A Selectively Exhaustive Chronology of the Life & Works of
Robert Lax (1915-2000)

Compiled by Paul J. Spaeth
[revised 2/06]

1915  (Nov.30) Lax is born in Olean, New York.

1934  Begins studies at Columbia University in NYC.

1938  Receives bachelor’s degree from Columbia University.
      (Summer) Brings Thomas Merton to stay at a cottage in the hills above Olean.

1939  (Summer) Brings Merton and Ed Rice to stay at the cottage, and introduces
      Merton to the campus of St. Bonaventure College.

1940  (Summer) Brings Merton, Rice, Ad Reinhardt, Robert Gibney, & other Columbia
      friends to stay at the cottage.
      [Merton teaches English at St. Bonaventure College until Dec. 1941]

1941  Works on editorial staff of The New Yorker and at Friendship House in NYC.
      [Merton enters the Trappist monastery at Gethsemani, KY in Dec.]

1943  Teaches English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
      (Dec. 19) Baptized into the Roman Catholic Church in NYC.

1944  Receives fellowship to study philosophy at UNC at Chapel Hill; begins a
      dissertation on Thomas Aquinas.

1945  Works at Time, and later Parade in NYC.

1946  Works as a writer at Goldwyn Studios in Hollywood, CA until 1948.


1949  Travels through Western Canada with the Cristiani Family Circus.
      Visits Robert Gibney & Nancy Flagg in the Virgin Islands, along with Ad
      Reinhardt.

1950  (Spring) Staying in Olean, writes finalized version of Circus of the Sun in the
      Library of St. Bonaventure College.
      (Sept.) Begins living in France, at Eau Vive, a Dominican House, in Paris while
      working for New Story, a short-lived literary magazine, and at Marseilles.
(Dec.) Back in NYC for a short visit.

1951  (Jan.) Back in France, mainly in Marseilles.
(Summer) Spends a month in Rome, and a month with the Alfred Court Zoo Circus traveling across the Italian peninsula to Pescara.

“Circus of the Sun. Excerpt from a Novel in Progress” in *New Story* 4 (June 1951) 34-36. [First published appearance of material that would become *Circus of the Sun]*

1953  Helps to found *Jubilee: A Magazine of the Church & Her People* in NYC, for which he acts as "roving editor" until 1967.

1955  Meets graphic artist Emil Antonucci in NYC, who begins producing small press editions & films based on Lax’s work.


[PAX. New York, 1956-1985 A poetry broadside founded & edited by Lax]

PAX 1: [Three Poems] / Mark van Doren, Thomas Merton, Lax.

PAX 4: Five Poems / Thomas Merton.
PAX 5: The Anxious Man / William Maxwell.

[2nd published appearance of material that would become *Circus of the Sun]*

PAX 6: Four Poems / Soichi Furuta.
PAX 7: Two Poems and a Translation / Thomas Merton.
PAX 8: 27th & 4th / Robert Lax.

PAX 9: Mystery / Claire McAllister.
PAX 10: Hymn / Jack Kerouac.

PAX 13: Documents of Modern Art / Ad Reinhardt & others.

Antonucci film: 27th & 4th (22 min.)

1962  As part of a vacation returns to France, and visits Greece for the first time.


1964  (Spring) Begins living on Greek Island of Kalymnos.

“The Port Was Longing” in Poor Old Tired Horse 10.

1965  (Nov. 18) Records poetry for Library of Congress in Athens, Greece.


“The stone, the sea ...” in Poor Old Tired Horse 17.

How Does the Sun’s Ray Seek the Flower? New York: Journeyman Press.
3 or 4 Poems About the Sea. New York: Journeyman Press.

1967  (Jan.) Abstract verse play entitled “Drama” produced for B.B.C. (Poetry Now) by George MacBeth.
(April-May) Poet-in-Residence at General Beadle State College (South Dakota, now Dakota State University).
Records poetry for the Lamont Poetry Room at Harvard University.

Antonucci film: Thought (3 min.)

1968  (Oct.) David Kilburn & Julian Mitchell present a reading of Lax poems produced for B.B.C. by George MacBeth.
“Abstract Poem” in Green Island (1968)

Robert Lax Special Issue of Voyages 2:1-2 (Winter/Spring 1968)


      Antonucci films: New Film (20 min.), Short Films (20 min.)

      Homage to Wittgenstein. Kalymnos.
      “You will dissolve …” in Green Island (1970).

