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JOHN RYDER (LONDON)

## THE OFFICINA BODONI

Some notes towards a proper understanding of the work  
of Dr. Giovanni Mardersteig, master-printer and scholar-publisher of Verona,  
and how this work became known in England

Giovanni Mardersteig was born in Weimar in 1892, became co-editor of *Genius*, a journal of modern art, in 1919, and set up his printing and publishing enterprise, the Officina Bodoni, at Montagnola in 1922. The Officina was moved to Verona in 1927, and in 1948 he established the Stamperia Valdonega, a mechanised printing works which he continues to control in addition to the hand-press on which, by the end of 1970, more than 150 editions had been printed.

Between 1954 and 1965 major exhibitions of the work of Mardersteig were shown in Antwerp, Hamburg, London, Brussels, The Hague, Munich, Verona, Milan, Florence, Venice, Lugano and Berne—and catalogues in the appropriate languages were issued. We owe this wide viewing of books from The Officina Bodoni to Luc Indestege who persuaded Mardersteig to have the first exhibition at Antwerp in 1954. Certainly in England the catalogue for the exhibition held in the British Museum (*Officina Bodoni, Verona: Catalogue of Books printed on the Hand Press*, Verona 1954) was, and still is, the most important record of the Press in which 103 editions were listed. The catalogue reprinted with an Italian text, for a series of exhibitions in Italy in 1962 lists 117 editions, and at the Stamperia Valdonega, where all the catalogues have been printed, an up-to-date record is kept.

When Giovanni Mardersteig came to London for the opening of his exhibition in 1954 he was already a well-known visitor but most of his books were not so well known. *The Times Literary Supplement*, commenting on the exhibition, said: "... because most of his books have been produced on the hand-press in strictly limited editions they are not often seen in this country." Two notable exceptions were books printed in the mid 1920's for

Elkin Mathews. These were Horace Walpole's *Hieroglyphic Tales* (No. 17, 1926) and Chesterfield's *Poetical Works* (No. 19, 1927). Of this latter book I bought in 1961 a copy for £2 and in 1971 a copy in comparable state for £20. And the first of Mardersteig's facsimiles of sixteenth century writing books, *The Calligraphic Models of Arrighi* (No. 15, 1926) has an introduction by Stanley Morison and was distributed in London by the bookseller J. and E. Bumpus Ltd. A few copies of this book were available from Bumpus at the end of the 1940's at the original price of £4 4s but now it is hard to find a copy at any price.

As will be seen from the exhibition catalogue, during the second half on the 1920's many books were issued with English texts. This points to Mardersteig's affinity with England long ago established and ever since maintained. The following abridged entries from the catalogue make a clear demonstration:

- 12. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*
- 15. Morison: Arrighi facsimile
- 15a. (Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*—an excerpt made as a type specimen)
- 16. Plato's *Crito* in English
- 19. Chesterfield's *Poetical Works*
- 20. Morison: Moyllus facsimile
- 24. Mardersteig: *The Pastonchi Face*
- 26. Morison: Brun facsimile
- 27. Anon: *Reed to River*
- 29. Morison: Celebrino facsimile
- 30. Mardersteig's *The Officina Bodoni*
- 32. Hewlett's *Madonna of the Peach-Tree*
- 33. Morison: Mercator facsimile

In 1927, in the middle of this period of printing many books in English, Mardersteig agreed to print for the Italian Government

the complete works of Gabriele d'Annunzio. He moved the press from Montagnola to Verona and set up a printing office inside the factory of Arnaldo Mondadori. The last of the forty-nine volumes was not completed until 1935 when he accepted an invitation to work at the printing house of William Collins in Glasgow. During his year's work there the Fontana typeface was made.

After starting the d'Annunzio volumes and before his year at Glasgow Mardersteig took time off in 1932, spent it in London and married Irmi Kraye, the sister of Gustav Kraye, a young artist who was for two years a voluntary worker at the Press with Giovanni Mardersteig. Furthermore, his close association with Stanley Morison was begun in 1925. The five reproductions of writing manuals published between 1926 and 1930 were all edited by Morison whose introductions were printed in English. The association was lifelong and after Morison's death, Giovanni Mardersteig dedicated his *Pietro Bembo on Etna* (No. 150, 1969) to him. Mardersteig's more recent studies of the geometrically constructed roman alphabets of Felice Feliciano and Francesco Torniello were both written by him. The Feliciano book, *Alphabetum Romanum* (No. 113, 1960) is a rare example in Officina Bodoni publishing in which the text was the result of his own researches, he was the designer of the type and he also did the printing. A whole-page review by Prof. Charles Mitchell appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*. The English text edition of Feliciano's Alphabet was distributed by William Collins in 1960 and that of Torniello by The Bodley Head in 1971.

In England between 1923 and 1954 there were two sources of information on scholarly printing and publishing; *The Fleuron*, seven issues between 1923 and 1930; *Signature*, thirty-three issues between 1935 and 1954. In the wealth of information these two journals provided only in the last issue of *The Fleuron* is the Officina Bodoni mentioned. A review of *Andres Brun* (No. 26, 1928) also appeared in this issue. Throughout the com-

plete thirty-three issues of *Signature*, edited by Oliver Simon, no book printed at Officina Bodoni was ever reviewed, and Mardersteig as a printer-publisher was never once mentioned. And in Oliver Simon's autobiography "Hans Mardersteig" is once referred to as the editor of *Genius* but never as a printer or printer-publisher.

