

THE PORTAL

News from the Armstrong Browning Library

*"A wondrous
portal opened
wide..."*

Number 52 • Summer 2008

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Exciting Changes for ABL in 2008-2009

The Armstrong Browning Library's re-envisioned newsletter, *The Portal*, looks nothing like the Pied Piper's Koppelberg Hill, but it opens up a wondrous view of changes to come in 2008-2009.

The Library's bronze doors in the front page background evoke the idea of an imposing gateway opening into a magical realm. Library staff chose the image after discovering a definition of "portal" as: "1. A doorway, entrance, or gate, esp. one that is large and imposing. 2. An entrance or means of entrance: a portal of knowledge."

Recently, Pattie Orr, Vice President of Information Technology and Dean of University Libraries, created the Office of Communications and Marketing in order to unify public relations objectives within the Baylor Libraries. Cooperative teamwork between that office and the ABL makes possible the production of a sharper format, timelier articles and standardization between the newsletter, the website and general printed information.

A shift in leadership underscores the year's most notable change. After serving as the Library's director since 2003, Dr. Stephen Prickett has left Baylor to return to his native England. He and his wife Patricia Erskine-Hill will be living in their early-sixteenth-century home in the village of Charing, Kent.

In the meantime, Rita Patteson, Associate Professor and Curator of Manuscripts, has

agreed to serve as the Library's interim director. Her greatest challenge this year will be to create public awareness of the Library and what it has to offer.

"We are aware," she says, alluding to the Library's low profile, "the public is not aware."

She hopes to change some of that with upcoming special events targeting Baylor students, faculty and staff, Guardian Angel supporters and the larger Waco community. Several digitization projects recently underway or in planning stages will increase awareness of the Library's important collections to scholars around the world researching the Brownings and nineteenth-century literature. And, closer to home, Patteson plans to work with several campus departments to bring in more research students.

Other top-level goals for the ABL during the coming year include:

- Strengthening the ABL's collections
- Launching infrastructure projects
- Increasing gift opportunities and endowments

The Library plans to elaborate on these goals in upcoming issues of *The Portal*. Please refer to the Library's website at www.browninglibrary.org for the most current information on upcoming events. The doors of ABL are open to all. Please come in.

*Till lo, I push a door,
sudden uplift
A hanging, enter,
chance upon a shift
Indeed of scene!*

"Parleyings with
Christopher Smart"

—RB



Homecoming 2008: Celebration of “Italy Windows”

During Baylor Homecoming 2008, the Armstrong Browning Library will celebrate the completion of a series of six remarkable stained glass windows. The focus of the ceremony will be two-fold—the official dedication of the final window, the Vallombrosa Window, given in memory of much-loved English professor Ann Miller and a celebration of the completion of this multi-year project, with the opportunity to thank the donors of the entire windows series for their generous gifts.

The project to enhance the ABL's Cox Reception Hall with stained glass began in 1998 under the directorship of Dr. Mairi Rennie. An overall theme of the Brownings in Italy was chosen, since the years they spent in Italy had a profound influence on their lives and poetry. After researching the work of numerous stained glass artisans, the Willet Stained Glass Studios of Philadelphia, now Willet Hauser Architectural Glass, was chosen to design and create the series. The first window, representing Florence, was installed in 2001, followed by windows depicting Italy (2001), Venice (2002) and Asolo (2004).

In December 2007, the ABL hosted the dedication ceremony for the fifth window in the series. The Rome window, donated by the children of Bob and Anna Wright, of Vernon, Texas, honors their parents—both of whom were students of Dr. A. J. Armstrong—and is also a tribute to the Wrights' legacy of philanthropy to Baylor and the ABL.



The Vallombrosa Window, given in memory of Ann Miller, will be dedicated during the Homecoming celebration of the six Italy Windows in the Cox Reception Hall.

The Homecoming dedication and celebration will take place from 2:00 to 3:00 pm, Friday, October 31, in the Cox Reception Hall. Donors of all the windows in the series will be invited to take part and other celebrants will include the family and friends of Ann Miller, members of Baylor's Board of Regents and University administrators. Friends and supporters of the ABL are cordially invited to attend this memorable event.

