



OMAR AND THE CONSUMER MARKET

A group of American *Rubáiyát* parodies on a variety of topics address the theme of consumerism from different angles. In many cases, women are framed as the conspicuous consumers and men, if mentioned, are typed as the producers who fund their female counterparts and complain about their spending habits. Another related and recurring theme is that of fast-moving trends and the impulse to keep up with them. Josephine Daskam Bacon's "An Omar for Ladies" encourages women to turn their attention towards fashion:

*One for her Club and her own Latch-key fights,
Another wastes in Study her good Nights
Ah, take the Clothes and let the Culture go,
Nor heed the grumble of the Women's Rights!¹*

It is difficult to know whether Bacon sided with the Anti-Suffragist Movement² or if she simply exaggerated her speech for comic effect. An early graduate of Smith College for women and a professional writer, Bacon was more likely a supporter of women's rights. Later, she uses Khayyám's *carpe diem* to condone impulse spending:

*And she who saved her coin for Flannels red,
And she who caught Pneumonia instead,
Will both be Underground in Fifty Years,
And Prudence pays no Premium to the dead.³*

The bulk of her poem focuses on clothing trends - items popular one moment and found in the bargain bin the next - that parody the world of fashion. It is yet unclear whether Bacon criticizes or promotes the system. Perhaps she does both. Her insinuation that the "Four Hundred" - the conservative, New York elites at the turn of the century - was a group somewhat removed from the newest trends, both through their pure bloodlines and their geographic location in the suburbs, clearly denotes a jab at those whose lifestyles are out-of-date.

Two other parodies, Mary B. Little's *The Rubáiyát of a Huffy Husband* (1908) and Gelett Burgess's *The Rubáiyát of Omar Cayenne* (1904), critique consumer culture while perpetuating the very craze that they mock. Little's *Huffy Husband* is written in the voice of a husband whose wife has become preoccupied with the *Rubáiyát* craze.

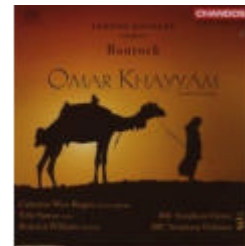
*She soon possessed the dreadful Omar Fad,
Which other Husbands, I have learned, think Bad.
But unlike other Fads which now are Past,
This has the power to make me very Mad.⁴*

The husband goes on to deplore his wife's obsession, noting that other fads, such as collecting vases or fans, did not disturb the comfort of their home as the *Rubáiyát* had. Little's framing of the "Omar Fad" as a purely feminine affair links the fad more closely to the female realm of consumerism. While this aspect of Little's parody is hyperbolic, as

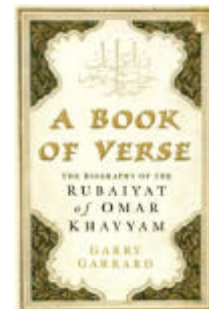
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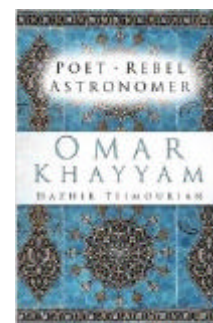
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Granville Bantock
Omar Khayyam



Garry Garrard
A book of verse



Hazhir Teimourian
Omar Khayyam

Omariana

Issued once or twice a year.
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the craze also captured the male sector through advertisements and popular entertainment, the *Rubáiyát's* inextricable link to consumer culture - and by association, to fashion and the decoration of the home - tagged the craze as "feminine," or worse, "effeminate," a label feared by early twentieth-century American men who advocated President Theodore Roosevelt's "Strenuous Life."⁵ Thus, the Omar craze was an outlet for men only when it could be made a masculine endeavor. The members of the Omar Khayyám Clubs of London (f. 1892) and Boston (f. 1900) sung the praises of both FitzGerald and Omar while they smoked, ate, drank, and socialized in a setting that excluded their female counterparts. Burgess' s *The Rubáiyát of Omar Cayenne* gives readers a picture of the driving force behind the mass-dissemination of the *Rubáiyát* - the publishing industry.

