued from page 6)

stores across the nation, especially the seven used books stores in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Carol Joy Cole, who runs the Flint Area Backgammon Club and is the organizer for most of the tournaments across the U.S., is also one of the largest distributors of backgammon books. Advertisements placed in backgammon newsletters and magazines indicating that I buy individual books or entire collections have filled many gaps. Unfortunately, almost all of the backgammon books from the computer era are printed as oversize paperbacks.

My favorite backgammon books are the books I deem worthy enough to have hard bound. Bill Robertie's *Advanced Backgammon*, Ortega's *Fascinante Backgammon*, and a recent title published by Mike Corbett are such books. When I asked Mike to autograph my copy he was very honored to see it in hardcover. Most of the backgammon books use a four-ply computer analysis for the results. Mike challenged some of the results by doing one million computer rollouts on over 100 positions. In each position the computer was wrong on the four-ply analysis, enough to be considered a blunder.

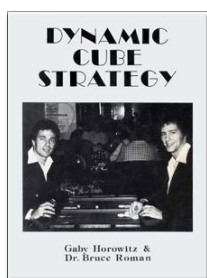
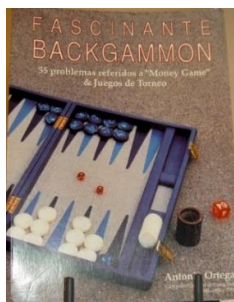
The internet has made some scarcer titles easier to find, though the downside is that some duplicate titles I typically sold for \$125 now only sell for \$25 to \$50. The

rarer titles from the 1930s I can still sell for \$175 to \$275, but the market for people willing to spend that much is limited. The internet was also my source for my backgammon bookplate design from the web site fiver.com. I received about fifteen different designs, all for \$5 each. The quality of the designs was very high overall, so I had a difficult time choosing a favorite. The design I chose blends the ancient origins with a modern background.

THE SEARCH CONTINUES

Recently I printed a facsimile reproduction of *Backgammon As Played In Hollywood* in a limited edition of 250 hardcovers with dust jackets. The original was derived from the microfilm from the Library of Congress. My buy order is up to \$500 if someone can find an original of this publication with the dust jacket. Today, many of the backgammon players on the tournament circuit know me as a backgammon historian. I have spent many hours in New York and Washington D.C doing research on the doubling cube.

What do I see beyond the horizon? Ever more excellent backgammon titles will be published, computer programs will get ever stronger, and more people will play backgammon over the internet. In addition, backgammon enthusiasts will become aware of my collection via the American Backgammon Tour page on Facebook.



According to Maurice Barie, *Dynamic Cube Strategy*, shown at left, is a "horrible" book because its author, Gaby Horowitz, "was a notorious cheater and has the distinction of being one of the few players ever banned from playing backgammon at the tournament level."

(Note about the author: In addition to being a backgammon enthusiast and a champion player, Maurice Barie is also a long-time book collector and treasurer of The Book Club of Detroit.)