Carlos Colón Debuts Memorial Tribute on Browning Day

This year's May 7 Browning Day program was a musical tribute organized and directed by composer Carlos Colón of Waco to honor Stephen Prickett during his last days as director of the Armstrong Browning Library. Incorporated into the event, titled “Songs of Love and Death: Music



Composer and director Carlos Colón debuted his original work “Las Lamentaciones de Rufina Amaya” at this year's Browning Day Celebration.

Inspired by Browning and Other Poets,” were two of Colón's arrangements with words drawn from Robert Browning's poetry, “The Year's at the Spring,” and “Love is Best.” However, the highlight of the afternoon was the debut of “Las Lamentaciones de Rufina Amaya,” a tribute to an El Salvadoran village massacred in 1981. Colón's thirty-minute work for choir and chamber orchestra drew in a record crowd. They were entertained by soprano Karen Hogue, the China Spring High School Chamber Choir under the direction of Susan Thrift, a guest Children's Choir and Baylor students who performed in the chamber string orchestra.

Carlos Colón-Quintana was born in Chalchuapa, El Salvador. He studied music at the National Conservatory of Music of Guatemala and came to the United States in 1986. He holds a Bachelor of Music from Belmont University and a Master of Music from Baylor University. In June, his music was performed at Carnegie Hall and other pieces are scheduled for a festival in the Caribbean. His wife, Dr. Susan Colón, is an Honors College professor at Baylor University.

You can look forward to hearing more of Colón's music at ABL's Benefactors Day program on September 17 and at Browning Day next spring.

ACQUISITIONS SPOTLIGHT

One of the highpoints of recent ABL book acquisitions is the purchase of a touching association volume, signed on the title-page by both Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning—signatures which, evidence suggests, date from their courtship. The book is the ninth edition of James Howell's *Epistole Ho-Eliaæ: Familiar Letters, Domestic and Foreign* (London, 1726). We can assume that the volume was in the Barrett family library at 50 Wimpole Street, as Elizabeth mentions it twice in letters to Mary Russell Mitford in 1840, offering to lend it to Mitford. We can also assume that Browning would have found the book of interest as it contains one of the earliest accounts in English of the legend of the Pied Piper, the subject of his popular poem published in 1842. From there, it is easy to imagine discussion of the book taking place between the two poets during Browning's courtship visits to Elizabeth's home in 1845-46.

The poets' signatures are affixed to the title-page in a manner that discretely reflects their growing feelings for each other. Elizabeth has signed her name across from the word "Familiar," below which Robert signed his name using

a different pen and enclosed both names with a brace pointing to the word "Familiar." The volume remained in the library of the poets until it was dispersed at Sotheby's in 1913 in the famous *Browning Collections* sale.

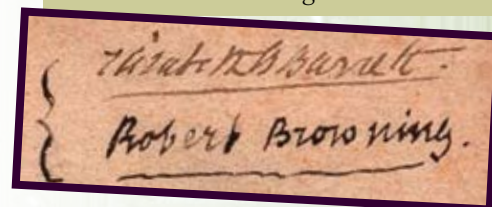
Among other acquisition highlights for the manuscripts section were two slender 1819 notebooks containing poems and notes written by Elizabeth Barrett. One of the notebooks contains the original working manuscript of an unpublished poem, "Adieu that place where smiling plenty is...." The 124-line poem, written when EBB was thirteen, records the hazards of the Barrett family's two-day journey from their home of Hope End to the seaside town of Worthing. A later passage in the notebook, "A fragment of my thoughts," reveals EBB's "delight inexpressible" upon seeing the printed form of her first work, *The Battle of Marathon* (1820)—a piece that was privately printed by her father. Notes at the end of the notebook include her list of thirty people who are thought to be the recipients of this first publication.

The second notebook apparently was first used as EBB's Greek language



Title-page of James Howell's *Epistole Ho-Eliaæ: Familiar Letters, Domestic and Foreign* with signatures of Elizabeth and Robert.