*Wake! For the Hack can scatter into flight
Shakespeare and Dante in a single Night!
The Penny-a-liner is Abroad, and strikes
Our Modern Literature with blithering Blight.*⁶

By the turn of the century, demand for classics had decreased and so had the quality of publications. Burgess bemoans the craze for "Modern Literature," which he sees as a system driven by critics, advertisement, and the easy fame of inferior, often female, writers. He finds new texts devoid of meaning, their plots homogenized by the demand of readers, many of whom are now women.⁷ Burgess even takes a jab at specific figures involved in the publishing industry; the "Spontaneous Glee" of *Rubáiyát* parodist Carolyn Wells is shamed among other works with a similar lack of substance.

Consumerism is also a theme in Harry Persons Taber's *The Rubáiyát of the Commuter, Being Quatrains Concerning the Affairs of Everyday*, a 101-verse parody describing a day in the life of a modern worker. Written from a (male) commuter's perspective, the story can be read as one of sacrifice for the happiness of family and the comforts of home. The husband commutes to provide for his family and the wife plays her part as the primary consumer:

*Then fares she forth to town with merry smiles
And buys her Summer dresses in new styles,
And many strange and wondrous furbelows
She buys, persuaded by the shopman's wiles.*⁸

Taber's verses do not express exasperation over compulsive spending; rather, he finds consumption to be an inherent

quality in women, even a duty that need not be criticized.

Consumerism played an essential role in the *Rubáiyát* mania of the early 20th century. Clever marketing and the constant production of *Rubáiyát* goods fueled the craze. Especially in America, the tremendous economic shift that occurred during the latter half of the 19th century allowed for Omariana to flourish. In a stratified society characterized by great wealth for the lucky few and a flood of working-class immigrants who toiled for pennies to survive, an educated, rising middle class with free time on their hands and spending money in their pockets shaped their new identity through the *Rubáiyát* craze.

Notes

¹ Josephine Daskam Bacon, "An Omar for Ladies," in *A Parody Anthology*, ed. Carolyn Wells (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), 5, verse 1 of 12.

See also: http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/poem1/blp_bacon_omar_ladies.htm

² See Jane Jerome Camhi's *Women Against Women: American Anti-Suffragism, 1880-1920* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1994), or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-suffragism>, for a brief overview of the movement.

³ Bacon, verse 3 of 12.

⁴ Mary B. Little, *The Rubáiyát of a Huffy Husband* (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1908), n.p., verse 5 of 29.

⁵ Roosevelt preached his doctrine of "toil and effort," "labor and strife" to a Chicago audience in 1899. See Gail Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) and Mark C. Cames's *Meanings for Manhood* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990).

⁶ Gelett Burgess, *The Rubáiyát of Omar Cayenne* (New York: Frederick A Stokes, 1904), 5, verse 1 of 101.

⁷ An increased literacy rate; the consumer-driven cycle for new reading materials that could be bought cheaply; the founding of lending libraries; and the continued relegation of women to the home accompanied by a desire for escapism into the world of fiction contributed to an overall rise in female readership during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

⁸ Harry Persons Taber, *The Rubáiyát of the Commuter, Being Quatrains Concerning the Affairs of Everyday* (Briarcliff Manor, NY: John Bridges, 1905), 36, verse 64 of 101.

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MINIATURE EDITIONS OF THE RUBÁIYÁT



From May 15 through July 28 this year an exhibition was held at the Grolier Club, New York, devoted to the art and history of the miniature book. The exhibition showed examples of miniature books from

the earliest times to our present day, such as clay tablets of ancient Mesopotamia and a *New Testament*, printed on a crystalline silicon chip, in 2001.

On display were a number of miniature editions of the *Rubáiyát*, a text that has been a favorite subject for illustrators, printers and bookbinders, ever since the last decades of the 19th century. There is no comprehensive list of mini-Omars, so this is an opportunity to present an initial investigation. This means naturally that the list cannot be complete. Much of the work of printers of miniature books is hidden in the mainstream of book publishing, and is therefore not easy to be found. Here we confine ourselves to the domain of the three inch or less editions, which is more common in the U.S. than elsewhere. Many printers and collectors consider four inch editions also as miniatures.

Miniature books exist almost as long as 'normal' books, but they have always had a special attraction, because of their size. And as it is mankind's nature to extend limits, the search for larger and smaller never ends. For a certain period the smallest book in the world was in fact a miniature *Rubáiyát*. It was produced by Meigs, in 1900. Another 'smallest' *Rubáiyát* was Thompson's edition *The Rose Garden of Omar Khayyám*, 1932.