Two accounts of his Press appeared in English. The first, Mardersteig's own book,



*Blocking device for bindings*

*The Officina Bodoni: the operation of a hand-press during the first six years of its work* (No. 30, 1929), and the second, Friedrich Ewald's article, "The Officina Bodoni", published in *The Fleuron*, No. VII, 1930, edited by Stanley Morison. There were 200 copies of Mardersteig's book in English and 1210 copies of *The Fleuron*. There are no references in *Signature* to Mardersteig as a printer-publisher but in the fourth issue, November 1936, there is an article on the calligraphic studies of Stanley Morison in which the author writes: "At this point we may make a passing reference to the production of Morison's books." But only the Cambridge University Press is named, and no references at all to the books printed by Mardersteig. And in the accompanying list of books, under the heading Calligraphy, although no printers or towns of printing origin are mentioned, the entry for *Mercator* (No. 33, 1930) has in it the mysterious word "Verona". The tail of the entry reads: "De Sikkell, Antwerp; Pegasus Press, Paris. Verona, 1930." Two articles about Mardersteig, both by Harry Carter, did appear in *Signature*. The first was a note on Collin's Fontana



type and the second concerned itself with the design of a new Tauchnitz edition.

For the March 1937 issue of *Signature*, Vivian Ridler compiled a list of “printers, printing schools, typographers, publishers” whose work was to be sought after and assembled in the John Johnson collection, a sanctuary of printing at the University Press, Oxford. Included in the list of 180 names were:

Cock Robin  
Essex House  
Fanfrolico  
Herrin News Shop  
Lane  
Printing Schools, various

but there was no mention of our subject and his Press. Whatever the reason for this omission, it shows that the famous Press at Verona was not, in England in 1937, one which readily came to mind even though, in addition to the complete works of d’Annunzio, at least 38 other books were printed and that 17 of them were done in English.

Another possible source of information might have been the “Book production notes” regularly contributed to the *London Mercury* by Bernard Newdigate between 1920 and 1937. But in Joseph Thorp’s selection we find no reference to the Officina Bodoni and only onereference to the original printer at Parma: “Bodoni more than any one else gave us the ‘modern’ types which were... rightly banned by Morris for their ugliness...” However, Newdigate, in *The Art of the Book*, 1938, reproduced the title-page of *L’Oleandro* by Gabriele d’Annunzio (No. 37, 1936) and includes a note on the current activities of Mardersteig. Fontana and Zeno typefaces are shown but the note itself is not too confidence-inspiring in that Bellinzona is named as the first location of the Press although Montagnola is given in all the colophons. About the typefaces from Parma he says: “By favour of the Government of Italy he was able to use the punches cut by Bodoni late in the eighteenth century, and with the

types cast from them he printed at a hand-press a magnificent series of books.” The “ugliness” of Bodoni types previously referred to seems to have been forgotten: Newdigate certainly did know that types are cast from matrices—not punches—even if he did not know that Mardersteig borrowed matrices from Parma.

That concludes my list of English references before the exhibition of 1954 except for Raffaello Bertieri’s article on Italian typography in the first issue of *The Dolphin*, 1933, which mentions the existence of a d’Annun-



Device (No. 2, 1923) printed red

zio edition without naming the printer. However, I should say that Hermann Hesse wrote about the Press at Montagnola and about Mardersteig’s first publications in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* in 1923. This is the article to which Julius Rodenberg referred in his *Deutsche Pressen* in 1925. The German novelist, Hermann Hesse, was a neighbour and friend of Giovanni Mardersteig and his newspaper *feuilleton* is worthy of notice. But first I should like to mention that in 1928 Julius Rodenberg together with Oliver Simon published an illustrated survey of book design in Europe and in the United States since the First World War. In it there is no mention of the



Officina Bodoni, and when Rodenberg came to publish his last book *Größe und Grenzen der Typographie* (Stuttgart, 1959) once more we find no mention of the Officina Bodoni.

To return to Hesse, my search for this newspaper *feuilleton* ended when I received a xerox copy from Chicago University Library. I had asked for help from the Newberry Library and through James Wells I received this xerox together with a typed transcription. I had a translation made and read Hesse's note for the first time—just forty-seven years after its publication. I have now received a separate printing of the article made by Jacob Hegner, a booklet of sixteen pages done shortly after the *feuilleton* appeared on 4 November 1923.

In his article Hesse wrote: "... a few months ago a new printing press came into existence which achieves quality work of the first order." He then mentions the first four published books of the Press which are works by Poliziano, Michelangelo, Goethe and Shelley, and then continues: "The intrinsic value of the achievement lies not in the editorial skill but in the craftsmanship." Of course Mardersteig's editorial skills have since become especially evident in the many books to which he has added notes or introductions.

Hesse continued and elaborated his claim for the excellence of his printer-friend's craftsmanship: "The arrangement of the setting, page by page, is the subject of long consultations and countless trials ... a first trial proof is pulled whereby the minimum pressure is exerted. This trial proof may look perfect to the layman, and possibly there are no mistakes to be seen which may not also be found in any other book."

