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Small bookplates – Servants of a great cause
[*Kleines exlibris – Diener eines grossen zieles*]
Sammler-Express, December 1954, Volume 8, Issue 23, p.371

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April 2003
(Minor editorial changes, February 2008)

SMALL BOOKPLATES - SERVANTS OF A GREAT CAUSE

The Latin word *Ex-libris* means *from the books of*; it is understood that these are labels, such as bookplates, book crests, library marks, or book-owners' marks. Most often, these labels say, simply, *my book*, *this book belongs to*, or *from the library of*. As with stamp collectors, topics or themes attracts many bookplate collectors.

Topical collecting is especially popular because a complete collection of bookplates is simply not possible. As a result, collectors limit themselves to collecting bookplates in various categories. Particulars on building and valuing a bookplate collection may be found in a contribution to the August, 1954 issue of this magazine entitled *On collecting bookplates by topic*, which will also give you an insight into the creations of many bookplate artists.

The *Ex-libris Pragensibus Adolf Malý* [*From the Prague books of Adolf Malý*], an aquatint full of atmosphere, done by the Czech graphic artist Pavel Simon in 1946, appears to us like a charming greeting from the Golden City. This bookplate is found especially in books that report on the city of Prague, or rather, allude to life in Prague. In the same manner, there are bookplates that refer to other beautiful cities; for example, Gianni Mantero possesses a fine wood engraving done by the Milanese artist Italo Zetti, for his Florentine books: *Ad usum Florentinos libros*. There are also examples of bookplates conceived for one book only: the etching by K.O. Speth, *Dr. Willy Tropp zu eigen* [*Owned by Dr. Willy Tropp*] (1921), shows a scene from Cervantes' famous book *Don Quixote*.

Two pretty children's bookplates are the woodcut by Ernst Grünewald, of Bremen, which he made for his son Klaus, as well as the Dutchman Rozendaal's bookplate for Bianca Strens. The two striking faces on this bookplate stand on their heads - we see them over and over! In the original, this astonishing work is put into relief by coloured diagonal lines that alternate, respectively, between brown/white, red/white, and green/white. The lines touch and cross over two portraits that are exact, but inverted, copies of one another.

Typographic Bookplates, set with modern type and decorations, can give the collector no less joy of possession than the expensive original graphic plates. Unfortunately, such - often multi-coloured - prints constitute a rarity in the bookplate market. Here, two examples that represent the name of the book owner should be mentioned: the so-called *redende Blaetter* [*speaking prints*], made for Heinz Loewe (in the original, the lion appears in a different colour); [Translator's note: *Loewe*, the man's family name, means *Lion* in German.] and the Edith Halberstam bookplate were both manufactured from left over printing paper!

Thus, the topical possibilities open to the bookplate collector are far from exhausted, though there is insufficient space here to show examples of all of them. One is reminded, for example, of earlier, abundant heraldic bookplates (coats-of-arms). Often, the Grim Reaper is portrayed in these bookplates. Such bookplates, with death in the design, can produce a rich topical collection.

Books have their destiny - Donors' bookplates or memorial bookplates refer to book donors who mark the occasion of a gift by giving instructions that the book be marked with a lasting sign of its origin. We seldom come across such donors' bookplates; on the other hand, they are widespread in foreign countries.

The Areté press in Copenhagen recently donated to the writer of this article an issue of their *Exlibris* series, entitled *International Bookplate Art* which was published in March this year. The month of March has particular significance as a symbol of Danish-Soviet friendship. This issue was published in an edition of 150 numbered copies, as were its predecessors. It contains ten pasted inserts, of which the bookplate for Ruth Schwartz is shown here. Emmerik Remmer wrote the foreword. The text is in Danish, to which a French and German summary are attached, in which the conclusion states:

The exchange of small graphic art is responsible for an important connection among peoples, and it can help fulfil the dream of humanity: the wish for peace. Persons with different outlooks and different languages who can still feel the bond of friendship serve the cause of peace through these exchanges. Because where persons speak with each other, weapons are silent. So do they see that the small bookplate serves a great goal: peace.

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