

THE ROYAL PICK

THIS IS THE START of a new regular column for *Amphora* in which I will attempt to bring to light some interesting and amusing items that have appeared over the past few months in international auction and booksellers' catalogues. I will write about rare books, not-so-rare books, illuminated books, manuscripts, and occasionally autographic material. In the course of a year, I receive approximately 200 printed catalogues, ranging from the sumptuous catalogues of Librairie Sourget, possibly the most elaborate and costly catalogues produced in the last 100 years, to the typed lists of books that other booksellers send out. The range of pricing between the two extremes can be as much as half a million dollars, so I do have a fair amount of material to work with.

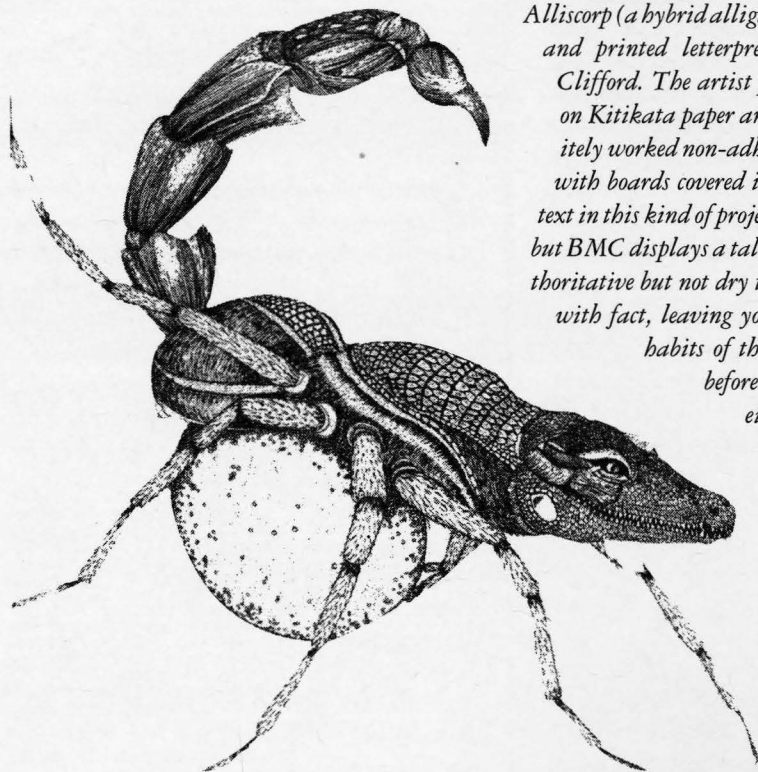
Recently Librairie Sourget of Chartres, France, in Catalogue 30, had so many fine and wonderful

items that I found it hard to pick just a couple, but this had to be a favourite at €175,000: *Speculum Humanae Salvationis Latino-Germanicum*, published by G. Zainer at the monastery of S. Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg, 1472. This is one of the most important books in the history of the art of illustration, the first book printed at this monastery and the first illustrated book printed in Augsburg. It contains 192 wood engravings and has been beautifully bound in brown morocco. From the wonderful library of Estelle Doheny, it is the first complete copy to come on the world market in 30 years.

Also in this catalogue is *Apocalypsis Cum Figuris*, by Albrecht Dürer, Nuremberg, 1511, which contains the most important 16 wood engravings ever produced by Dürer, including his Apocalypse engraving, bound in 19th century brown morocco, at €95,000. Also a first-edition *Sidereus Nuncius*, by Galileo Galilei, printed by T. Baglione, Venice, in 1610. Bound in full vellum in the 18th century, this small, thin pamphlet of 28 leaves is the founda-