Hermann Hesse made a number of references to Giambattista Bodoni to explain the title *Officina Bodoni* and to describe Mardersteig's inheritance. "This man [G. B. Bodoni] sang, piped, danced and built through the medium of letter forms!" He thought Mardersteig a worthy successor because the value of his work relied "purely on the dignity and

the charm of perfect craftsmanship". At this time the sole and exclusive types were of G. B. Bodoni and on this issue Hesse wrote: "... a part of its [the Officina's] merit is due to the alphabets of the old Bodoni." To Hesse, Mardersteig was "a worthy and continuously creative successor" whose ideal was to be expressed in "the honest and successful striving towards perfection". What has happened since 1923 must have astonished even Hermann Hesse. Certainly one aspect of development at Montagnola and at Verona was foretold by Hesse and that is Marder-



*Device (No. 19, 1927) printed black*

steig's adherence to "the dignity and charm of perfect craftsmanship" in the design and execution of all his printing and in the design and production of his types. Hesse would have found the greatest delight in a recent and austere facsimile edition of the original Bodoni's *Manuale Tipografico* of 1788 which Mardersteig introduced and published in 1968. Unlike Bodoni's later specimen book,



*Device used on letterpaper*

issued by his widow in 1818, this *Manuale* has an abstract purity much in keeping with Mardersteig's own work. It is a specimen book of letters which allows the letters to speak for themselves, not letters in isolation

but in their natural arrangement in the making of words and sentences.

After 1954 the exhibition catalogue became the chief source of information in English on the work of the Officina Bodoni. This catalogue lists 103 titles. It does not include any volumes of the National Edition of d'Annunzio. The 1954 catalogue, as mentioned above, has been revised and printed in sev-



Device (No. 24, 1928) printed blue

eral languages. *Goethes Urworte, Orphisch* (a trial printing of 8 pages) appears in later catalogues before what has earlier been referred to as the first book, Poliziano, *Orphei Tragedia*. The Goethe is described as the first proof of the Press and was included at Luc Indestegé's request. A second proof was made but does not appear in any list or catalogue so far discovered. This was Nietzsche, *Zwei Reden Zarathustras*, 1923. My information comes from Robert Elwell, New York. Of the first proof only ten copies were pulled and of the second, only twelve copies. Also in 1923 a trial setting in Bodoni was made of a prose poem by Maurice de Guérin, *Les Bruits de la Nature*. Mardersteig did not like this setting. He printed only four or five copies one of which is owned by James Laughlin of New York. Many years later he included this text in *Poèmes en Prose* (No. 101, 1954) using his own typeface, Griffo, in its second state of cutting. Then in 1926 a first specimen of Bodoni's Cuneo type was made—Sterne, *An Excerpt from a Sentimental Journey*. There were twenty-five copies of this small book, bound in marbled-paper boards with a white paper label on the spine. This title appears in the

1929 list but not the 1954 catalogue or any of its revisions. And the Machiavelli, *La vita di Castruccio da Lucca*, which appears as the last book in the 1929 list, Giovanni Mardersteig tells me was never issued. It is described as the first specimen of 16 point Bembo type, "Five copies each on different hand-made laid and wove papers".

To return to the Laurence Sterne (No. 15a, 1926) for a moment, it would be a pity to lose track of this type specimen which has a bearing of some importance on Giovanni Mardersteig's interest in England or, as he names it, the heroic island. Stanley Morison visited him in Montagnola at Christmastime in 1925 and Mardersteig planned to visit London early in 1926. The Sterne specimen in Cuneo was printed shortly before the Horace Walpole book for Elkin Mathews referred above. It has the usual kind of colophon with its press-mark and the following words: "This is one of twenty-five copies printed by hand in the month of May 1926 at the Officina Bodoni, Montagnola Switzerland." On the preceding page is a longer notice under the heading "colophon". Mardersteig was clearly in a state of disappointment over the postponement of a visit to England due to the General Strike. The message reads: "A journey, it would seem, is at the mercy of political factions; not to sentiment, which is the motive of all good journeys. In a sentiment of admiring affection for the heroic island where I hoped to journey—when railway wheels should move again—this greeting was printed with Giambattista Bodoni's twelve point type 'Cuneo', here used for the first time since his death. H. M."

Was this specimen a "greeting" to someone in England whom he was prevented from seeing at an appointed time? Of course the main point revealed in the colophon is the deflection of his intended journey to London by chance circumstances. The end of the Montagnola period was approaching, Mardersteig had already shown a leaning towards anglophilia, and he had met and was being influenced by Morison and Holroyd-Reece,



owner of the Pegasus Press in Paris. A visit to London at that time might have provided a very different change from the one which actually took place—namely the printing of the Italian National edition of d'Annunzio at Verona. The Officina Bodoni was firmly established in Via Marsala, Verona, by the time Mardersteig spent two months in London in 1932 and so his return to Verona was assured.