      Another Red Red Blue Poem. New York: Journeyman Press. [Broadside]
      An Evening at Webster Hall. New York: Journeyman Press.
      4 Boats, 3 People. East Markham: Tarasque Press [Postcard]
      Mostly Blue. New York: Journeyman Press.
      Red Circle – Blue Square. New York: Journeyman Press.

      Article on Lax by R. C. Kenedy in Art International 15:1 (1971)
      Antonucci films: Red & Blue (25 min.), Shorts (18 min.)


1974  (Feb.-April) Exhibition of Wild Hawthorn & Journeyman presses at The Victoria
      & Albert Museum (London).
      (Summer) Artist-in-Residence, with Antonucci, at Artpark (Lewiston, NY).

      “Does the grass fear the dark …” New York: Journeyman Press.
      Spring Song. Exeter, Devon, Eng.: Kontexts Publications.
      “Try to see the air …” New York: Journeyman Press.

1975  (Summer) Artist-in-Residence, with Antonucci, at Artpark (Lewiston, NY).
“Bird against the cloud …” in *Journeyman* 1 (1975)
“Dr. Shakesprop” in *Journeyman* 5 (1975)
“Game on the beach …” in *Journeyman* 9 (1975)
“G’bye Flo, I tell her …” *New York: Journeyman Press. [Broadside]*
“I like get f’d …” *New York: Journeyman Press. [Broadside]*
“Light dark, light dark …” *New York: Journeyman Press. [Broadside]*
“My dog has fleas …” *New York: Journeyman Press. [Broadside]*
“Oedipus” in *Journeyman* 3 (1975) [First published in 1958]
“Red Blue” in *Journeyman* 12 (1975)

Article on Lax by David Miller in *Lugano Review* 2 (1975)

1976  (Summer) Artist-in-Residence, with Antonucci, at Artpark (Lewiston, NY).
(Aug.19) Poetry reading for WBAI radio, NYC.


1978  (May26) Poetry reading for WBAI radio, NYC.

McNeel. [Reprinted 1994]

1979  (May14-18) Exhibition of Journeyman publications and Antonucci films at Zona 
Gallery (Florence, Italy) organized by Maurizio Nannucci.

*Color*. Florence, Italy: Exempla.

1980  (Sept.25-26) Takes part in “A Maritain-Merton Symposium” (Louisville, KY)

*[Mythoi]* / translation of *Fables* by Moschos Lagouvardos. Thessalonica.


1982  (May14) Takes part in the 5th Bielefelder Colloquium Neue Poesie [in Athens]
(Oct.23) Takes part in a festival entitled “fone, la voce e la traccia” (Florence) 
along with Brion Gysin, Bernard Heidsieck, Maurizio Nannucci, Emmet 
Williams.
1983  
*At the Top of the Night.* Furthermore Press.
*Clouds.* Furthermore Press.
*Ennea Poimata* / translation of *Nine Poems* by Moschos Lagouvardos.
*Fables = Fabeln.* Zurich: Pendo Verlag.
*In & Out of Ourdah.* Furthermore Press.

“*Nine Poems*” in *The Blue Boat* 1.
*Said’s.* Furthermore Press.
*Shepherd’s Calendar.* Furthermore Press.
*Tiger.* Furthermore Press.
*The Way.* Furthermore Press.
*Whole.* Furthermore Press.

1984  
(May4) Takes part in the 7th Bielefelder Colloquium Neue Poesie.

*Act in This Moment.* Furthermore Press.
*Arc.* Furthermore Press.
*As Long As.* Furthermore Press.
*Astrophysical Masterpieces.* Furthermore Press.
*Cloning for Yellow.* Zurich: Seedorn Verlag.
*Cloud Over the Hill.* Furthermore Press.
*Fat Ladies.* Furthermore Press. [Drawings]
*From the Top of the Ferris Wheel.* Furthermore Press.
*In His Dreams.* Furthermore Press.

*Just Midnight.* Furthermore Press.

“*Light*” in *Aggie Weston’s* 21 (1984)
*The Love That Comes.* Furthermore Press.

"*The port was longing …*” in *Green Island* (1984).
*Spider.* Furthermore Press.
*21 Pages = 21 Seiten.* Zurich: Pendo Verlag.
*Water Sunlight Writes.* Furthermore Press.

1985  
(April21) Reading Neue Staatsgalerie Stuttgart.
(June21) Radio broadcast “Robert Lax: Ein Eremit in Greichenland” by Sigrid Hauf for Westdeutscher Rundfunk.
(Oct.8-Nov.3) Lax material included in exhibition entitled “Bild/Sprache” at Galerie im Taxispalais (Innsbruck, Austria).

