

English Summaries

Translated by Bent Nordhjem

Book-Clasps and Metal Corner-Pieces from the Viking Age Found in Scandinavia

By Thorkild Ramskou

ANGLO-SAXON missionaries were active on the Continent as early as the 8th century. Our knowledge of them derives mainly from literary sources; but recently the German scholar Günther Haseloff has demonstrated that a special ornamental style, best known from the Tassilo chalice, may be traced back to the English missionaries.

Although Ansgarius is normally given credit for having brought Christianity to Scandinavia, the truth is that he was scarcely more successful than his predecessor, Willibrord, who came about a century earlier, as the first missionary on Danish soil. Though Willibrord's mission was a failure, his visit – or, perhaps rather, the lively intercourse with Friesland in those days – left traces in 8th century Danish ornamentation, as may be seen from some small plates, originally mounted on reliquaries, and from a peculiarly Scandinavian type of jewelry. The fact that these jewels contain ornamental details which are practically identical with those of the Tassilo chalice has never been noticed before.

Book-clasps and metal corner-pieces are rare in Scandinavia. From Birka in Sweden we know one volume, of Continental provenance, and ornamented in the missionary style. From Norway we know some metal corner-pieces of Irish origin; but they are probably mere loot from Irish monasteries and as such have nothing to do with the mission or with Friesland. The same applies to a probably English corner-piece found near Roskilde.

A very interesting clasp has been found near Gothenburg in Sweden; judging by its style, it must have been made in Denmark in the 10th century; consequently, it is one of the earliest pieces of church equipment produced in Scandinavia.

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Illustration as Teamwork

By Ernst Clausen

AFTER pleading for the use of illustrations in books, the author emphasizes a fact which tends to be forgotten: illustrating a book involves other than purely technical problems. Drawing on his own experience as an illustrator, the author instances three commissions which faced him with radically different problems: (1) A publishing house asked him to supply illustrations for a short, dramatically tense novel; (2) On a journey in Greece, he and a poet were given a free hand to choose their subjects for a joint book on Greece; but the illustrations had to be fitted into pages of poetry in various metres; (3) When he was asked to devise the front cover of a book on jazz, he was faced with a clearly defined task which effectively narrowed his freedom of movement.

The author calls for closer collaboration between all who contribute to the finished illustrated book: on one hand, the illustrator, and, on the other, those concerned with the general design, the making of the clichés, the composition, the printing, and the binding. He suggests that the Copenhagen Academy of Fine Arts should introduce a new subject, to be named "the technology and aesthetics of the book" and to be taught by both artists and technicians. This would enable young artists to familiarize themselves with both the structural and the technical problems of book-production without a great deal of initial groping in the dark, and it would help the technician to a better understanding of the art of the illustrator as a creative activity requiring imagination and a sense of beauty.

In the Study 300 Years Ago

By Erik Dal

THE author has investigated the sources of the Danish scholar Søren Poulsen Gotlænder (Judichær), whose "Synopsis Prosodiæ Danicæ" (1650) and "Prosodia Danica" (1671) are important examples of that interest in the national languages and literatures which in the late Renaissance dominated European scholarship, also in Scandinavia. (Judichær's works formed Vol. II of "Danske Metrikere" ("Danish Prosodists"), Copenhagen 1953 *sqq.*, edited

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by Arthur Arnholtz, Aage Kabell, and Erik Dal; the author's Introduction and Notes to Vol. II will be published in 1960).

The author tries to show that an interest in the history, function, and aesthetics of the book may be of considerable assistance to the student in an inquiry of this nature. After characterizing in general terms the books which were to found on Judichær's desk about 1650, he concentrates on a number of books, which are shown in the illustrations: two of Judichær's own books characterized by their firm, perhaps somewhat rough typography; a nicely bound Mercator Atlas; a "traditional" and a "modern" Latin grammar (for in those days the typography of schoolbooks was a much-debated question); corresponding pages in a good traditional and a cheap mercantile edition of the Danish hymn-book, from which Judichær took so many examples, and which he endeavoured to revise according to the new metrical principles; finally, the title-page of the only book from Judichær's library known to the author: a collection of moral anecdotes and sentences.

The Typography of Modern Danish Periodicals

By Eli Reimer

WHILE the standards of modern Danish typography have been improving in many fields of recent years, no such change is as yet visible in our periodicals. Many of them adhere to a traditional pattern, robbed of any values it may originally have possessed, or display a pell-mell of conflicting typographical principles, with no attempt at harmonizing the type of the headlines, that of the text, and the general get-up of the paper.

The article examines various Danish periodicals in relation to their aims and the type of public they cater for. It begins with an analysis of some professional journals intended for teachers. Periodicals of this kind, catering for a public well accustomed to reading, ought to be characterized by a plain and legible type, a clear make-up, and homogeneous or moderately varied headings. Periodicals which appeal to a public unaccustomed to reading must aim at a different ideal; in such papers, the lay-out ought to be varied and captivating, making it a pleasurable experience merely to look at the print. It should not be forgotten, however, that a genuinely varied typography requires careful planning: it doesn't arise by accident.

Finally, the article examines and criticizes Danish literary reviews.

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On a Special Type of Hymn-Book Cover and Its Origin

By Edward C. J. Wolf

IN a treatise on quaint old bindings, Emil Hannover, the late director of the Copenhagen Museum of Applied Art, described a special style of binding used for certain old hymn-books: On the inside of the front cover a heart was carved out, covered with red paper, and decorated with gold initials and ornaments; the heart was concealed behind two flaps cut out of the end-paper. Books of this type were usually – perhaps invariably – used as betrothment gifts.

Emil Hannover advanced the theory that this type of cover was a Danish invention. In 1940, the author of the present article investigated a large number of Swedish and some Norwegian bindings in the hope of verifying this hypothesis. Later, a visit to the Library of Windsor Castle shook his belief in the theory; it was finally exploded when in 1959 a Dutch binding of this type was discovered in Copenhagen.

A Promising Young Bookbinder

By J. Olsen

WITH the progress of mechanization the place of handwork in bookbinding has suffered a sharp decline. Owing to the low demand for hand-made covers few young bookbinders are given a proper training in this technique; and, in fact, the old craft is only kept alive by a narrow circle of enthusiasts. Of recent years, a gifted young bookbinder, Ole Olsen, has been making an idealistic effort to uphold the traditions of the bookbinding craft.

Ole Olsen, who is 26 years of age, served his apprenticeship in Jakob Baden's bookbinding works (Mogens Wille). As a pupil at the bookbinders' school he undertook tasks outside the normal curriculum and, when he concluded his apprenticeship, was awarded the highest prize of the school and a gold medal for his test piece. As a young journeyman he came under the influence of such able bookbinders as Erik B. Thomsen and Knud Erik Larsen. Later, a book about the French artist Paul Bonet, and an exhibition of French book-covers, fascinated him and inspired much of his subsequent work. He has taken part in several exhibitions and competitions, and received a grant which enabled him to pay a highly fruitful visit to Paris.

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Ole Olsen performs all parts of the work himself, makes his own covering and end paper, and has drawn many of his own decorations; recently, however, he has been working in collaboration with Mrs. Karen Strand, who has drawn the decorations for Johs. V. Jensen's "Aarstiderne" and for Walton and Cotton's "The Compleat Angler". Ole Olsen is a young artist from whom great things may confidently be expected.

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