Perhaps one reason why the extra “colophon” to *Sterne* is of special interest lies in its echo of an event in the life of G. B. Bodoni. Bodoni, born at Saluzzo in 1740, worked for eight years in the Vatican at the Propaganda Fide. An interest in the work of John Baskerville had already been aroused and the young Bodoni left Rome in 1766 for England, with the intention of visiting Baskerville at Birmingham. However, malaria forced him to delay the journey and to return home to Saluzzo. Before he could decide to set off again for England he accepted the job of establishing and directing a new Stamperia Ducale at Parma where he remained until his death in 1813. This chance circumstance deflected Bodoni's typographical interest from Baskerville to Pierre-Simon Fournier. It was with Fournier's types that Bodoni began to print and it was on Fournier's designs that Bodoni modelled his first types although the Baskerville influence was always present and even became stronger as Bodoni cut more types. In all, he cut over 25 000 punches and his legacy, now to be found in the Museo Bodoniano, Parma, included over 50 000 matrices. The chance cancellation of his journey to Birmingham may indeed have been momentous. The entire output might have been more closely based upon the work of John Baskerville.

The exhibition catalogue, in its present form, does not always give certain details which interest the collector. A number of binding styles have been developed but no information on bindings is given. Giovanni Mardersteig says that the printing is more important, but this does not make the bind-

ing unimportant and variant bindings should be noted. Another detail which interests collectors is the numbering of copies. Adriana Ramelli in her Gutenberg Jahrbuch article, 1955, referring to *Primum Pactum Confoederationis Helveticae* (No. 13, 1925), wrote: “This magnificent edition was done for the Society of Swiss Bibliophiles which explains the numbering of the copies which is not to be found in any other work printed at Montagnola. Only later did Mardersteig number copies to help the whim of bibliophiles and also, perhaps above all, to make it possible to follow the adventurous destiny of certain copies.” Amongst the writings about the Officina Bodoni, the Ramelli article has some standing but if a definitive catalogue is made it should be mentioned that the Officina Bodoni had this book in preparation for issue under his own imprint when the Society asked Mardersteig if he would print a book



*Device (No. 26, 1928) printed red*

for them. He proposed this Rütli Pact text with translations and the Society agreed. As to the numbering, somewhat roughly done by hand, this was added by the Society. Although Mardersteig did not number the books he produced at Montagnola, the people for whom he printed did. Of the two books he printed for Frederic Warde, the *Crito* (No. 16, 1926) was neatly numbered by hand. And of the two books printed for Elkin Mathews one title, the *Chesterfield* (No. 19, 1927), was



numbered in England by hand in an unsightly manner, at the side of the colophon rather than below it.

After the Press's removal to Verona numbering became usual. The first book to my knowledge to have each copy numbered in type was the Brun writing book facsimile (No. 26, 1928). A numbering machine was used for the English text edition of *The Officina Bodoni* (No. 30, 1929). The numbers usually appear at the foot of the colophon page—which normally backs the first blank leaf after the end of the text; but occasionally the numbering appears elsewhere as in Ovid's *Amores* (No. 35, 1932) in which a leaf bearing the printed number precedes the title-page. Several editions printed for private distribution have not been numbered. For instance the *Carmie Favole del Lago di Garda* printed for the marriage of his son Martino to Gabriella Tasin in an edition of 222 copies is un-numbered as was *In die Festo Natalis*, an edition of 160 copies printed for Alberto Falck (No. 146, 1968) and also the *Lo Alfabeto delli Villani* (No. 151, 1969) printed for the wedding of Alberto Falck. Two keepsakes for Gallery 303, New York, are not numbered but on the verso of the title of the John Dreyfus account of Mardersteig's work (No. 135, 1966) a limitation is printed: "135 copies", and in a similar position on the title verso of *On G.B. Bodoni's Type Faces* (No. 145, 1968) is printed: "200 copies". In the case of this latter example a definitive catalogue may well modify the "200" to 80 copies actually printed although a reprint was subsequently made of 50 copies on Cernobbio paper.

To return to the *Ovid* mentioned above, this is a special book in that it has a great many finely drawn calligraphic initials executed by Claudio Bonacini after letters designed by Giovanni Mardersteig. Neither the catalogue nor the colophon name Bonacini who also drew initials for the book of Leonardo Giustinian's poems and songs (No. 68, 1945). In the colophon to Ovid's *Heroides* (No. 99, 1953) the printers of the book are named and Mardersteig appears as