The early mini-Omars were often used as gifts to friends, such as the *Gem* edition by Sewall (India, 1897). They sometimes had jewelled bindings, like some of the Rosemary Press Omars, that were given to friends or members of the Omar Khayyám Club. Sometimes they were commissioned by club members.

Oonty Press

One of the first, if not the first, miniature *Rubáiyát*s that we find in bibliographies is the edition produced by the Oonty Press (India, 1897) in an edition of 50 copies for Col. Sewall in India. It is referred to as the *Bijou* edition. Only a dozen copies or less are estimated to be in existence. However, measuring 24 mo., it is not strictly a miniature though it is listed in Welsh' bibliography. Also beyond the miniature domain, but also listed in



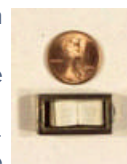
Welsh' bibliography is the *Gem* edition (1905), issued by Sewall, in an edition of 105 copies of which 30 were printed on Japan paper, measuring $4\frac{3}{8}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inch. It contained four illustrations by Elihu Vedder.

Madras

Another early mini-Omar in Welsh' bibliography is a *Rubáiyát* printed in Madras, 1862. Welsh does not provide the measurements, but if we assume that this is in fact the same edition as listed by Potter under number 166, then it is by no means a miniature. In this list it measures $8\frac{1}{4}$ by $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches. It would be very unlikely if the there would be a miniature version of this very rare *Madras*-edition.

Meigs

The second miniature, but the first within the 3-inch range, was the famous edition produced by Charles Hardy Meigs, in Cleveland (Ohio), in 1900. At that time it was the smallest book in the world, measuring 10 x 9 mm. Originally eight copies were done, from which fifty-seven copies were printed for subscribers. The plates were then destroyed to avoid duplication. The book was issued with a magnifying glass, in an ornamental metal box. A copy was sold at auction at \$ 420.00 in 1928. Nowadays copies are for sale at \$ 1,500 or more.



Cathcart

The Meigs edition is always regarded as the smallest *Rubaiyat* of its days. What is rather not known is that a few years after its appearance W. Cathcart of Cleveland, Ohio, succeeded in producing an even smaller copy. Cathcart was associated with the book department of a large store. He was approached by a Mr. Goebel who suggested that they should produce a smaller edition than the Meigs version. With the help of a publisher and a bookbinder they managed to produce a text that covered $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch. The final result was a volume measuring 9 by 9 mm., but only a few copies were printed. One source speaks of only two copies printed, of which one is supposed to remain in the British Library.

Sangorski and Sutcliffe

The famous firm of Sangorski and Sutcliffe did not only produce one of the largest and most valuable Rubáiyáts, the



so called *Great Omar*, that went down with the Titanic. They also did a small number of deluxe leather miniature bindings, commissioned for private clients. The image shows a copy issued in London, 1911.

Bryce and Sons

The firm of David Bryce and Sons was a large supplier of miniature books. One famous accomplishment was a complete *Shakespeare*, one volume per play (1904), and Bryce was the first to produce a complete miniature bible. The list of published books runs up to one hundred titles, some of these reaching 100.000 copies. *Rubaiyats* were published in 1904 and 1911.



Treherne

Anthony Treherne also published a set of forty miniature Shakespeare editions. Three *Rubaiyats* were published between 1903 and 1906. One of them also bore the imprint of Treherne & Clafin. Treherne's minibooks were published in the USA under the imprint of Henry Altemus Company, Philadelphia.



Rosemary Press

Between 1906 and 1921 the Rosemary Press produced several miniature editions of the *Rubáiyát*. They were issued in very limited numbers, ranging from twenty to sixty copies, issued at special occasions or dedicated to the members of the American Omar Khayyám Club. The Rosemary Press produced about twenty-five other miniatures. The *Rubaiyats* were executed in various ways. Some were printed on fine paper or vellum, bound in different sorts of leather and many of them were bound with jewels. The operators of the Rosemary press, George W. and Winthrop M. Southworth were members of the Omar Khayyám Club, but more information on this press is not available.



Lilliputian Press

This was a press operated by W. Hoyte Maness and Clarke W. Walton in Monroe,

North Carolina. Four books were printed, all of them containing verses by Khayyam. In the Andrew Lang edition the prose translation of Mr. McCarthy were put to rhyme by Lang. The Stokes edition, listed by Bradbury (nr. 2827) measures 3,75 inches.

