

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

Translated by BENT NORDHJEM

DANISH BALLAD ILLUSTRATIONS

By Erik Dal

The Danish medieval ballads form the most valuable part of Danish folk poetry and are in many respects related to the British "Child" ballads. They have come down to us in manuscripts from ab. 1550-1700, in broadsides from the same period and later, generally with simple title-woodcuts, and in two larger collections (1591 and 1695, and subsequent issues). In the 19th century, ballads were taken down from oral tradition, studied and edited, and because of the importance of the ballad in Danish literary tradition as a whole, the interest of the fine arts, too, was attracted by it. Consequently, paintings and other pictures came to light, and a number of ballad editions were illustrated.

In this review of ballad illustrations, special attention is given to drawings by Lorenz Frølich (1820-1908), the brothers Joakim and Niels Skovgaard (1856-1933, 1858-1938) and to a special series of single ballads from ab. 1890. These artists represent a romantic tradition, and they were intimate friends with the outstanding ballad editors Svend Grundtvig and Axel Olrik. In our century, ballads have been illustrated especially by Ernst Hansen (b. 1892) and Povl Christensen (b. 1909). Most of Ernst Hansen's illustrations are heavy, square woodcuts; they are based upon a multitude of studies without the ornamental simplification shown in the final works, and Ernst Hansen has allowed the editor to reproduce some of these unprinted studies.

Many other artists, some of them very well known, others of secondary importance, have illustrated ballads, also during recent years. The history of these illustrations, beginning before 1600 and unbroken since ab. 1840, has obvious relations, not only to Danish art in general, but also to scientific and other aspects of ballad study in the same generations.

It should be added that the longitudinal section of the subject given in the article hopes to concentrate on the essential parts of it, but that the illustrations do not claim to do so. The material has not been collected before, and therefore some very important, but rather well known works are not reproduced, while very little known items have been given the priority.

BIRGITTE CRAMER'S COLOURED PASTE-PAPER FOR BOOK-COVERS

By T. Vogel-Jørgensen

Birgitte Cramer, who has been making coloured paste-paper for book-bindings, both half and full, for twenty-five years, learnt her craft from the painter Joakim Skovgaard. He made some early paste-papers in collaboration with Anker Kyster, a bookbinder who, in 1892, had revived this old craft in Denmark. Birgitte Cramer started playing with paste-paper when a mere schoolgirl, thus acquiring the elements of a technique which she subsequently perfected. She has been working professionally since 1932, and in 1943 brought out a new type of paper. While the patterns of ordinary paste-paper are largely a matter of luck and only the colouring can be planned in advance, the patterns of her new papers are applied by hand so that all copies in an edition may now appear in homogeneous paper-covered bindings. Birgitte Cramer's recent work is characterized by parallel patterns broken by capricious irregularities. A fine sense of colour, an unfailing technique, and a great variety of patterns, account for the fame of Birgitte Cramer's paste-paper.

ITALIAN WRITING-BOOKS FROM THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

By Svend Eriksen

This article surveys the writing-books of the *cinquecento*, and contains illustrations from copies in the Library of the Museum of Decorative Art, Copenhagen.

After explaining the nature of the writing-books, the author goes on to discuss the various functions of Italian scribes in the sixteenth century: they were both copyists, calligraphers, and teachers of penmanship. The art of writing and the writing-books developed against the background of Italian humanism. The geometrically constructed letters of Luca Pacioli and other early scribes are paralleled by the monumental inscriptions of L. B. Alberti's buildings, in which may be traced a significant development, as regards both style and quality, from the primitive and somewhat crude letters at the front of S. Francesco at Rimini (ab. 1450) to the elaborate classicism of the inscriptions of the diminutive Santo Sepolcro of S. Pancrazio (ab. 1467) and S. M. Novella (1456-70), both at Florence. This evolution coincides roughly with the supposed discovery—attributed to Andrea Mantegna and Felice Feliciano—of a Roman inscription with preserved marks of geometrical construction.

The article traces the evolution of geometrical letter construction up to C. F. Cresci, who criticized the method severely and recommended freehand letter design, as close to the ancient Roman models as possible. In conclusion, it gives an account of the *cancellaresca* script found in the books of Lud. Arrighi, G. A. Tagliente, G. B. Palatino, and other famous Italian calligraphers; in this there is nothing new to readers of the fundamental writings of Stanley Morison, A. F. Johnson, and James Wardrop.

