

# *English summaries*

BY BENT NORDHJEM

## 'GRAFISK CIRKEL' THROUGH TWENTY-FIVE YEARS

BY AAGE WANTZIN

*Grafisk Cirkel* — "The Graphic Circle" — was founded on February 6, 1936, by twelve young craftsmen who were united in a common desire to raise typographical standards, which, in their opinion, were at that time far from satisfactory. Being particularly interested in book production, they agreed on the following programme: Every year each member should produce, at his own expense, twenty-five numbered and signed copies of a book and send one copy to each of the others. Next, each member should set down in writing candid and professional criticisms of the works submitted. Meetings should be held every six months to discuss and comment on these critical papers. Because they felt that newspaper reviews of typographical works were often inadequate and sometimes misleading, the members of the GC decided not to submit their works to the professional reviewers, nor to offer them for sale, directly or indirectly; they would do their work not for profit or personal advertisement, but simply as a means to furthering their own technical proficiency.

However, the books produced under this programme aroused considerable interest, and it was urged that they deserved a wider circulation. After a few years, the Circle therefore decided to admit passive members who, by paying a modest subscription, would receive a copy of all GC publications; this made it possible for the Circle to undertake more ambitious publications and print a few copies for sale in bookshops. The illustrations which accompany this article are all borrowed from publications undertaken jointly by the members. It seems likely that the publications of the Graphic Circle (comprising more than a hundred books) have inspired other workers in the same field, and even that they may have counted for something in the general improvement in Danish typographical standards in recent years.

## MAGIC : A BOOK-COLLECTOR'S TALE

BY H. P. ROHDE

Reading Hans Brøchner's description — in "Erindringer om Søren Kierkegaard" (Memories of S. K.), ed. by Steen Johansen, Gyldendal 1953 — of how, on his first visit to Kierkegaard, he borrowed a copy of Eichendorff's "Dichter und ihre Gesellen", and of how he later acquired the same copy at the auction of Kierkegaard's books, the author vaguely remembered having seen the book in some second-hand bookshop. With some difficulty he finally tracked it down, confidently expecting it to be Brøchner's copy since it is a rather rare work, bought it — and was immediately disappointed: it carried, not Brøchner's name, but that of Anna Thomsen.

However, subsequent investigations revealed that it was undoubtedly Brøchner's copy. First, under the name it carried the date "April 10, 1856": the very day Brøchner bought his copy at the auction. Secondly, the title is not listed in the catalogue of Brøchner's collection, which was sold in 1876. Thirdly, the book carried a wrapper of green glazed paper, exactly like one of the books in the Kierkegaard collection at the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

The author gives an account of Anna Thomsen, daughter of Kierkegaard's cousin Julie Thomsen. He conjectures that she was disappointed when Brøchner married somebody else; describes her later affection for Artur Hazelius, the well-known Swedish museum official, and her tragic illness; and surmises that Anna Thomsen and Brøchner renewed their acquaintance when the latter had become a widower. Brøchner died on December 17, 1875; Anna Thomsen died unmarried on July 31, 1888.

Two blades of grass were inserted between the pages of the book. They seem to mark passages which have some bearing on Brøchner's and Anna Thomsen's situation. The copy does not seem to have been much read; but the cover is worn as if it had often been in somebody's hands.

Together with this copy the author came across P. V. Jacobsen's "Trolldom" (Magic): a drama published anonymously in 1848. He bought this volume too, thinking, " 'Dichter und ihre Gesellen' and 'Magic' — the two of them seem to belong together."



## OFFSET FOR BOOKS

BY ERIK ELLEGAARD FREDERIKSEN

The letterpress process has dominated the field of book-production ever since the invention of printing. It is only during recent decades that the offset process has been gaining ground — primarily for reprints of textbooks, and generally yielding rather unsatisfactory results. It is, however, perfectly possible to improve the quality of offset printing by careful preparation: by the selection of a suitable fount, by better proof-pulling, and by constant supervision of the inking. Photo-setting machines, more concentrated inks, and electronic control: all these are undoubtedly on the way and will help to improve the quality and simplify the process.

Faced with this challenge, letterpress printing has not been marking time: Dow-etching has provided a method for producing whole forms for rotary printing. And yet it may be maintained that while offset has improved its quality, letterpress printing has only increased its speed, and its qualitative lead is constantly being reduced.

For books aimed at a small language community offset will usually be uneconomical. Danish publishers will have either to print coloured plates in large numbers for foreign markets or join in the pools of foreign publishers. By thus reducing costs they may be in a position to afford the proper method of production. It may, of course, be feared that the emergence of a world book market may lead to an undesirable standardisation and that national artists may find it difficult to have their works printed in the same flattering way.