The Rose Garden of Omar Khayyam

As Bondy says, *The Rose Garden of Omar Khayyam* by Eben Francis Thompson, was the result of a process of miniaturisation to produce smaller and smaller books that led to "books which are hardly more than specks of dust". *The Rose Garden* was privately printed in 1932 and measures 4 by 6 mm. It was then the smallest book in the world and it still holds a high rank in the present list of 'super miniatures'. Hamilton B. Wood and F.K. Vroom of the Commonwealth Press needed seven years of work to complete the job. 250 copies were printed and sold together with a version measuring 1,75 by 1,5 inches and a proof-sheet containing for pages of the smaller edition. It was also accompanied by a bibliography by Thompson, called *A thimbleful of books*. All these items were presented in a book-shaped box, together with a magnifying glass.



Washburn

William Lewis Washburn, owner of the Palmetto Press, published a miniature newspaper as a young boy in Connecticut in the 1870s. Later he became associated with a newspaper and his languished hobby, playing with toy presses, turned into a "typus fever" again. His first productions breathe an Arts and Crafts air, where his later miniatures attracted attention. The Palmetto Press actually dates from 1875 but it wasn't until 1900 that the press came into being. Washburn produced three mini Omars: *The Pots. A cry to God*, 1935, *Chess, the game of life*, 1936 and *Wine songs from Omar Khayyam*, 1936.

Randle

Burt Randle's books are different from most other miniatures, because they were photographically reproduced from his very small handwriting. His other works are reproductions of type and illustrations. Bradbury remarks that Randle's books create bibliographic problems, which make it difficult to give an accurate description of a certain edition. Some books have no date or place of publication and in some other cases it is doubtful whether Randle published the

books or whether he just printed them. Three Omars were produced between 1940 (estimated) and 1942. The earlier two of these editions consisted of two volumes.

Black Sun Press

The Black Sun Press was set up in 1927 in Paris, France, by Harry and Caresse Crosby. The press printed work by Joyce, Wilde, Poe and others. A miniature *Rubaiyat* was printed in 1930, one year after Harry Crosby's death, the press being continued by his wife. Although 44 copies were printed only a few have survived.

Raheb, Pennyweight Press



Barbara Raheb and the Pennyweight Press, the imprint under which she started printing, issued six Omar miniatures between 1977 and 1993. The editions vary from 100 to 300 copies, two issues were bound with jewels. Raheb issued more than 500 miniature books, more than any other US publisher in the 20th century. Early miniatures by Raheb are highly collectable and are hard to find.

Mosaic Press



Imprint under which Miriam Owen Irwin, Cincinnati, Ohio prints miniatures since 1976. The list of editions runs up to more than 100 titles, mostly original texts from authors recruited by Irwin. The Mosaic Press *Rubaiyat* was printed in an edition of 360 copies, of which 60 were deluxe hand-coloured. Many Mosaic Press books are bound as orders are received, so not every book has a statement of the number of copies printed.

Dateman books

A family book binding company established in Weston-super-Mare. Most of the books are produced in two sizes: 2,9 cm. and 2 cm. Three *Rubaiyats* were produced shortly after another. The two recent editions of 2005 and 2006 have illustrated dust-jackets.



The **Miniaturbuchverlag**, Leipzig is the only German book publishing company specialized in miniature books. Their list ranges from literary classics to law books. The *Rubaiyat* of this press was awarded "Schönstes



Miniaturbuch Deutschland 1998". This edition contains the translation by Omar Ali-Shah, together with a translation in German.

Catherijne Press

The only Dutch miniature Omar was produced by The Catherijne Press, in 1994. The press was started in 1984 by Luce and Guus Thürkow. The printing was done by specialized presses, the rest of the work



was done by themselves. In 2003 the press was taken over by Trijnie Duut and GerJan Hey. The Omar of the Catharijne Press was published in a standard edition of 175 numbered copies. A special edition was provided in a de luxe folding case and the owner's name printed within. A miniaturized illustration from Ronald Balfour's edition is tipped in.

Curiosity

The largest Omar, illustrated by E. Vedder in 1884, has recently been reduced to minimum size. However, there is only a front cover, taken from the 1894 edition, the rest of the book is a dummy with blank contents. It was made by Tree Feathers, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and measures 19 mm.