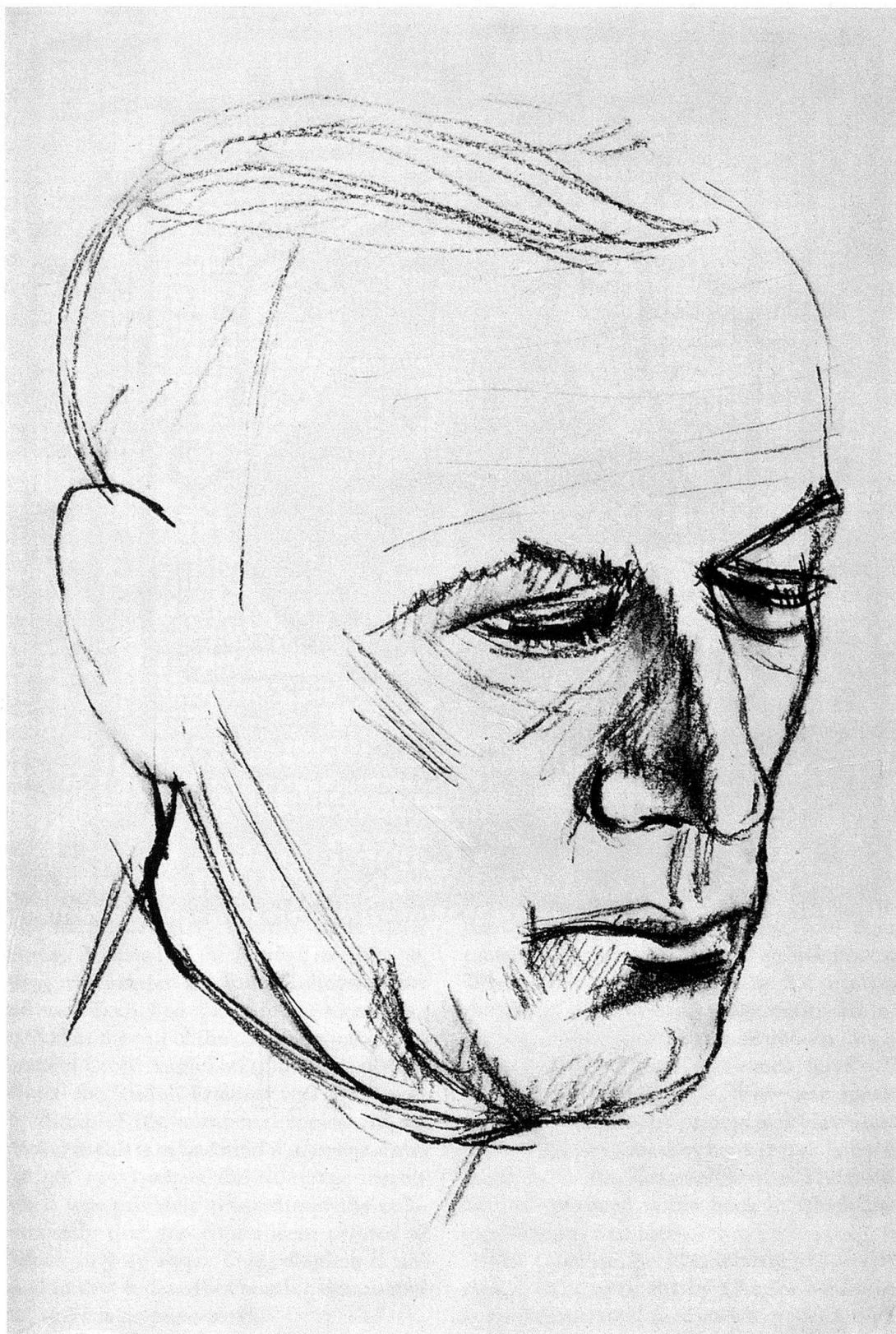
"Johannis Mardersteig"—the colophon is printed in Latin. This example of named printers in the colophon is not unique for the names Mario Facincani and Rino Grazioli appear in *Alphabetum Romanum* (No. 113, 1960) together with the name of the hand-colourist, Ameglio Trivella, and the colophon to the poems of Dylan Thomas (No. 90, 1949) reads: "... printed in Griffio type by Hans Mardersteig on the hand-press ...". The naming of a lithographic printer like Fornasetti was not uncommon amongst the illustrated books but Mardersteig's own name is not to be expected except as the designer of the typeface in which the book is set.

Concerning the press-marks, of which there are many variations, certain remarks were made in *The Officina Bodoni* (No. 30, 1929) on their precise uses. Mardersteig also noted the origin of the mark: "... a circle surmounted by a double-barred cross, a symbolic representation of the globe with the emblem of the Christian faith." To this basic design has been added a personal attribute, the bull's horns, from the sign of the Zodiac under which Mardersteig was born. Also, in the past, initials of the Press and of the printer have been added but are no longer in common use. Most of the colophons to Officina Bodoni books end with one of the press-marks. And the simplest form of the mark has sometimes been employed in watermarks and on bindings from 1923 to the present time. I would like to propose a definitive catalogue in which the press-mark of the colophon is shown against each entry in its correct colour and also, wherever applicable, the device on the binding board and in the paper as a watermark. Some of the press-

#### CAPTIONS FOR THE TWO FOLLOWING PAGES

1 Giovanni Mardersteig by Kurt Craemer (*Positano*, 1960).

2 Mardersteig's New Year card of 1968, showing detail from the pavement of an old Christian basilica below the foundations of the Biblioteca Capitolare, Verona.





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marks are shown in these pages and the references given in each case are to one specific use, but of course many of the marks have been repeatedly used in a variety of colours.

It would also be interesting to know, in both early and later works of the Press, just how much influence on points of design has been brought to bear on the Officina Bodoni by the publishers who have been its customers. Whilst the two bindings for Frederic Warde are clearly Mardersteig influenced some of those done for Holroyd-Reece do not appear to be so. In the binding of a recent book made for Harvard College Library the title, *Ippolito e Lionora*, reads down the spine, and this is one of the rare breakings of Mardersteig's rule that lettering on the spine should read upwards from tail to head. It was done at the special request of the publisher at Harvard. An earlier example is in the binding, a printed paper label also reading down the spine, of Dylan Thomas's *Poems* (No. 90, 1949).

