

# Guide to the collection of occult bookplates

BKP 182



compiled by Adrienne Pruitt

October 2023

Arts Library Special Collections  
180 York Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-432-1712  
haasalsc@yale.edu

<https://web.library.yale.edu/arts/alsc>

---

## Table of Contents

Collection Overview .....	3
Requesting Instructions .....	3
Administrative Information .....	3
Conditions Governing Access .....	3
Conditions Governing Use .....	3
Preferred Citation .....	4
Processing Information .....	4
Biographical / Historical .....	4
Scope and Contents .....	4
Arrangement .....	4
Collection Contents .....	5
Selected Search Terms .....	7

---

## Collection Overview

**REPOSITORY:** Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library Special Collections  
Arts Library Special Collections  
180 York Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
203-432-1712  
haasalsc@yale.edu  
<https://web.library.yale.edu/arts/alsc>

**CALL NUMBER:** BKP 182

**CREATOR:** Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer

**TITLE:** Collection of occult bookplates

**DATES:** Circa 1920-circa 1975

**PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION:** 16 Items

**LANGUAGE:** Materials are mostly in Latin with some French and Finnish.

**SUMMARY:** Collection of occult and astrology-themed ex libris, most by Slovakian artist, Karl Hugo Frech

**ONLINE FINDING AID:** To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ead.arts.bkp.0182>

---

## Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/ead.arts.bkp.0182>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b.      box

---

## Administrative Information

---

### Conditions Governing Access

The collection is open for research.

---

### Conditions Governing Use

Copyright status for collection materials is unknown. Transmission or reproduction of materials protected by U.S. Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S.C.) beyond that allowed by fair use requires the written permission of the copyright owners. Works not in the public domain cannot be commercially exploited without permission of the copyright owners. Responsibility for any use rests exclusively with the user.

---

## Preferred Citation

Collection of occult bookplates, Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library, Yale University.

---

## Processing Information

All titles supplied by cataloger. Description largely drawn from seller's catalog; any description in quotation marks denotes an exact quote.

---

## Biographical / Historical

Karl Hugo Frech (1883-1945) was a graphic artist and painter known both for his depictions of Bratislava, where he spent most of his life, and for his bookplates, many of them occult-themed.

Frech was born on September 9, 1883, in Stuttgart, Germany. He studied lithography at the G.F. Schreiber Art Institute in Esslingen, and attended the Academy of Applied Arts in Stuttgart (1903-1905), where he later worked. He also studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Karlsruhe. After a period of European travel in Italy and Sweden, he married and moved to Bratislava (formerly known as Pressburger) in 1914. There, he was a member of the Pressburger Kunstverein and made his living as a painter and graphic artist. He contributed illustrations to books and newspapers, including Pressburger Zeitung and Grenzboten, and received numerous commissions for bookplates from notable figures in Bratislava. Many of his bookplate designs feature an occult theme.

Frech died on July 27, 1945, near the Austrian town of Steyr, while attempting to escape from a camp for displaced Germans.

---

## Scope and Contents

Collection of 16 occult and astrology-themed ex libris, most by Slovakian artist, Karl Hugo Frech (1883-1945), created between circa 1920 and circa 1975. Includes examples of etching and woodcut, some litho printed.

---

## Arrangement

This collection is arranged chronologically.

## Collection Contents

b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Professor Dr. H. Matthes, designed by Peter Paul Draewing <i>1 Item ; 9 x 14 cm</i> Draewing, Peter Paul , bookplate designer</p> <p>Peter Paul Draewing (1876-1940) was a German artist and teacher known for his landscape paintings in the French Impressionist style.</p> <p>Depicts "an alchemist or wizard with a long white beard formulating a potion of some chemical concoction in a laboratory with alchemical symbols, hourglass, skull, book, mortar and pestle decorated with grapes, poppies, wolfbane, and an owl at the top." Mounted bookplate on three-hole punch paper.</p>	circa 1900-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Gertrud Streith, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Depicts a woman seated in a field before a vision of travelers on camels (possibly the Three Magi) and a background of stars and alchemical symbols.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Mathilde Sanke, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Depicts a nude woman with her left hand over her face and her right hand out in supplication before an astrological background.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Rose Frech-Albrecht, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945</p> <p>Depicts a child atop a book with a bird in flight overhead and a floral background.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Ludolf Frank, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Depicts a radio set with a globe and alchemical symbols in the background.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of H. Karl Frech, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Depicts two haloed figures, one holding a book and an axe, and the other holding a staff with a serrated blade.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of H. K. Frech, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Depicts a group of cloaked worshippers before the Eye of Providence.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Wilhelm Regius, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Depicts occult symbols including a pentagram. Large format handpress print.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Ing. Walter Schumacher, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Woodblock print on tissue stock. "K. Frech: Bratislava" address stamp on reverse.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Fritz Degenring, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer</p> <p>Woodblock print on tissue stock. "K. Frech: Bratislava" address stamp on reverse.</p>	circa 1920-1930

b. 1	<p>Bookplate of H. K. Frech, designed by Karl Hugo Frech <i>1 Item ; 12.5 x 14.5 cm</i> Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer "Ex Libris Occultis H. K. Frech." Depicts a skull and astrological symbols. Etching.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of K. Frech, designed by Karl Hugo Frech Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate designer Depicts a woman with a floral crown holding two saplings that bear astrological and other occult symbols.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Bohumil Hradecny, designed by Bohumil Hradecny <i>1 Item ; 8 x 12 cm</i> Hradecny, Bohumil , bookplate designer Bohumil Hradecny (1876-1960) was an artist, occultist, and member of the para-Theosophical society Ibing's Mystic Circle. He was also one of the founding members of Universalia, a Czech esoteric society begun in 1920 and incorporated in 1930.  Depicts a nude figure with arms outstretched to astrological and occult symbols, illustrating "the truth of esoteric knowledge seeking and ritual purpose, very much in the Czech design style." Etching design, litho printed.</p>	circa 1920-1930
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Gino Sabattini <i>1 Item ; 8 x 11 cm</i> "Ex Libris Occulta Gino Sabatini." Depicts a hand, an eye, and a curtain with astrological symbols. Mechanical woodcut print. Most likely cut by Tranquillo Marangoni, Italian woodcut designer and engraver.</p>	circa 1950s
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Ritva Ristolainen <i>1 Item ; 10 x 15 cm</i> Finnish author Ritva Heikkila was born in 1920 as Aira Ritva Ristolainen.  Depicts "an angelic figure ascending from a piano with a book to celestial levels." Woodcut design, litho printed.</p>	circa 1960s
b. 1	<p>Bookplate of Mich de Mey, designed by Anton Vermeylen <i>1 Item ; 9 x 12 cm</i> Vermeylen, Anton , bookplate designer Anton Vermeylen (1931-2012) was a Belgian artist who worked in stained glass and graphic design. He was known for his woodcut work.  Depicts "a figure with a spirit behind them illuminating the person reading." Woodcut. Signed by the artist in pencil.</p>	circa 1975

## **Selected Search Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### **Subjects**

Bookplates -- Specimens.  
Occultism

### **Genres / Formats**

Bookplates

### **Contributors**

Frech, Karl Hugo, 1883-1945 , bookplate  
designer  
Hradecny, Bohumil , bookplate designer  
Vermeylen, Anton , bookplate designer  
Draewing, Peter Paul , bookplate designer

### **Acquired From**

Lux Mentis, Booksellers , seller