More than 3 inches

The number of miniature Omars rises suddenly when we accept a wider definition of the miniature booksize than the 3 inches that are common in the US. Often 4 inch books are considered as miniatures as well. Actually, in Welsh's bibliography of miniature books we find that 22 of the 53 listed Omars exceed the 3 inch limit. In this 4 inches and larger area we find editions by Siegle, Hill & Co., Collins, the Little Leather Library, Saalfield, Harrap and others.

Shortlist

Below is a shortlist of miniatures measuring 3 inches or less that I have been able to identify. A more complete list of miniature editions will be published on the website: www.omarkhayyamnederland.com

1. *Rubaiyat*. - Cleveland, Meigs, 1900. 10 by 10 mm.
2. *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. - London, Treherne, 1903. 65 by 65 mm.
3. *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. - Glasgow, Bryce, 1904. 54 by 35 mm.
4. *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. - Glasgow, Bryce, 1904. 62 by 78 mm.
5. *Rubaiyat*. - Cleveland, [s.n.], 1905. 9 by 9 mm.
6. *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*. - London, Treherne; New York, Claflin, 1905. 67 by 51 mm.

7. **Rubaiyat**. - Philadelphia, Altemus, 1906. 70 mm.
8. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - London, Treherne, 1906. 68 by 54 mm.
9. **The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám the Astronomer-Poet pf Persia**. - Venice, Rosen, 1906. 65 by 51 mm.
10. **Rubaiyat**. - London, Cowans, 1907. 54 by 73 mm.
11. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - St. Louis, Miniature Publishing Comp., 1910. 27 by 52 mm.
12. **The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám the Astronomer-Poet pf Persia**. - London, Fisher Unwin, 1911. 65 by 51 mm.
13. **The Rubaiyat**. - London, [s.n.], 1911. 38 by 32 mm.
14. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1916. 24 x 73 mm.
15. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1916. 24 x 69 mm.
16. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1916. 25 x 73 mm.
17. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1916. [Exact size unknown]
18. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1917. 24 x 71 mm.
19. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1917. 24 x 73 mm.
20. **The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - New York, Crowel, [ca. 1917]. 64 by 51 mm.
21. **Rubaiyat**. - Paris, Nelson, 1918. 60 by 60 mm.
22. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1918. [Exact size unknown]
23. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam of Nais-hapur**. - [S.I.], Rosemary Press, 1917. 25 x 75 mm.
24. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Needham, Rosemary Press, 1921. 25 by 70mm.
25. **The soul gospel of Omar Khayyám**. - Bombay, [s.n.], 1926. 50 by 130 mm.
26. **Rubaiyat**. - London & Glasgow, Gowans & Gray, 1927. 59 by 79 mm.
27. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - London, Sangorski and Sutcliffe, [ca. 1930]. 38 by 33 mm.
28. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Paris, Black Sun Press, 1930. 30 by 32 mm.
29. **The Rose Garden of Omar Khayyam**. - Worcester, [s.n.], 1932. 6 by 8 mm.
30. **The Rose Garden of Omar Khayyam**. - Worcester, [s.n.], 1932. 44 by 37 mm.
31. **From Omar Khayyam**. - Monroe, Lilliputian Press, 1935. 44 by 25 mm.
32. **The pots, a cry to God ...** - Collingswood, Washburne, 1935. 70 by 57 mm.
33. **Chess, the game of life ...** - Collingswood, Washburne, 1936. 70 by 54 mm.
34. **Wine songs from Omar Khayyam**. - Collingswood, Washburne, 1936. 64 x 47 mm.
35. **Persian sentences from Omar Khayyam**. - Monroe, Lilliputian Press, 1936. 44 by 25 mm.
36. **Rubaiyat 12 x 4**. - Monroe, The Lilliputian Press, 1937. [Exact size unknown].
37. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - Chicago, Randle, 1940. 2 v. 32 mm.
38. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - Chicago [Pettigrew], Randle, 1940. 2 v. 47 by 47 mm.
39. **Rubaiyat**. - Jamaica, Wood, 1940. 60 by 38 mm.
40. **Quatrains from the Rubaiyat**. - Chicago [Pettigrew], Randle, 1942. 9 by 7,9 mm.
41. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - Jamaica, Wood, 1943. 6 by 3,5 cm.
42. **Rubaiyat**. - London, Oxford University Press, H. Frowde, [196?]. 30 by 33 mm.
43. **Rubaiyat**. - Tarzana, Raheb, 1977. 19 by 17 mm.
44. **Rubaiyat**. - Tarzana, Raheb, 1977. 14 by 11 mm.
45. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Van Nuys, Raheb, 1977. 25 by 20 mm.
46. **Excerpts from the Rubaiyat**. - Lakewood, Miniature Book Studio, 1983. 19 by 14 mm.
47. **The Rubaiyat**. - Cincinnati, Mosaic Press, 1983. 69 mm.
48. **Omar Khaiam. Rubai**. - Moscow, Poligrafia, 1989. 73 mm.
49. **Rubaiyat**. - Agoura Hills, Pennyweight Press, 1991. 24 by 16 mm.
50. **Rubaiyat**. - Agoura Hills, Pennyweight Press, 1991. 25 by 28,5 mm.
51. **Rubaiyat**. - Agoura Hills, Pennyweight Press, 1991. 24 by 16 mm.
52. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - Agoura Hills, Pennyweight Press, 1993. 25 by 20 mm.
53. **Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám**. - Zuilichem, The Catharijne Press, 1994. 60 by 40 mm.
54. **The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Edinburgh: Diehard Craft Miniature, 1996. 60 by 55 mm.
55. **Omar Khaiam. Rubai**. - Moscow, Yaniko, 1998. 50 by 65 mm.
56. **The Rubaiyyat of Omar Khayaam = Die Rubaiyyat von Omar Khayaam**. - Leipzig, Miniaturbuchverlag, 1998. 55 by 45 mm.
57. **Omar Khayyam: a mini biography : plus selected quatrains from the Rubaiyat**. - Edgewater, The JEN Press, 2000. 63 mm.
58. **Omar Khayaam. Rubaiyyat**. - Kazan, IDEL Press, 2001. 61 by 47 mm.
59. **The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Weston-super-Mare, Dateman Books, 2005. 30 by 28 mm.
60. **The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Weston-super-Mare, Dateman Books, 2005. 30 by 28 mm.
61. **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**. - Weston-super-Mare, Dateman Books,

