

Chapels, Devils, Monks, & Friars: *The Language of Printing History*

Robin Davis | LIS 590 HB | History of Books
Dec. 8, 2010



How do historians describe the history of printing... historically?

- “...how greatly we are indebted to the inventors of that useful, or, as it may justly be said, **divine art of printing.**” —Adlard & Browne, 1770
- “the learning, virtue, honourable exertions, and ardent and daring zeal of most of the early printers, who ... have secured to their memories the **everlasting respect** of all lovers of liberal and enlightened education.” —Timperley, 1889

From Mark Twain's autobiography

“In the line in which the ‘out’ had been made occurred the name Jesus Christ. Wales reduced that to J.C. It made room for the missing words, but it took 99% of the solemnity out of a particularly solemn sentence.

...Presently that great Alexander Campbell appeared ... He said ‘So long as you live, don’t you ever diminish the Savior’s name again. Put it *all* in.’

...So he imposed upon himself the long and weary and dreary task of overrunning all those three pages ... and thoughtfully improve[d] upon the great preacher’s admonition. He enlarged the offending J.C. into Jesus H. Christ.

...I don’t remember what his punishment was, but he was not the person to care for that.”



IMPRESSIO LIBRORVM.

Potest vt vna vox capi aure plurima: Linunt ita vna scripta mille paginas.

Figure 8. The Galle workshop: the printshop. Engraving: *IMPRESSIO LIBRORVM* [. . .] Ioan. Stradanus inuent. Phls. Galle excud. (Stedelijk Prentenkabinet, Antwerp, cat. no. III/G 966) (Copyright: Museum Plantin-Moretus, Prentenkabinet, Antwerp)

Chapel

From the OED:

10.

- a. A printers' workshop, a printing-office.
- b. A meeting or association of the journeymen in a printing-office for promoting and enforcing order among themselves, settling disputes as to price of work, etc. It is presided over by a *father of the chapel* annually elected. Hence *to hold a chapel*.

Solaces

“The Penalty for the breach of these Laws and Customs is in Printers Language called a Solace.”

—Joseph Moxon,
Mechanick Exercises, 1683

these Laws and Customs is in Printers Language called a *Solace*.

And the Judges of these *Solaces*, and other Controversies relating to the *Chappel*, or any of its Members, was plurality of Votes in the *Chappel*. It being asserted as a Maxim, *That the Chappel cannot Err*. But when any Controversie is thus decided, it always ends in the Good of the *Chappel*.

1. Swearing in the *Chappel*, a *Solace*.
2. Fighting in the *Chappel*, a *Solace*.
3. Abusive Language, or giving the Ly in the *Chappel*, a *Solace*.
4. To be Drunk in the *Chappel*, a *Solace*.
5. For any of the Workmen to leave his Candle burning at Night, a *Solace*.
6. If the *Compositer* let fall his *Composing-stick*, and another take it up, a *Solace*.
7. Three *Letters* and a *Space* to lye under the *Compositer's Case*, a *Solace*.
8. If a *Prefs-man* let fall his *Ball* or *Balls*, and another take it up, a *Solace*.
9. If a *Prefs-man* leave his *Blankets* in the *Tympan* at Noon or Night, a *Solace*.

These *Solaces* were to be bought off, for the good of the *Chappel*: Nor were the price of these *Solaces* alike: For some were 12 d. 6 d. 4 d. 2 d. 1 d. ob. according to the nature and quality of the *Solace*.

But if the Delinquent prov'd Obstinate or Refractory, and would not pay his *Solace* at the Price of the *Chappel*; they *Solac'd* him.

The manner of *Solacing*, thus.