Almost one third of the first hundred titles from the Officina Bodoni were private editions and in addition to this number eight more titles were printed for an Italian bibliophile society, "I Cento Amici del Libro, Firenze". In the catalogue private editions are simply called "private editions" but the colophons usually name the person for whom the books were printed. An early private edition was the *Arrighi* (No. 15, 1926) where the title-page states: Privately Printed for Frederic Warde. *Madonna of the Peach-Tree* (No. 32, 1929) was printed for John Holroyd-Reece and each book had the name of a recipient printed at the tail of the colophon page. The *Sonette* of Cecco Angiolieri (No. 60, 1944) was printed for Rudolf Freiherr von Simolin in an edition of 165 numbered copies. An exception to this is to be found in *Carmina Amico* (No. 36, 1932) where the title-page merely says it was privately printed and the colophon only that 100 copies were printed at Verona in July 1932. This colophon is unusual in that it describes binding details and that there is no press-mark.

The first book printed for "I Cento Amici del Libro, Firenze" was Tasso's *Aminta* (No. 42, 1939). This Italian text of Tasso's fable was illustrated with etchings by Chiappelli and was the second book to be printed in Mardersteig's first typeface, Griffio. Up to the present time twenty books have been made for the book club at Florence the founding of which, in 1939 by Tammara de Marinis, was of special importance to the Officina Bodoni whose usual exports were suddenly cancelled at the outbreak of war.

A good deal of valuable information concerning Giovanni Mardersteig as a type-designer is to be found in both catalogues and colophons. He designed three text types, Griffio, Zeno and Dante; two titling founts, Dante and Pacioli; and supervised the cutting of Fontana, a text type for Collins of Glasgow, after a design from the old foundry of Alexander Wilson. Specimen printings of these types are not so easy to find, but I must define three kinds of specimens before describing any of them.

For Griffio, Zeno and Dante the first specimens were made by the punch-cutter, Charles Malin, of Paris. These working proofs, known as smokes, are of individual letters and such proofs tend not to survive. The punches and smokes of certain letters were shown at the British Museum exhibition in 1954. Smokes are made by holding the punch in a candle flame until the surface of the letter is coated with carbon and then pressing the carbon deposit into soft paper. The second specimen, made by the printer, shows individual letters and letters in combination to form words and sentences. Such specimens are shown in Franco Riva's *Il Libro Italiano, 1800-1965*. Very few specimens of this kind were printed and I have not yet located any, but they have certainly been made for Griffio, Zeno and Dante. The third kind of specimen is the book in which the typeface was first used.

The punches for Mardersteig's type design, Griffio, were cut by Charles Malin in 1929. Mardersteig used as his model a type

of Aldus from Bembo's *De Aetna* (Venice, 1495) which had been cut by Francesco Griffo. The model for the italic was one of Griffo's late alphabets cut for Soncino at Fano. This first Officina Bodoni type made its public appearance in 1939 when a 16 point size was used for a thirty-five copies edition of *Due Episodi della Vita di Felice Feliciano* (No. 41, 1939). After the war some letters were revised and a "second state" of Griffo was established in Rudolf Hagelstange's *Die Elemente* (No. 91, 1950).

The second typeface, Zeno, was designed in roman only by Mardersteig in 1931 and cut by Malin in 1935-36. The first specimen, again in the 16 point size, was Lorenzo Montano's *San Zeno* (No. 38, 1937). Revisions were also made to Zeno and a second state was shown in *The Gospels* (No. 117, 1962). Two years later a definitive state of this second design appeared in a new printing of Montano's *San Zeno* (No. 121, 1964).

The third typeface, Dante, was again cut by Malin from roman and italic drawings by Mardersteig and first appeared in 10 and 12 point sizes in Boccaccio's *Trattatello in Laude di Dante* (No. 102, 1955). Titling founts were added and the Dante design was later made available for machine composition by the Monotype Corporation.

A valuable aid to bibliographers of the Officina Bodoni, and to any critical appraisal of its work, would be to have from the Press a small book on the types that have been used. Such a book should include a showing of the several founts of G. B. Bodoni which have appeared in Officina Bodoni books and also reprints of the specimens of Griffo, Zeno and Dante. Brief notes on his choice of models and on his direction of the cutting and recutting of the punches would add to our understanding of typographic changes at the Press. The casting of the types for hand composition is a process which is likely to be completely forgotten unless it is documented now and the choice of papers for particular founts might profitably be demonstrated on the actual paper wherever such material is

still available. The typographical value of this specimen book would be inestimable amongst collectors and scholars, and it would, of course, tell us something about Mardersteig's choice of paper and his dealings with a number of mills.

If published prices are not always to be given in a definitive catalogue at least annotations to certain books might include this information and compare it with known auction figures. Dylan Thomas's *Twenty-Six Poems* (No. 90, 1949), published at £5 may now fetch £350 or more. It is also likely that the few editions signed by Giovanni Mardersteig will eventually exchange hands at high prices. Several of the poetry books are signed by the authors but few by the printer. Pushkin's *Il Cavaliere di Bronzo* (No. 141, 1968) and MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle* (No. 152, 1969) are exceptions in that they are signed by the printer.