2006. 20 by 18 mm.

62. Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. - Tyne and Wear, Blythe Dollhouse Miniatures, 2007. 20 by 10 mm.

63. The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. - Folkstone, Mitchell, [n.d.]. 28 by 38 mm.

Bibliography

Miniature books. 4,000 years of tiny treasures.

Anne C. Bromer and Julian I. Edison. New York, Abrams, The Grolier Club, 2007.

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The history of miniature books. D.V. Welsh. Albany, Fort Orange Press, 1987.

The private press. Roderick Cave. New York and London, Bowker, 1983

Miniature books. Their history from the beginnings to the present day. L.W. Bondy. London, Shepard Press, 1981.

A thimbleful of books. Eben Francis Thompson. Worcester, Privately printed, 1933.

A brief videoclip on the show at the Grolier Club can be watched on [Reuters website](#)

Jos Coumans, Nov. 2007

New titles

Bantock - Omar Khayyám

The English composer Granville Bantock (1868-1946), almost forgotten nowadays, was one of the first to convey the *Rubaiyat* to music. In 1906 he finished the first part of a colossal work, called *Omar Khayyám*, for three soloists, choir and symphony orchestra. It had its first performance that year in Birmingham, followed a few years later by a second and third part. Although it enjoyed some popularity in its days, it has rarely been performed since. In 2001 conductor Vernon Handley recorded two sections from *Omar Khayyam* on CD, in a selection of Bantock's works, called *Thalaba the Destroyer* (Hyperion, CDA 67250). A new recording however was published in October this year, by



Vernon Handley with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, together with the BBC Symphony Chorus, containing a complete registration of the *Omar Khayyám* (Chandos). Soloists are Catherine Wyn-Rogers, mezzo-soprano, Toby Spence, tenor and Roderick Williams, baritone. The textbook provides more details on Bantock's life and career, it also includes the verses, taken from the fourth version of FitzGerald's translation (1879). In a brief interview Handley calls the *Omar Khayyám* a masterpiece, in which Bantock succeeds "to grasp the overall form ... the most important thing in all art", and to create "an atmosphere which is quite unlike anything else". Comparisons with Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* are not shunned. *The Gramophone* (Nov. 2007). As a critic in the same issue of *The Gramophone* states: the recording by Handley "should encourage future festival performances". Chandos, 3-disc set CHSA 5051(3). **JC**