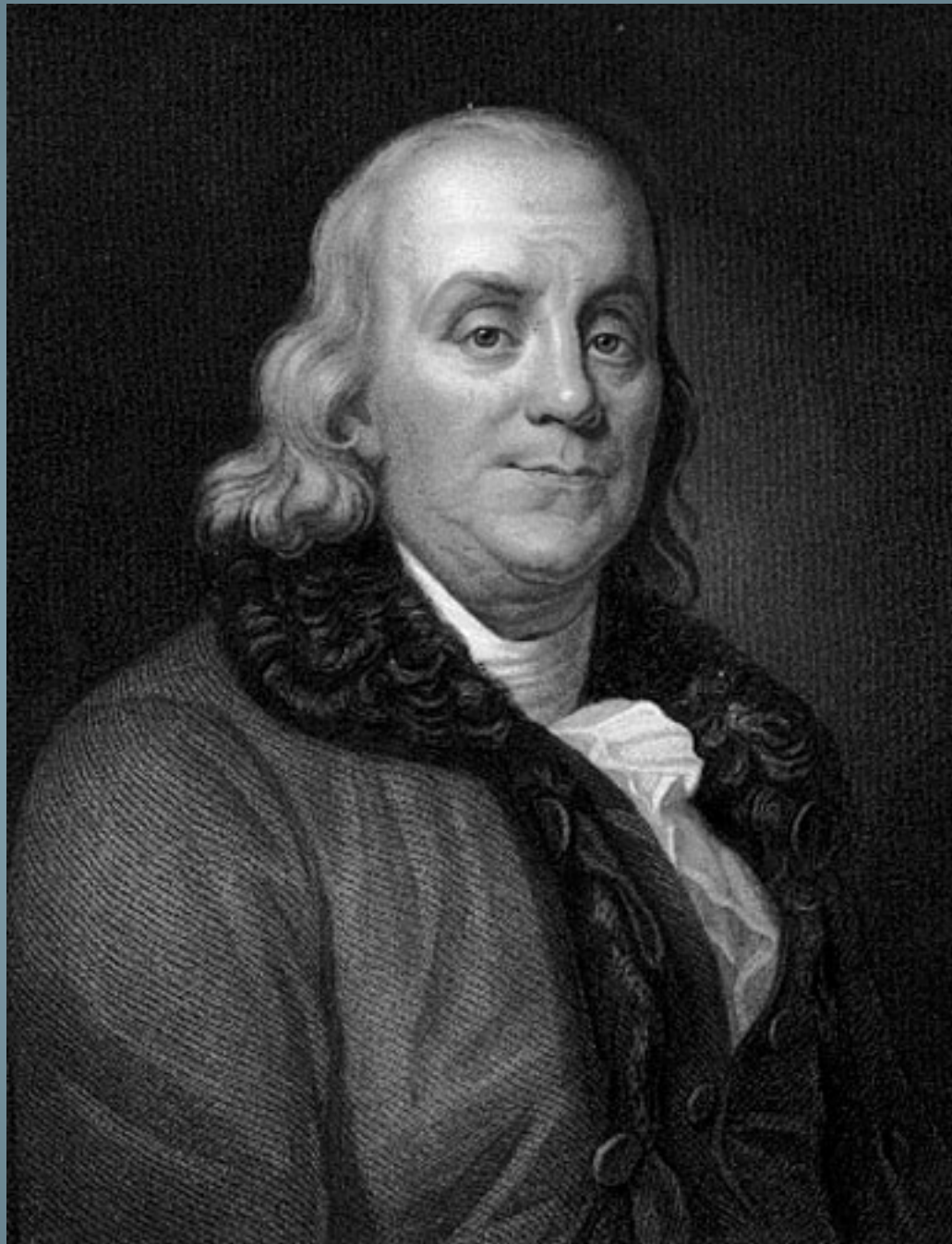
The Workmen take him by force, and lay him on his
his

The Chapel at the Plantin-Moretus Press

“By way of a common box system of fines, gifts and contributions, good social conduct and a certain **code of behaviour** for skilled craftsmanship could be enforced ... Contemporary statements in their complaints books clearly show that the Plantinian journeymen were always prepared to show offenders mercy. Their aim was not to relieve their colleague of his hard-earned wages, but to **nurture feelings of friendship** within the group.”
—Materné (61)

A Chapel at Blackfriars

“I was obliged to submit to that immemorial custom ... It commenced by walking round the chapel ... singing an alphabetical anthem, tuned literally to the vowels; striking me, kneeling, with a broadsword; and pouring ale upon my head...” —Gent (17) 1832



A Chapel in London

“...a new bien venu or sum for drink, being five shillings, was demanded of me by the composers. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid below; the master thought so too, and forbad my paying it.

