

Most of us know how to read books, but how often do we study books as historical artifacts? Books of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century exemplify the impacts of industrialization, increased literacy, and the advent of the modern publishing industry. Unlike handwritten books from the Middle Ages and privately printed books of the Early Modern period, mass-produced books relied on speedier printing technologies and cheaper materials. Stereotype plates, wood pulp paper, and cloth bindings are examples of materials that were employed to industrialize the book production process. Format changes also took place in response to economics and the changing demands of the book market. The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the demise of the three-volume novel in Great Britain, further popularizing the single-volume format that was already standardized in the United States.

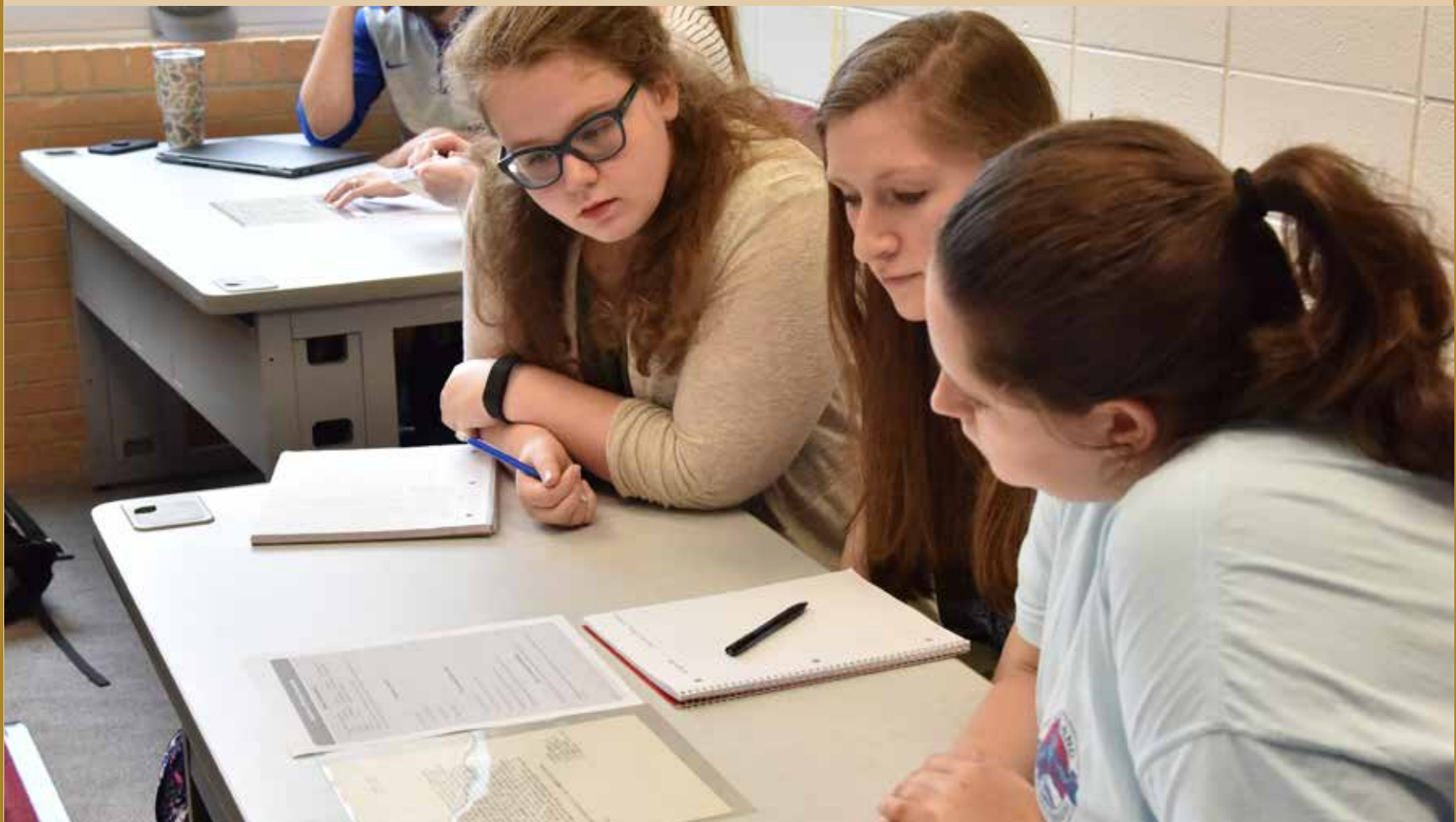
Take a look at these examples of books published in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth century. Be sure to notice elements such as binding material, the color of pages, handwritten notes, and other evidence of use.

Student engagement with rare books is critical to the mission of the Bentley Rare Book Museum. Our collection of over 10,000 rare books and manuscripts spans a variety of subjects and formats ranging from ancient cuneiform tablets to contemporary graphic novels. In this exhibit case, we highlight students who have completed exceptional work with materials from the Bentley Rare Book Museum.



## Camilla Stegall, B.A. in History with minors in Public History and German (May 2021)

During the spring 2020 semester, Camilla Stegall learned how to view and appreciate books as historical artifacts. Camilla learned how to determine a book's condition, value, and appropriateness for a rare book collection.



