

Fatal Books & Other Antiquarian Book Categories

boodust (0)(view author's auctions)

12/09/03 3:01 AM

Encyclopedias and dictionaries are nothing new and the various categories of books (as I threatened to provide) are taken, verbatim, from

CYCLOPÆDIA  
OR AN  
UNIVERSAL DICTIONARY  
OF  
ARTS AND SCIENCES  
LONDON  
M.DCC.XLI  
[1741]

It is actually a two volume set..volume 2 dating from 1743.

Mr. Chambers, the compiler of this mammoth work was fond of lists and catalogues and categories. The following constitutes his catalogue of the various types of books deemed important in the 18th century.

Latin was still current in scholarly circles, as was Greek, and, for some a smattering of Hebrew and Arabic.

Some are likely to find this a total bore, but a few might be interested.

Do you think we could get ebay to add some of these categories?  
:)

Maybe Prohibited Books and Fatal Books? ...or Acroamatic [see below]

Much of the spelling, capitalization and punctuation is as it was in the 1741 book, but I lapsed from time to time...

The kinds and denominations of BOOKS, are various: with regard to their use and authority, books may be divided into:

~ human, those composed by mere men;

~ divine, those sent from heaven, or dictated by God himself, containing His word and will; which latter are also called sacred and inspired books.

The Mahometans reckon one hundred and four divine books, given by God to his prophets; viz. ten to Adam; fifty to Seth; thirty to Enoch; ten to Abraham; one to Moses, the Pentateuch; ... another to Jesus, the Gospel; another to David, the Psalms; and another to Mahomet, the Alcoran. He that denies these, or any of them, or any part, verse, or even word of them, is indeed an infidel: and God preserve us from infidels!

SIBYLLINE BOOKS are those composed by certain pretended prophetesses, deposited in the capitol, under the care of the duumviri.

CANONICAL BOOKS are those received and alleged by the church as parts of the holy scripture...such are the books of the old and new testament.

APOCRYPHAL BOOKS, those excluded from the canon, yet received and read in churches

AUTHENTIC BOOKS, those that are decisive, and of authority: such in the civil law are the code, digest, &c. in our law, the statutes.

AUXILIARY BOOKS are those less essential, yet of use as subservient to the other: as in the study of the law, books of institutes, formulæ, maxims, reports &c.

ELEMENTARY BOOKS are those which deliver the first principles of sciences: such as those under the titles of rudiments, methods, grammars, &c. by which they stand contradistinguished from books of a superior order, which aim at making further advances in the sciences.

LIBRARY BOOKS, such as are not ordinarily read over, but turned to, and consulted occasionally: such are dictionaries,

comments, corpus's, thesaurus's, &c.

EXOTERIC BOOKS are those intended for the use of popular and ordinary readers.

ACROAMATIC BOOKS are those containing more secret and sublime matters, calculated for adepts and proficients in the subject.

PROHIBITED BOOKS are those condemned and forbidden by the superiors of the church, as either containing matters of heresy, or things contrary to good morals.

PUBLIC BOOKS , libri publici, the records of past times and transactions kept by public authority.

CHURCH BOOKS , or ecclesiastical books are those that are used in the public offices of religion. ~ Such in the Latin church are the sacramentary, antiphonary, lectionary, psalter, evangelary or evangelistary, ordo, missal, pontifical, ritual, processional, breviary, rosary, &c. ~ Also the book of peace, liber pacis which is a book to be kissed in the ceremony of the mass. ~ The music-book, containing the psalms, troparies and other prayers of that kind, which are used to be sung, with the notes marked to each. Book of liturgies, liber liturgiarum, containing not all the liturgies of the Greek church, but only the four now in use; viz. the liturgy of St. Basil, of St. Chrysostom, that of the presanctified, and that of St. James, which is only used in the church of Jerusalem, and that but once a year.

The English Church~books , in use in the middle of the tenth century, as enumerated in Elric's canons, were the bible, psalter, pistol~book (ie: epistles), gospel~book, mass~book, song~book (elsewhere called antiphonary), hand~book ( or manual), kalender, passional (or martyrology), penitential, and the lesson~book\*

\*Popish books (under the names of antiphoners, couchers, grailes, journals, legends, manuals, missals, ordinals, pies, portuasses, primers, processional) are abolished. ~ But it is doubted whether this statute be in force, because

[possibly repealed] ...

The Jewish church~books were the book of the law,

the hagiographia, the prophets, &c. The first was also called the book of Moses, because composed by him; and the book of the covenant, because the terms thereof were contained in it. In a more absolute sense, book of the law denoted Moses's original or autograph, found in a hole of the temple in king Josiah's time.

BOOKS, again, may be divided, with regard to their scope and subject, into ~historical, those which relate facts, either of nature or of mankind; ~ dogmatical, those which lay down doctrines or general truths; ~ miscellaneous, those of a neutral kind, containing both tracts and doctrines; ~ historico-dognatical, those which only rehearse doctrines, or at the most, indicate the arguments by which they are proved, as Mallett's geometry; ~ scientifico-dogmatical, those which not only recite the doctrines, buut demonstrate them, as Euclid's Elements.