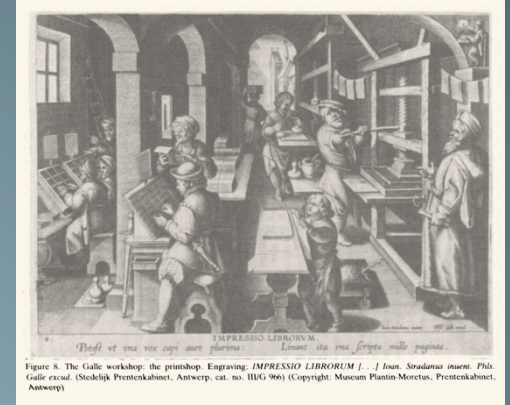
I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an **excommunicate**, and had so many little pieces of private mischief done me, by mixing my sorts, transposing my pages, breaking my matter, etc., etc., if I were ever so little out of the room, and all ascribed to the chappel ghost...”

—Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography



Chapel

Devil



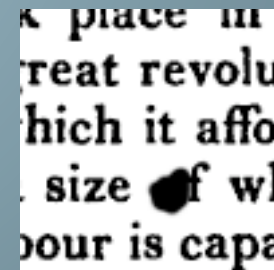
Hell-box



Friar



Monk



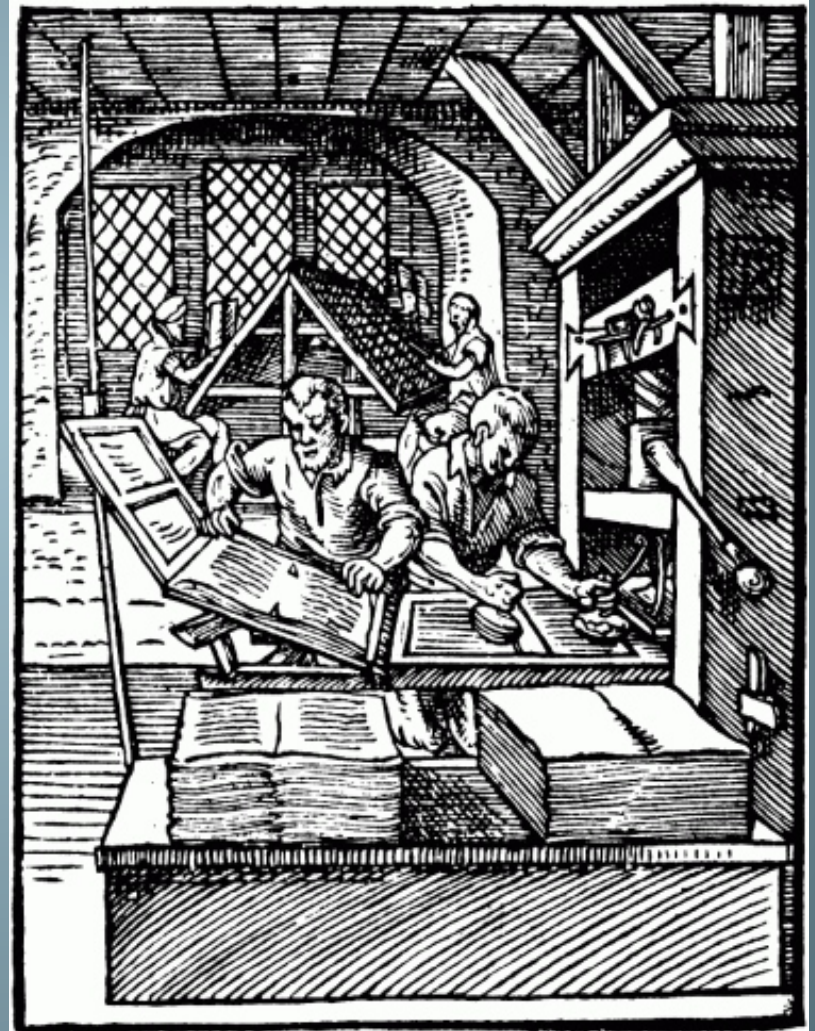
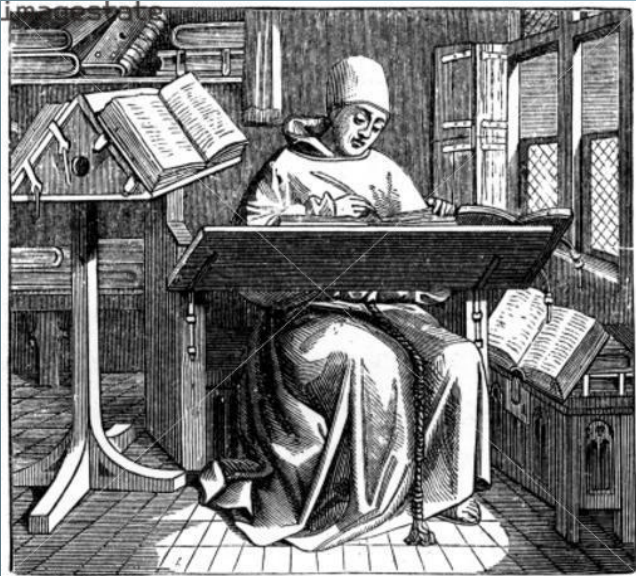
I never did like to find rivers in my paragraphs. But it seems that when I justify my text that they crop up when you least want them to. They can be avoided by using the Multi-Line Composer, that makes me a little more happy. But what makes me really happy is a big chocolate sundae with whipped cream and a cherry on top! Yes! Chocolate is even better than the Multi-Line Composer.

