

IP3, Print Culture and Fashion Products

Elsa Fougst, Swedish Royal Printer c. 1780–1810

For nearly forty years Elsa Fougst (1744–1826) was one of the most important figures in the Swedish book trade. Fougst's main enterprise was her large printing house *Kongl. Tryckeriet* ('the Royal Printing House'), which was responsible for printing and publishing the official documents of the Swedish realm. From 1782, the year that she became a widow, until her retirement in 1811, Fougst held independently the prestigious position of Royal Printer. Additionally, she ran a number of other enterprises within the book trade: a publishing house, two bookshops, and a type foundry, as well as being the editor of the newspaper *Stockholms Weckoblad* in the 1770s. Today, however, she is virtually unknown and even scholars within the field of book trade history seem to know little about her, while her husband, Royal Printer for a mere ten years, has been the subject of a number of articles and smaller studies.

In my dissertation (Uppsala 2009) I examined Elsa Fougst's career and position in the Swedish book trade between 1780 and 1810. The final chapter of the dissertation concerns the international bookshop Elsa Fougst & Comp., which Fougst ran with her associate Carl Gottlieb Ulff from 1784 to 1786. Throughout her career, Fougst sold her Swedish books in a bookshop attached to *Kongl. Tryckeriet*, but the short-lived enterprise Elsa Fougst & Comp. only dealt with foreign books.

The booksellers of late eighteenth-century Stockholm who traded in foreign books can be divided roughly into two groups. The first group was constituted by people who were already established in the book trade as printers or publishers and Fougst belonged here. For the other group of booksellers, trading in books was their sole profession. Ulff belonged to this group, being a veteran bookseller with experience in selling foreign books.

With Elsa Fougst & Comp., Fougst and Ulff could supply their customers with books of all kinds. They dealt mainly in German, Latin and French books. Two printed sales catalogues from the bookshop, one in German and Latin (1784), and one in French (1785) show that Fougst and Ulff could offer a large variety of works, ranging from natural science, medicine and theology (generally German and Latin titles) to plays, novels and poetry (mainly in French).

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A considerable amount of the French books originated from the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel (STN), a printer/publisher/wholesale bookseller specializing in clandestine books and based in the Prussian principality of Neuchâtel near the French-Swiss border. Elsa Fougat contacted the STN in 1784 to place an order of books, many of which were considered subversive. From studying the STN's account book, I found evidence that most of these books (among them several clandestine titles) were shipped from the STN to Fougat. Some of them, but not all, ended up in Fougat and Ulff's printed French sales catalogue. Others must have been sold in some other way, either under the counter or procured directly for their customers.

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http://www.litvet.uu.se/om_oss/personal/hemsidor_k-r/anna-maria_rimm/

Elsa Fougat, Kungl. boktryckare. Aktör i det litterära systemet ca 1780–1810, Skrifter utgivna av Avdelningen för litteratursociologi vid Litteraturvetenskapliga institutionen i Uppsala, 59 (diss. Uppsala, 2009)