PONTIFICAL BOOKS were those among the Romans, appointed by Numa to be kept by the pontifex maximus; describing all the ceremonies, sacrificices, feasts, prayers and other religious matters with the circumstances and manner wherewith each was to be celebrated. these were also called indigitamnta, as containing the names of all the gods, and the occasions, and the formulæ of invoking each.

RITUAL BOOKS, libri rituales, those which directed the order and manner of founding, building and consecrating cities, temples, and altars; the ceremonies belonging to walls , gates, tribes, curiæ, camps and the like.

AUGURAL BOOKS, libri augurales, called by Cicero, reconditi, were those wherein the sciences of foretelling futurity from the flight and chattering of birds was contained.

AURUSPICINE BOOKS, libri aruspicini, are those wherein the mysteries of divining from the entrails of victims were prescribed.

ACHERONTIC BOOKS, libri Acherontici, those wherein the ceremonies and discipline of Acheron were contained; sometimes also called libri Etrusci, as being su[pposed to have been composed by Tages the Hetrurian, though others pretend that he had received them from Jupiter himself. Some suppose these to hav been the same with the libri fatales; others with the libri aruspicini.

FULGURAL BOOKS, libri fulgurales, those written touching thunder and lightning, and the interpretation thereof....as that composed by the nymph Bigois, prederved in the temple of Apollo.

FATAL BOOKS , libri fatales, are those wherein the ages or terms of the life of men were written, according to the

Hetrurian discipline. These were consulted by the Romans in all public calamities, and instructions taken from them how to expiate the offended dieties.

**BLACK BOOKS** are those which treat of necromancy and witchcraft.

The same denomination is also given to some other books on account of the colour of their backs, or the dismalness of their contents; whence also red book and domesday book.

**GOOD BOOKS** in the common usage are those of devotion and piety, such as soliloquies, meditations, prayers &c.

A good book, in the booksellers' language, is a saleable one; in the language of the curious, a scarce one; in that of men of sense, an useful and instructive one. Among five principle things which Rabbi Akiba recommended to his son, one was, that if he studied the law, he should take care to do it in a good book, lest he should be obliged to unlearn all again.

**SPIRITUAL BOOKS** are those which treat more expressly of the spiritual or christian life, and the exercises thereof, as contemplation &c. ... such as those of

St. John Climax, St. Frances de Sales, St. Theresa, Thoams a Kempis, Granadensis, Dr. Horneck &c.

**PROFANE BOOKS** such as do not treat of matters of religion.

Books, with regard to their authors may be divided into :

Anonymous ~ those without any author's name

Cryptonymous ~ those whose author's names are concealed in some anagram, or the like

Pseudonymous ~ those which bear false names of the authors

Posthumous ~ those published after an author's death

Genuine ~ those really written by the persons whom they pretend for their authors, and still remaining in the state wherein they were left by them.

Spurious or Supposititious ~ those pretending to be written by others than their real authors

Interpolated ~ those which, since their composition, have been corrupted by spurious additions, or insertions.

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lludwig (4598 )(view author's auctions)  
12/09/03 3:11 AM (# 1 of 6)

Thanks boodust!! This is a keeper! One to add to the site Newell is doing!

ah yes, the difference between a good book and a nice book! lol

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garjaybooks (5747 )(view author's auctions)  
12/09/03 3:58 AM (# 2 of 6)

Great thread !! I just hope no one from the eBay staff takes the time to read it though. I'm already overwhelmed by the number of choices sometimes !!!

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momsotherdaughter (318 )(view author's auctions)  
12/09/03 4:47 AM (# 3 of 6)

thanks boodust, I've been agonising over what category to put this little book in for days. Now I see it's clearly cryptonymous sibylline, and as luck would have it, eBay's got that category, only they call it \*other\*.

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cinnamon7 (513 )(view author's auctions)  
12/09/03 6:55 AM (# 4 of 6)

Thank you boo for your carefully written and exhaustive explanation. This is another thread to bookmark!

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fine.books (743 )(view author's auctions)  
12/09/03 9:38 AM (# 5 of 6)

boo: it's definitely a keeper.

momsotherdaughter: ROFL!

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boodust (0 )(view author's auctions)  
12/09/03 12:38 PM (# 6 of 6)

Thanks, Aye , well the world has changed and I doubt that Mr.Chambers could have thought it necessary to have such a category as

SILLY BOOKS, although I warrant the good antiquary would have said such trite matters were EXOTERIC.

And you will note there is no CHILDRENS BOOKS or JUVENILE BOOKS. Although we must be careful to not confuse those with the category which the word originally denoted JUVENILIA which are books produced in an author's youth... as much of Shelley's poetry and that of the sad and tragic Chatterton and, as a modern example, Anne Frank.... it seems there should be a sub-category of juvenilia for those authors whose sad life was too early truncated by fate...since they were not allowed to produce anything of an adult nature. This last is a category which, I think possibly slipped Mr. Chamber's mind as it is totally in keeping with his criteria... and such works certainly existed....although , again Mr. Chamber's antecedent to ebay's dread other seems to be EXOTERIC.