QUIXOTIC ANIMALS

The careful reader of The Cat Skinner Press Catalogue of Quixotic Animals will be warned of the book's premise by the prefatory author's biography, which begins "Briony Morrow-Cribbs studied biology, paleontology and printmaking at the Emily Carr Institute of Fine & Scientific Arts..." This book grew from her 2005 graduate project for that august school, and it presents the first published record of 12 heretofore unknown



plants and creatures, such as the Bird Lizard and Alliscorp (a hybrid alligator scorpion). The text was set and printed letterpress from polymer by David Clifford. The artist printed the tipped-in etchings on Kitikata paper and also constructed the exquisitely worked non-adhesive exposed-sewing binding, with boards covered in Japanese silk. Too often the text in this kind of project falls far short of the images, but BMC displays a talent for adopting a factual, authoritative but not dry tone. She subtly mixes fantasy with fact, leaving you wondering at the lives and habits of these creatures you've never seen before. Sadly, the edition of just eight copies (US\$600) was fully subscribed before any copies even left the bindery. But the artist, back home in Washington State, promises new book projects within the year. See www.brionymorrow-cribbs.com for more of her work.

tion of modern astronomy and contains the first description of the use of a telescope by Galileo. The book is extremely rare, even though it was published in an edition of 550 copies, and has never before been on the open market—price on demand! And one last example from this fabulous catalogue: John Boydell's collection of prints from the pictures painted for the *Purpose of Illustrating the Dramatic Works of Shakespeare*, John and Joshua Boydell, London, (1790)–1803. This volume, in a special binding of lemon morocco for the Duchess de Berry, contains 96 copperplate engravings that almost leap off the paper they are so powerful; all this a steal at €75,000. I'm very fortunate as I have about 60 of these engravings, all loosely matted.

Maggs Bros., 50 Berkeley Square, London, Catalogue 1384 has a great collection of private-press material, with much from the Ashendene Press, Doves Press, Golden Cockerel, Gregynog, Gwasg Gregynog and the Kelmscott Press, to name a few. How about *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Books Printed at the Ashendene Press, 1895–1935*, with a foreword by C.H. St. J. Hornby, one of 390 numbered copies in the original maroon polished calf? This was the last book from this famous press; priced at £1,750. From the Doves Press we have *Credo* (£4,000), a folio leaf printed on handmade watermarked paper, 1906. The rarest of all Doves Press items, this item states Cobden-Sanderson's deeply held spiritual beliefs and is the manifesto that lay behind all his work. Or how about a signed photographic portrait of Cobden-Sanderson in his smock and white beret, at £900? From the Golden Cockerel Press, *Ecclesiastes or the Preacher*, with 13 wood engravings by Blair Hughes-Stanton, in the original vellum-backed orange cloth gilt, published in 1934, at £650. From the Kelmscott Press there is a beautiful copy of *The Well at the World's End*, by William Morris in 1896, bound in the original limp vellum, at £4,500. For the more ephemeral, a signed original carved woodblock by Eric Gill from *The Prioress's Tale*, at £4,000. Also some wonderful 20th-century graphic art: *Cigar Packaging, Germany, ca. 1930s*, containing 180 pieces of original advertising and packaging art, at £1,000.

In future columns, I intended to peruse more catalogues than the two featured here, but found such wonderful items to mention that I have already run out of space for this issue!

John King is a bookseller based in Surrey, B.C.

LIFE OF PIE



Polytalent Jim Rimmer is hard at work on the first new book from his Pie Tree Press in eight years. Leaves from the Pie Tree could be described as a typobiography: he recounts his early apprentice years as a compositor in the 1950s, and how his interests and talents expanded to include type design (both metal and digital), printing, and illustration. The book marks the debut of Quill, a metal face he designed and cut. It also will feature a photo essay on his process for creating metal type, and numerous display sheets featuring his illustrations and typefaces. Scheduled for summer publication, the edition will be just 40 copies (approx 64 pp., folio, sewn & quarter bound by Rimmer) priced at C\$700. For details or to reserve a copy contact the publisher at rimmertype@shaw.ca.