I never did like to find rivers in my paragraphs. But it seems that when I justify my text that they crop up when you least want them to. They can be avoided by using the Multi-Line Composer, that makes me a little more happy. But what makes me really happy is a big chocolate sundae with whipped cream and a cherry on top! Yes! Chocolate is even better than the Multi-Line Composer.

Justification

The old, the new

- Understanding through translation
- Evolution of book production



greater printing-house. Here I continued all the rest of my stay in London.

At my first admission into this printing-house I took to working at press, imagining I felt a want of the bodily exercise I had been us'd to in America, where presswork is mix'd with composing.

I drank only water; the other workmen, near fifty in number, were great guzzlers of beer. On occasion, I carried up and down stairs a large form of types in each hand, when others carried but one in both hands. They wondered to see, from this and several instances, that the Water-American, as they called me, was stronger than themselves, who drank strong beer! We had an alehouse boy who attended always in the house to supply the workmen.


My companion at the press drank every day a pint before breakfast, a pint at breakfast with his bread and cheese, a pint between breakfast and dinner, a pint at dinner, a pint in the afternoon about six o'clock, and another when he had done his day's work.

I thought it a detestable custom; but it was necessary, he suppos'd, to drink strong beer, that he might be strong to labor. I endeavored to convince him that the bodily strength afforded by beer could only be in proportion to the grain or flour of the barley dissolved in the water of which it was made; that there was more flour in a pennyworth of bread; and therefore, if he would eat that with a pint of water, it would give him more strength than a quart of beer.

He drank on, however, and had four or five shillings to pay out of his wages every Saturday night for that muddling liquor; an expense I was free from. And thus these poor devils keep themselves always under.

Watts, after some weeks, desiring to have me in the composing-room, I left the pressmen; a new bien venu or sum for drink, being five shillings, was demanded of me by the compositors. I thought it an imposition, as I had paid below; the master thought so too, and forbad my paying it.

I stood out two or three weeks, was accordingly considered as an excommunicate,

 All Notes & Marks

[Location 43 - Highlight](#)

That felicity, when I reflected on it, has induced me sometimes to say, that were it o...

[Location 103 - Highlight](#)

It was written in 1675, in the home-spun verse of that time and people, and address...

[Location 201 - Highlight](#)

About this time I met with an odd volume of the Spectator. It was the third. I had nev...

[Location 381 - Highlight](#)

Keimer made verses too, but very indifferently. He could not be said to write them, f...

[Location 556 - Highlight](#)

Osborne went to the West Indies, where he became an eminent lawyer and made mo...

[Location 644 - Highlight](#)

At my first admission into this printing-house I took to working at press, imagining I...

[Location 644 - Bookmark](#)

greater printing-house. Here I continued all the rest of my stay in London. At my firs...

[Location 654 - Highlight](#)

poor devils

[Location 657 - Highlight](#)

excommunicate,

[Location 669 - Highlight](#)

4> "A printing-house is always called a chapel by the workmen, the origin of which ...

[Location 841 - Highlight](#)

We had scarce opened our letters and put our press in order, before George House, ...

[Location 853 - Highlight](#)