*“While working with the texts at the Bentley, I learned what to look for when acquiring a rare book. What is its condition? Does it fit the collecting scope? How can you use it once it is part of the collection?”*

*I also learned about the interesting world of publishing history. With publishing history, your focus is not always the story the book contains; the focus is generally on the author, the publisher, and the materiality of the book. This was a new way of thinking about books for me.”*

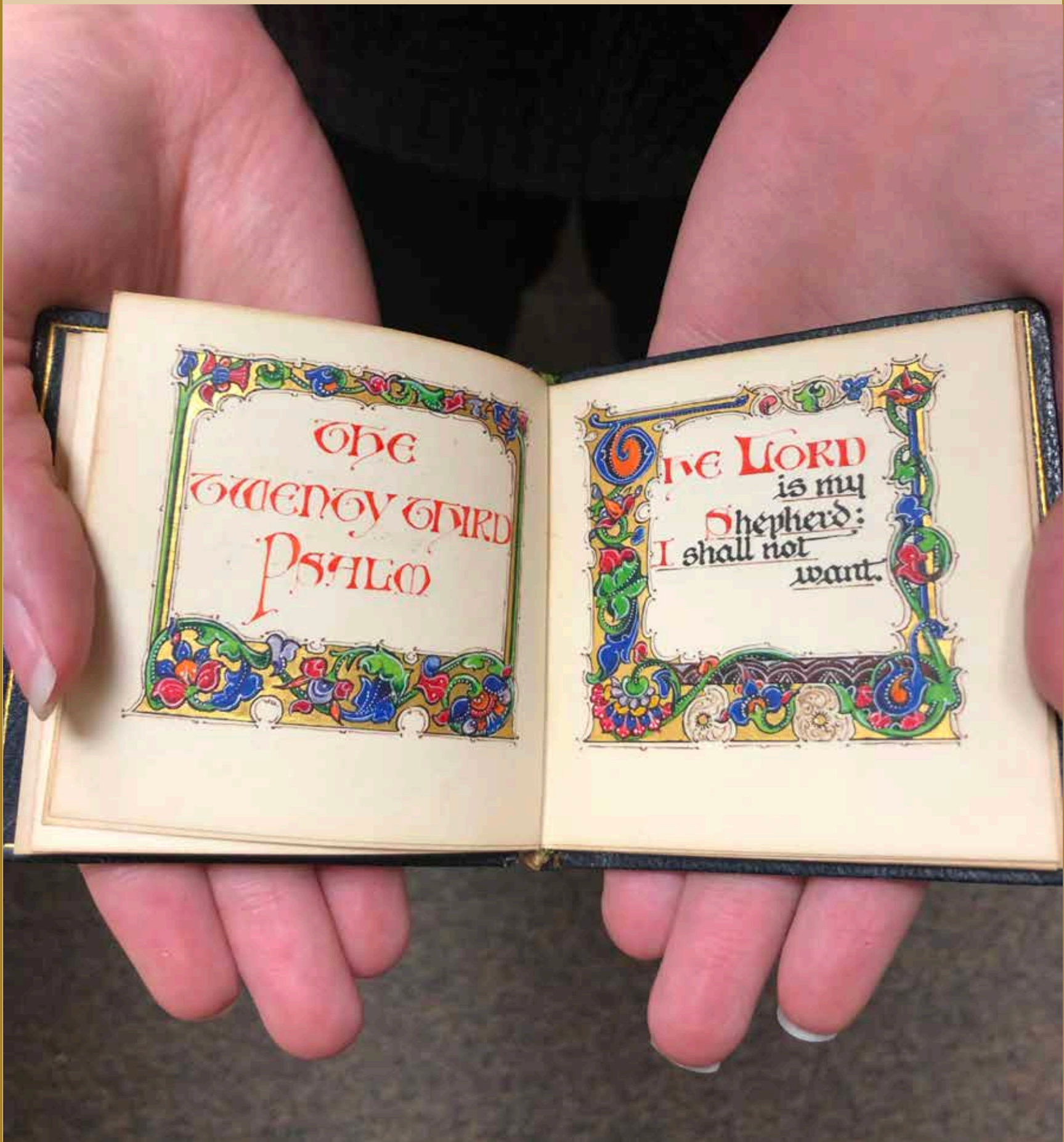
## Jessica Higgins, B.A. in History; certificate in Public History (May 2020)

During the spring 2020 semester, Jessica sharpened her skills in rare book preservation and digitization while satisfying her interest in illustrated texts.



*“ I learned several new skills during my internship, such as preservation methods with delicate books and digitizing materials. I am not normally a strong public speaker, but I was excited about my research with these rare books and successfully shared my findings during the rare book open house program.*

*The Bentley Museum’s collection of wordless novels, specifically works by Frans Masereel and Lynd Ward, immediately piqued my interest. Wordless novels rely on the expressiveness of black and white woodcut illustrations to tell impactful stories that transcend language barriers. They are essentially the original graphic novels.”*



THE  
TWENTY THIRD  
PSALM

THE LORD  
is my  
Shepherd:  
I shall not  
want.







