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William Morris, The Friendship of Amis and Amile

ca.1894

1 item (0.1 linear feet)

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A leader in the English Arts and Crafts movement, William Morris translated the ancient French romance, Amis and Amile, in 1894, one of a number of romances he published in his literary efforts to restore the middle ages.

This holograph copy of Morris's short story was prepared for the Kelmscott Press in 1894 and printed in a run of 500. The first American edition appeared later that year, published by Thomas Bird Mosher. appeared later that year, published by Thomas Bird Mosher.

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Background on Amis and Amile

An ancient French romance based upon a legend of love and sacrifice, the story of Amis and Amile was translated and published by William Morris in 1894. The plot of the romance revolves around devoted friends, near twins in resemblance. When stricken with leprosy, Amis received a visitation from the archangel Raphael and was informed that his cure would be brought about only by telling Amile to slaughter his children and then bathe in their blood. Although Amis refused, Amile too had heard the angel, killed his children, bringing their blood to his sick friend, and immediately healed him. Miraculously, the children were restored to life thereafter, although both Amis and Amile were killed in battle, even death did not part them: though buried apart, their coffins were found together the next morning.

A textile designer, artist, writer, and publisher, William Morris was a deep proponent of traditional craftsmanship in an era of industrialization. Associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and a major figure in the English Arts and Crafts movement, Morris built on the writings of John Ruskin to develop a philosophy that at once prized craftsmanship and aesthetics and resisted the homogenization of mass production. Often drawing on medieval and romantic motifs and technologies, Morris's work reflected his socialist leanings, Morris operated the Kelmscott Press from 1891 to 1898 on the principle of employing traditional methods of book production, down to and including derivatives of fifteenth century typography and illustration. His version of Amis and Amile was printed in an edition of 500 at the Kelmscott Press in 1894 and by Thomas Bird Mosher in Maine later that year.

Scope of collection

This holograph copy of Morris's short story, "The friendship of Amis and Amile," was prepared for the Kelmscott Press in 1894. Pasted on the rear of the last page is a ticket indicating that it came from the collection of the noted autograph dealer Thomas F. Madigan.

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Thomas F. Madigan, date unrecorded.

Processing Information

Processed by I. Eliot Wentworth, April 2102.

Related Material

SCUA houses a large collection of works by and about William Morris, including the first American edition of *The story of Amis and Amile, done out of the ancient French into English*. Portland, Me.: T.B. Mosher, 1896 (Call no.: PR5081.A5 S8 1896a).

Language:

English

Copyright and Use (More information)

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Search terms

Subjects

Kelmscott Press

Contributors

Morris, William, 1834-1896. [main entry]

Morris, William, 1834-1896.

Genres and formats

Holographs (Autographs).

Link to similar SCUA collections

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