In my search so far for collections of Officina Bodoni books one or two responses have drawn attention to items not included in the official catalogue. I have already mentioned certain trial proofs and type specimens. In addition to these Mardersteig's work on the journal *Genius* from 1919 to 1921 should be taken into account. With Carl Georg Heise, Mardersteig edited 3 volumes each of 2 parts for Kurt Wolff at Leipzig. The work was planned to cover 4 years but Mardersteig's health and also the economic difficulties experienced in the early 1920's brought *Genius* to an end before certain notable artists like Picasso had been adequately treated. Some of the Stamperia Valdona books like the 100-copies edition of Lorenzo Montano's *Pagine Inedite*, are close to the hand-press books. This particular book might well have a note under Montano's *Zeno* (No. 38, 1937 and No. 121, 1964) already referred to.

One of my correspondents, Professor Charles Mitchell, listed, as a part of his collection, certain New Year cards which he has personally received from the scholar-printer at Verona. It was always my intention to declare these cards because I regard

ZENO C. 16 e 14

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IN PRINCIPIO ERA IL  
VERBO, E IL VERBO ERA  
PRESSO DIO, ED ERA  
DIO IL VERBO.

In principio era il Verbo, e il  
Verbo era presso Dio, ed era  
Dio il Verbo. Era questi in prin-  
cipio presso Dio. Le cose tutte  
furono fatte per mezzo di lui, e  
senza di lui nulla fu fatto  
di quanto esiste.

IN PRINCIPIO ERA IL VERBO,  
E IL VERBO ERA PRESSO DIO,  
ED ERA DIO IL VERBO.

*A specimen of Mardersteig's Zeno type (definitive state)*



them with special relevance to the Officina Bodoni's publishing programme. My own collection dates from 1955 to the present time.

The first card I have is not dated, but I think it is 1955. It shows a Bruno Brumanti re-cutting of one of Bartolomeo di Giovanni's woodcuts which was later to appear in *The Gospels* (No. 117, 1962). The next card includes Martino's name and reproduces a decoration by Feliciano. Letters and decorations by Feliciano also appear on the cards for 1959, 1961 and 1964. In 1948 two cards were issued. One has a Campigli illustration from Marco Polo's *Il Milione* (No. 56, 1942) and the other has a display of Dante Titling. Both are imprinted with "Officina Bodoni and Stamperia Valdonega" in place of the usual family names. It was the year of the founding of the machine press.

The decoration used on the 1960 card was an arrangement of border units which later appeared on the slipcase for *The Gospels* and in 1964, in a smaller size, on the title-page of a Valdonega Press book. Another Valdonega link was made on the 1968 card by reproducing in colour the mosaic from the Biblioteca Capitolare, Verona, which also appeared on the jacket for *Millennium Scriptorii Veronensis* (Valdonega and Nattali & Maurice, 1968).

The 1969 card with its display of italic Bodoni type printed in red and black followed Giovanni's facsimile of the *Manuale Tipografico*, 1788, and was the last to include Martino's name for it was in April 1969 that Giovanni's son married Maria Gabriella Tasin.

The discovery of variant copies amongst the editions of books printed at the Officina Bodoni will be a slow process over many years. Binding variants may be expected but printing variants may be rarer and I can only describe one incidence.

For some time I have possessed two copies of *Eustachio Celebrino* (No. 29, 1929). One copy numbered 111 is in the original black cloth as issued by Pegasus Press. The other copy

is numbered 76 and has been cut down to 220 × 154 mm and rebound in blue-green cloth, retaining only the fragment of black cloth with the spine title blocking on it and using this as a black label on the green spine. The facsimile of four leaves, 156 × 104 mm, was separately printed and was tipped onto the leaf of the book preceding the colophon. The colophon states that this facsimile was



Device (No. 30, 1929) printed black

printed by Albert Frisch in Berlin by colotype on Kelmscott Bachelor paper. I had never compared my two copies until a third came into my possession.

This third copy contained only the four leaves of facsimile and I discovered it in a catalogue recently issued by Deval & Muir. The entry read: "273. CELEBRINO (Eustachio). Il Modo d'Imparare di scrivere lettera Merchantessa... 1525. (Modern facsimile.) Marbled boards, 12 mo. (\$9.60) £4. With the fine coloured typographical ex libris of Hermann Degering." It sounded too much like Officina Bodoni for me to ignore and so I bought it. A comparison of the three copies showed this Degering copy to be the Frisch printed facsimile on the paper described in Mardersteig's colophon. But this same examination showed me that the facsimile in my copy numbered 111 was not as described in the colophon. It was printed on different

paper—not white but toned; not laid but wove; and not with the hammer and anvil watermark but plain. Also the page size was slightly larger.

When I showed Giovanni Mardersteig the Degering item he said he had not bound any copies of this facsimile in marbled boards. In fact he had never seen any. He told me that Stanley Morison took the English hand-made paper to Frisch in Berlin, and it would seem that Frisch ran out of paper before completing the 175 copies. Somehow or other Hermann Degering of the Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, acquired a copy on the correct paper perhaps specially and uniquely bound by the Berlin printer.