THE NEW DESIGN OF THE BOOKS OF GYLDENDAL

By Jokum Smith

The books published by Gyldendal in Copenhagen have recently been re-designed. Gyldendal issues about 400 titles a year, and about 250 of these are printed in the printing-house belonging to Gyldendal. The reform began by the selection of five formats which could be used for nearly all books:

- Format A: 12 × 19¹/₂ cm (4'7'' × 7'7'') for poems, essays, etc.
 - B: 13 × 21 - (5'1'' × 8'3'') for short novels, essays, schoolbooks.
 - C: 14¹/₄ × 23 - (5'6'' × 9'1'') for long novels, biographies, school books
 - D: 16 × 24 - (6'3'' × 9'5'') for memoirs, travel books, textbooks.
 - E: 18 × 26 - (7'1'' × 10'2'') for travel books, picture books, primers.

The introduction of these standard formats was followed up by the selection of three founts of sufficient variety to cover all types of books. For fiction, poetry, etc., printed on machine-finished paper, Linotype Granjon is used; for non-fiction printed on all kinds of paper, Linotype Baskerville; and for textbooks, reference books, and dictionaries, Linotype Times. A number of books are set by other printers, and in these cases Linotype Jenson, Monotype Bembo, and Monotype Perpetua are employed.

For the first time in the history of the firm, Gyldendal has charged a book-designer with the task of creating a house style, after the fashion of the English publishing houses Jonathan Cape, Chatto & Windus, and Faber & Faber; but they aim at a more lively and varied typographical style, while steering clear of the extremism of American book-designers.

The designer plans the contents of all Gyldendal books and many of the jackets and bindings. Gyldendal tries to avoid the traditional Danish half-leather bindings and is now introducing new and cheaper covers. Cloth or Linson are used on the spine, while the boards are covered with paper, often paste-paper. Full cloth is rarely used, although it has been successful with several non-fictional works. This was the case with Gyldendal's "Store Kogebog" (Cookery-Book), for which offset linen was used with a decoration in four colours. The tendency, however, is towards full bindings either of linen or some other material (as Swedish 'lanell' or German 'neolite'), on which pictures or patterns are printed in offset.

The author concludes his article by expressing the hope that Scandinavian designers, who have contributed so much to the design of modern furniture and other products of the arts and crafts, will reach a similar standard in the design of books.

THOMAS LARSEN BORUP, ENGRAVER AND PRINTER

By Johs. E. Tang Kristensen

In the rococo period, the age of taste and elegance, printers preferred to decorate and illustrate their books with copperplates. But as these were expensive, they sometimes had to resort to cheaper techniques; consequently, in Denmark as well as in

Germany and France, they occasionally employed woodcuts, though mostly in publications intended for the popular market: chap-books, broadsheet ballads, and "pictorial broadsheets". As these decorations and illustrations were usually unsigned, very little is known about the Danish wood-engravers of the period. From the latter half of the eighteenth century we know the name of *Thomas Larsen Borup*, who was both a printer and a talented and productive woodcutter, but hardly anything about his life. After his death, his widow married the printer *Johan Rudolph Thiele*; through the merger of the two printing offices Thiele acquired the whole of Borup's plant and all his blocks.

Thomas Larsen Borup cut innumerable vignettes, all in the style of the period, signing them *B.* or *T. B.* Among his woodcuts may be mentioned those for "The Dance of Death" and Le Sage's "Diable Boiteux". Besides, he ornamented and printed some elaborately framed folio sheets for occasional poems and similar purposes.

Most of Borup's blocks were probably intended for the "pictorial broadsheets", the illustrated magazines of the period, but most of these are now lost. Only sixteen prints of this type issued from his own press are preserved; but his hand may be recognized in broadsheets from other printing-houses. Recently, two remarkable prints which Thiele issued and for which he used Borup's blocks have been discovered. These woodcuts, which carry the dates 1766 and 1767, have a certain historical significance because they show artisans at work about the middle of the eighteenth century. Each sheet contains two pictures. One of them shows "The Printer" and "The Bookbinder", the other "The Turner" and "The Joiner"; both carry a versified text. No doubt, these four pictures formed part of a series of woodcuts showing working handicraftsmen, for which Thomas Larsen Borup made the blocks.

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