

Printed at the Sign of "The Penguins"



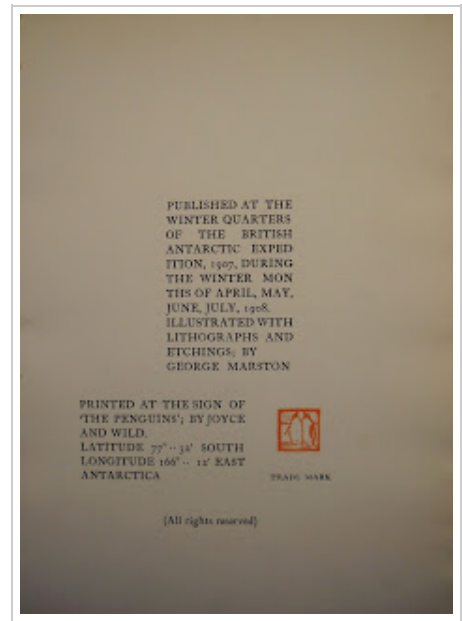
We have plenty of contemporary artists' books in Rauner that make inventive use of ordinary objects, but it's much rarer to find an older book bound with materials as strange as packing crates and harness leather. *Aurora Australis*, an anthology of poems, essays, and illustrations about life in Antarctica, has an excellent reason for its odd binding -- it was printed by the members of Ernest Shackleton's 1907-1909 Nimrod Expedition in the middle of an Antarctic winter.

Pressed for space in its small ship, the expedition brought along an iron handpress, an etching press, paper, ink, and type, but planned to improvise a binding from the lightweight wood boards of the expedition's packing crates. The editor was Shackleton himself, and the printers were two sailors who had had only three weeks training in presswork and lithography. The end result is both charmingly quirky

and astonishingly professional given the conditions in the hut where the press was set up. As one sailor described:

Dust from the stove fills the air and settles on the paper as it is being printed.... It is too cold to keep the printer's ink fluid; it gets sticky and freezes... the printers were called away while the candle was burning, and... when they returned they found that the plate had overheated and melted the inking roller of gelatinous substance. I believe it was the only one on the Continent and had to be re-cast somehow.

In all, about 90 copies of *Aurora Australis* were printed, bound, and distributed to the members of Shackleton's expedition. Rauner's is affectionately known as the "Oatmeal Copy" for the label which is partially visible on the inside board cover.



Ask for [Stefansson G850 1907 .A8](#) to see *Aurora Australis* for yourself. Also, make sure to take a look at an historical introduction to the text in our facsimile copy: [Stefansson G850 1907 .A8 1986](#).

Posted for Anne Peale '11

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