Some time ago I asked Mardersteig if he had kept proofs of any of his books. I was thinking particularly of certain private editions consisting of a single copy like Kenneth Grahame's *Reluctant Dragon* (No. 51, 1941) and also of books with any unexplained features like the cut-away leaf in the prelims of *The Calligraphic Models of Ludovico degli Arrighi* (No. 15, 1926). But he said that he had not kept proofs although he did have a copy of the *Arrighi* with all its leaves intact. The leaf which Warde had cut out after the edition was fully bound turns out to be not a dedication page as I had imagined, but the Preface (page iii, unbacked). The setting was used in a 4-page prospectus, and although some of the copy had been adjusted for its appearance in the book, the first sentence began: "The volume, of which the present pages are a prospectus..." was not altered and so the leaf had to be cut away and the Preface lost.

The only proof copy of any Officina Bodoni book I have ever seen is of this *Arrighi* writing book. It lacks some preliminary pages, is a typographical proof of the first 32 pages of facsimile and a paste-up of block pulls of the second 32 pages of facsimile. A number of pages have pencilled remarks in the hand of Frederic Warde and the final page is a pencilled draft of the colophon reading as follows: "T----- hundred copies printed privately for Frederic Warde at the

Officina Bodoni, Montagnola. March 1926." In the printed version this colophon reads: "For and under the direction of Frederic Warde and with his Arrighi types three hundred copies of this book have been privately printed on the hand-presses of the Officina Bodoni at Montagnola di Lugano, Switzerland. March MCMXXVI." This change was made at Mardersteig's request.



*Device (No. 88, 1949) printed red*

Frederic Warde's comments in this proof are surely addressed to Stanley Morison amongst whose papers at the Westminster Press it was discovered. Eventually the proof found its way into a bookseller's hands, was catalogued and thus came into my collection. The change from "printed for" to "under the direction of" is an important clue to the



*Device (used in Torniello, 1971) printed blue*

understanding of the design of page vii which is not what one might expect from Mardersteig. The first text line is set to full-measure and all subsequent lines on that page are indented—but all lines in the pages following



are to full measure. The intention seems to have been to outdent the opening line (although the heading "Introduction" is centred on this first line), but the intention became lost after page vii—incidentally the page is without folio and neither the Introduction nor the cut-away Preface are mentioned on the Contents page. Also the lines of the colophon are not so well arranged as Mardersteig would have done and the colophon itself backs the last page of the facsimile which is an unlikely position for the master to have used, and this position was repeated in *Crito* (No. 16, 1926), the only other book produced "under the supervision of Frederic Warde".

A separate study of the location of the hand-press books of the Officina Bodoni will be published after a wider and more detailed research has been made. Wherever possible references will include the 49 volumes of the National Edition of Gabriele d'Annunzio, the six issues of *Genius* and some of the books printed at the Stamperia Valdona. By the end of 1970 the number of editions printed at the Officina Bodoni just exceeded 150 and so, by including the d'Annunzio volumes, this total figure is over 200. If the average size of each edition is about 100 copies, that would mean there are about 20 000 books, all issued from Montagnola and Verona between 1923 and 1970. Provisional figures for a few libraries and private collectors are as follows:

#### *Libraries*

Amsterdam University Library 14  
Berkeley University Library 24  
Berne, Schweizerische Landesbibliothek 5  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris 5  
Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels 16  
Bodleian Library, Oxford 22  
Bodoniano Mus. Lib., Parma 19  
Boston Public Library 1  
British Museum, London 15  
Columbia University Library, New York 31  
Cambridge University Library 6  
Chapin Library, Williams Collection, US 7

Edinburgh, Clark Memorial Library 9  
Geneva University Library 5  
Glasgow University Library 1  
Grolier Club Library, New York 15  
The Hague, Royal Library 5  
Harvard, Houghton Library 18  
Huntington Library, California 10  
Iowa University Library 3  
Johannesburg Public Library 3  
Kentucky University Library 10  
Los Angeles Clark Memorial Library 2  
Meermann-Westreenianum, The Hague 6  
Newberry Library, Wing Collection, Chicago 29  
New York Public Library 40  
Verona Biblioteca Civica 72  
Victoria & Albert Museum Library 15  
Victoria State Library, Australia 54

#### *Private Collections*

Nicolas Barker, London 7  
Herbert Bondy, Chesterfield (*Genius*) 1  
Michele Buonafina, Milan 71 (\*)  
Harry Carter, Oxford 1  
Will Carter, Cambridge 4  
David Chambers, London 10  
John Dreyfus, London 18  
Kulgin Duval, Edinburgh 7  
Robert Elwell, New York 41  
Philip Evans, Liverpool 4  
Alberto Falck, Milan 91 (\*)  
John Hannah, Glasgow 10  
Bettina Hürlimann, Zürich 1  
Dwight Horne, London 10  
James Laughlin, New York 33  
Michele Lombi, Novara 126 (\*)  
Charles Mitchell, Oxford 4  
Ray Nash, New Hampshire 5  
Max Reinhardt, London 30  
Vivian Ridler, Oxford 4  
John Ryder, London 56  
Hans Schmoller, London 10  
Paul Standard, New York 12  
Reynolds Stone, Dorchester 11

The three major collections noted above (\*) all belong to Italian friends of Mardersteig.