*Above the Rock.* Furthermore Press.
*Dark Earth, Bright Sky.* Furthermore Press.
*Ghost.* Furthermore Press.
*I Can’t See You.* Furthermore Press.
*The Nights, the Days.* Furthermore Press.
Other Notes. Furthermore Press.
Some Short Notes of Robert Lax. Furthermore Press.


1986 (May 2) Takes part in the 9th Bielefelder Colloquium Neue Poesie.
Journal A = Tagebuch A. Zurich: Pendo Verlag.

1987 Start of Lax Archive at St. Bonaventure University (St. Bonaventure, NY).
(Nov. 10) Reading at Theater an der Winkewiese (Zurich) with jazz piano by Tessa Weigner.

Spark & Flame. Frankfurt: Kunstverein.

1988 Lax material included in exhibition entitled “Visual Poetics” at The Museum of Contemporary Art (Brisbane, Australia) curated by Nicholas Zurbrugg.

Journal B = Tagebuch B. Zurich: Pendo Verlag.

1989 (March 26) Reading at Kunsthalle Basel.

The Light / The Shade / illustrated by Lax. Zurich: Pendo Verlag.

1990 (Sept. 24-Oct. 12) Visiting Professor at St. Bonaventure University; awarded honorary doctor of letters degree.
(Dec. 1-Jan. 27) “Robert Lax and Concrete Poetry” exhibition at the Burchfield Art Center (Buffalo, NY) & at the Poetry/Rare Book Room at SUNY at Buffalo. Lindenmeyer for Bayerischer Rundfunk.
(Nov. 30) Radio play “erwartet bobo sambo ein gerauch? Erwartet er eine stimme?” for and with Lax by Hatmut Geerken for Bayerischer Rundfunk.
(Nov. 30) Radio broadcast “Is Was – Was Is” by Sigrid Hauff for Bayerischer Rundfunk.

To the Sea = á l’amère: poème et variation / Lax & Frédérick Leboyer. France: Livre á Livre.

(Sept.) Reading at the Sound Poetry Section of the Festival de la Batie (Geneva).
(Sept.27) Reading of Circus of the Sun at the Kantonsschule Kuesnacht (SZ).
“white dark, black dark ...” / illustrated by Andrew Blick, essay by David Miller. Edinburgh: Morning Star Publications. [Morning Star Folio 2/3]


1993 (June29-Aug.15) Exhibition entitled “Robert Lax: Vizualni Texty” curated by Jiri Valoch in Brno, Czech Republic.


1994 (Nov.2) Reading at Stadtbucherei Stuttgart.

Dialogues = Dialoge / illustrated by Lax. Zurich: Pendo Verlag.

1995 (June17) “Robert Lax: A Roundtable Discussion” held at the 4th General Meeting of the International Thomas Merton Society being held at St. Bonaventure University.
(Oct.25) Reading at Kunsthalle Basel.
(Oct.30) Reading at Zurcher Puppen Theater (Zurich).
music by John Gilmore for Bayerischer Rundfunk.
(Dec.8) Radio play “bob’s bomb” by Hartmut Geerken & Herbert Kapfer for Bayerischer Rundfunk.

Notes = Notizen. Zurich: Pendo Verlag.

Middle of the Moment (motion picture) / Nicholas Humbert & Werner Penzel of CineNomad.

Hermits / Peter France. New York: St. Martin’s Press. [chapter on Lax]

1997 (May7-16) Exhibition of Lax/Conz fabric poem prints at Sommerville College Art
Society (Oxford, Eng.).
(Sept.4-Oct. 12) Exhibition of Lax/Conz fabric poem prints at Kunstverein Rosenheim (Germany) as part of exhibition entitled “Konkrete Poesie Konzept Kunst”.
(Sept. 8-9) Performance of Black/White Oratorio with John Beer and Vincent Barras at the Festival de la Batie (Geneva, SZ).

[Poems written in Greece during the 1970’s]


[3 synchronized, looped films on a 45 min. cycle]


Robert Lax Multimedia Box / edited by Harmut Geerken & Sigrid Hauff. Verlag Michael Farin, 1999. [Contains biography & bibliography of Lax’s works, a catalog of an installation & video of a film by Nicholas Humbert & Werner Penzel on Lax, two cds of Lax reading from his own works and another of a radio play based on Lax’s writings]

2000 (Sept.26) Lax dies in family home in Olean, NY and is buried in the cemetery of St. Bonaventure University.

2001  (May5) Posthumous Arts Award from St. Bonaventure University.


*[large section on Lax]*