Those who fear the consequences of offset will take comfort in the reflection that for books with an individual character, consisting of straight matter, the letterpress process will always be preferred. But it is more rational to face the offset revolution without prejudices: What seems imperfect today may become perfect tomorrow; he who seeks quality should not carp at methods but judge results.

## SOME ILLUSTRATED OVID EDITIONS

BY JAN GARFF

No ancient writer has had so many illustrators as Ovid. In 1957, on the occasion of the poet's bimillenary, The Royal Library in Copenhagen, which possesses several hundred old editions of Ovid, exhibited a selection of these, together with copies from other libraries. The article lists some of the more important editions and some of their derivatives.

Ovidian illustration soon developed into a traditional art; this is especially true of the *Metamorphoses*, with which the following lines are exclusively concerned. The oldest printed edition with illustrations which we know is a Dutch one, with woodcuts, from 1484; this work, and a Venetian edition which appeared 13 years later, formed the basis for all Ovid publications in the Netherlands and Italy throughout the next half-century; and the woodcuts in German and French editions from the same period are merely free versions of the same illustrations. The first and only independent German edition of the 16th century appeared in Mainz in 1545; in 1553 one of the finest Ovid editions ever published appeared in Venice, and 8 years later another original edition came out in the same city, similarly with woodcuts. About the middle of the century two basic woodcut editions were published in France; the more important one was Bernard Salomon's 1557 edition, which was soon imitated, e.g. in the German *Virgil Solis* edition, to which the illustrations were long attributed.

Until the middle of the 16th century all illustrated Ovid editions are xylographic. Then, gradually, copperplates and etchings gain ground. The Oxford edition of 1632, with S. Savery's prints after F. Clein, introduces a mixture of the two techniques. In contrast to earlier editions, the illustrations in this work form a kind of pictorial table of contents to each of the fifteen books. The most important and, in the matter of illustrations, most comprehensive Ovid edition of the 17th century appeared in Paris in 1676, with 226 etchings by F. Chauveau and Sébastien le Clerc. It is characteristic of the artists of that century that they paraphrase Ovid rather than illustrate him.

Towards the end of the 17th century there is a marked decline in the number of Ovid editions. The most important contribution of the following century was a four-volume edition (Paris 1767-71) with copperprints, including works by François Boucher, who departs from the classical tradi-



tion in strongly emphasising the erotic element. Subsequent Ovidian illustrators often adopt a pseudo-heroic style, or no style at all.

### A COSMOPOLITAN COLLECTOR OF BOOKS

BY POUL LINNEBALLE

Among Danish private libraries, that of Tage Bull, the minister, was remarkable for its consistent emphasis on craftsmanship: it consisted mainly of books printed on special paper and bound by the best bookbinders (most of them French). It was also remarkable for consisting almost exclusively of foreign literature: partly because, as a diplomat, Tage Bull spent most of his life abroad, partly because of his European orientation. Though his interests were wide, his preference for the 18th century is evident. The French section can boast famous editions of La Fontaine, Molière, and Voltaire; it also includes fine editions of the romantics, e. g. Nodier and Gautier. English literature is also well represented, with excellent editions of Addison, Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Burton, Dryden, and Pope. German, Spanish, Italian, and Latin books form smaller sections in the library. Tage Bull specialised in Casanova: his knowledge of this controversial soldier of fortune was equal to that of the greatest experts. He possessed a considerable collection of treatises on Casanova's life and works, and many extremely rare Casanova editions. The library contains a section devoted to prominent pornographers, especially Nerciat, and including a splendid copy of "My Secret Life", printed only in 7 copies. The provenance of the books is often interesting: there are items from the libraries of Edward Gibbon, Talleyrand, the Goncourts, and Nodier. Most of Tage Bull's books were purchased at auctions and from secondhand booksellers in Paris. He also had most of them bound in Paris, by Yseux, Huser, Thierry-Simier, Lortic, etc. Thus, a Danish cosmopolitan and scholar succeeded in creating a private library to which it would be difficult, or impossible, to find a parallel anywhere.

*Forening for Boghaandværks publikation nr. 1 for 1961. Bogvennen er sat med Linotype Baskerville. Papiret er specialfabrikeret af Silkeborg Papirfabrik. Omslaget er Old Kentucky Linen fra Crone & Møller. Clicheerne er udført i F. Hendriksens Eftf.s Reproduktionsatelier. Den typografiske tilrettelæggelse havde Erik Ellegaard Frederiksen. Sat, trykt og indbundet i A. Rasmussens Bogtrykkeri, Ringkjøbing.*













Gyldendals  
Forlagstrykkeri  
København