Below: Detail of actual signatures.



school book—several pages have been excised and a few are headed with Greek letters. The handwriting on the first page is markedly more uneven than that in other sections of the notebook so it seems reasonable to think that it was written while actually traveling in the carriage.

To view a list of selected acquisitions, please go to www.browninglibrary.org and click on "Scholarly Resources."

Save the Dates

September 17: Benefactors Day, 3:00 pm. Mariana S. Oller, Research and Instruction Specialist (Special Collections, Wellesley College Library), will speak on the history of the Browning Collection at Wellesley College. Music provided by mezzo-soprano Debra Scroggins.

October 31-November 1: Baylor Homecoming at the ABL

- o *Window Ceremony*, 2:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 31.
- o *Open House*, 9:00 am-2:00 pm, Saturday, Nov. 1.

February 14: Valentine's Day Soirée

Dave Tanner, professional master of ceremonies, will entertain guests with music, anecdotes about Valentine traditions and Browning poetry.

Now Ready For Purchase

The Armstrong Browning Library

a book of photographs and text by
Avery T. Sharp
and Larry E. Fink

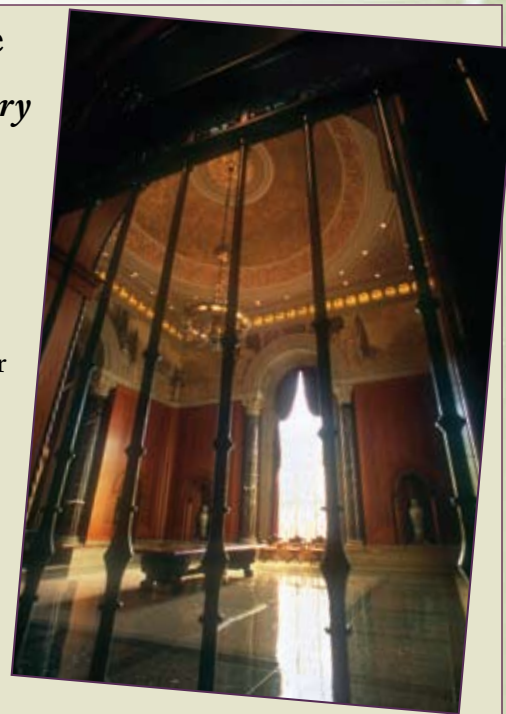
Cost: \$5.95 per copy
Texas residents add 8.25% tax
Shipping & Handling: \$2.00 per order

Available from
The Gift Gallery
ABL

One Bear Place #97152
Waco, TX 76798-97152

or call

Kathryn Brogdon at (254) 710-4960



Become a Guardian Angel Today

The patron organization for the Armstrong Browning Library is called The Guardian Angels, in reference to Robert Browning's poem, "The Guardian Angel: A Picture at Fano." Browning was inspired to compose the poem after viewing Guercino's painting of the same name that hangs in Fano, Italy. In 1946, Dr. A.J. Armstrong, founder of the Browning Collection at Baylor University, initiated this organization of supporters and friends. The Guardian Angel organization is open to anyone interested in helping to build the Library's collections, which are used by Browning scholars from around the world. Your membership ensures the continued growth of the Armstrong Browning Library and its programs.

Benefits of Guardian Angel Membership:

- receive invitations to all of the Library's events
- be a special guest at Benefactors Day
- receive the Library's bi-annual newsletter
- receive a 10% discount in the ABL Gift Gallery

Cost:

- Annual Membership—\$50.00
- Lifetime Membership in The Guardian Angels—\$1,000.00

To become a member or renew your membership, indicate "Guardian Angel Payment" on the note line of your check made payable to BAYLOR UNIVERSITY and mail to: Christi Klempnauer, Armstrong Browning Library, One Bear Place #97152, Waco, TX 76798-7152



L'Angelo Custode by Guercino
(Giovanni Francesco Barbieri), 1640
Civic Museum, Fano, Italy



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