Garrard - A book of verse



In his book Garrard sets out to investigate how and why we continue to be fascinated by Omar and his Rubáiyát. The journey takes us from the early days of the Persian Empire, along the invaders and conquerors in the following centuries to the times of Omar. Next we follow Edward FitzGerald and his friends and critics before we reach the main section of the book which is the story of the Rubáiyát: the discovery, the reprints, the pirates, the publishers, the translators and illustrators, the followers and the skeptics. The final chapter deals with compositions, audio recordings, and all kinds of ephemera and paraphernalia to which Omar's name has been attached.

Where most studies on Khayyám and the Rubáiyát discuss the authenticity, the genuineness of his verses as philosophical or historical problems, this book opens a more cultural and perhaps economical perspective. For example, on reading the chapter on the publishing history of the Rubáiyát, you could ask yourself how many copies did publishers as Doubleday, Collins, Harrap, Insel-Verlag, to name only a few, in fact publish?

JC

A book of verse. The biography of the Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. Garry Garrard. Stroud, Sutton, 2007. ISBN 978-0-7509-4631-5

Very recently published was a study by Hazhir Teimourian, *Omar Khayyám. Poet, rebel, astronomer*. It is the story of a mathematical genius persecuted for his philosophical beliefs and rebellious poems. It tells how the two rival worlds of Christianity and Islam slowly moved towards their most violent embrace in the First Crusade. Teimourian's book is the first detailed study of Khayyám's life and his world. (Information from inside front cover)

Stroud, Sutton, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-7509-4715-2.

Various



Omar Jaiyyam. Rubaiyat. Edición bilingüe. Traducción de Clara Janés y Ahmad Taherí. Prólogo de Clara Janés. Madrid, Alianza editorial, 2006. 211 p. ISBN: 84-206-

7790-6

The text of the verses is in Spanish and Persian and is a translation of the corrected copy of the rubaiyat by Iranian Persian literature researchers, Mohammad-Ali Foroughi and Qasem Ghani.

2009 - The year of the Rubaiyat

The year 2009 is an important Rubaiyat year:

FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* was published 150 years ago and FitzGerald was born 200 years ago. This will be celebrated in a number of events in the UK as well as in the Netherlands. Bill Martin and Sandra Mason, authors of *The Art of Omar Khayyám*, have set up a website where suggestions are given and can be done, for celebrations and events: www.omarkhayyamrubaiyat.com

Lisa Miller

Australian singer-songwriter Lisa Miller released a new album, called:



Morning in the bowl of night. Apart from the title, there is no reference to Khayyám. Label: Raoul, B000PABPFY

Een deur waarvan 'k de sleutel mis,
een voorhang voor een lege nis.
Een schrale heildronk: jij en ik—
daarna niets meer. Een lege dis.

A heeft het voor een aardse kroon,
B aast op 't paradijs als loon.
Neem liever wat vandaag zich aan-
dient,
buiten roffelt 's trommels toon!

Tot as vergaan geloof en hoop,
en is er ergens roem te koop,
men gooit ze, na een korte schitt'ring,
bij het vuilnis op de hoop.

AAN DE MAAN

Wij zien, wéér eens, elkander weer.
Toch, maan, kijk jij op seek're keer
weer uit naar mij, maar ik ben weg —
geen spoor van mij, geen schaduw
meer.

VERGANKELIJKHEID

Al wat vandaag belang'rijk was
komt morgen al niet meer te pas.
Het Vuur des Tijds verteert het ál
en reduceert het tot wat as.

NAAR KHAYYÁM

Wat heb je buiten 't Nu verloren?
Kán er iets daarnaast bekoren?
'k Weet wel zeker: Gist'ren is
reeds dood en Morgen ongeboren.

NAAR KHAYYÁM

Wie nooit naar Waarheid ook maar
taalde,
buiten eigen Kleinheid dwaalde,
wandelt rond in zachte kleren,
schimpt op wie bedroevend faalde.

Johan Reyntjens (Desselgem, België)

werkt sinds een aantal jaren aan een
reeks dichtoefeningen, onder de titel:
Mijn tribuut aan Omar Khayyám waaruit
bovenstaande selectie.