



CHAPTERS

F r o m T h e

HISTORY

o f T h e

B * O * O * K

*Selections from the Collection
of David & Nancy Leroy*



CHAPTERS
From The
HISTORY
of The
B*O*O*K

*Selections from the Collection
of David & Nancy Leroy*

An exhibition of rare books and objects from the collection of David and Nancy Leroy opened last August at Boise State's Ron and Linda Yanke Family Research Park, and is partly catalogued in this issue of the ICB newsletter.

Sponsored by Boise State's Arts and Humanities Institute and produced by the Idaho Center for the Book, the exhibit, "Chapters from the History of the Book," features 31 books and artifacts spanning centuries and continents, including manuscript fragments, early printed books, palm leaf books and early Coptic materials.

The works were generously lent from the collection of David Leroy, former Idaho lieutenant governor and attorney general (who is also a noted Abraham Lincoln scholar and collector of Lincoln memorabilia) and Nancy Leroy, a collector of fine art and former Miss Boise State University. The Leroy's have collected antiquarian books in Europe and the United States for more than 20 years.

The exhibition is located in the new Arts and Humanities Institute Gallery at the Yanke Family Research Park at 220 East Parkcenter Blvd in Boise. The books will remain on view through Dec. 5, from 1 - 4 PM Monday-Thursday or by appointment (contact AHI@boisestate.edu.) Entry is free.

The exhibition was curated by Stephanie Bacon, with the inspired and tireless help of Research Assistants Amaura Mitchell and Earle Swope; and the invaluable logistical and moral support of Lisa Cunningham and Nick Miller of the Arts and Humanities Institute. Thanks also to Curatorial Interns Alana Dunn and Alaggio Laurino, and other students and volunteers who have staffed the exhibition.



The Coptic Tradition

The term Coptic refers to early Christians in Egypt, their language, literature and legacy extending into contemporary times. Coptic writing was based upon the Greek alphabet, but new characters were developed to accommodate the differing sounds and dialects of Coptic. The Copts continued to speak and write the Coptic language until the 13th century AD, and in some places until the 17th century; it persists as the liturgical language of the Coptic church.

The Coptic literary tradition is almost entirely religious, consisting of translations from Greek and other languages, versions of the Bible, and commentaries. Coptic works on papyrus, parchment and paper are distinctive and executed with rigor; many are of great antiquity. Coptic books are among the oldest examples of the codex form.

Ethiopian Bible with Carrying Case, c. 18th century

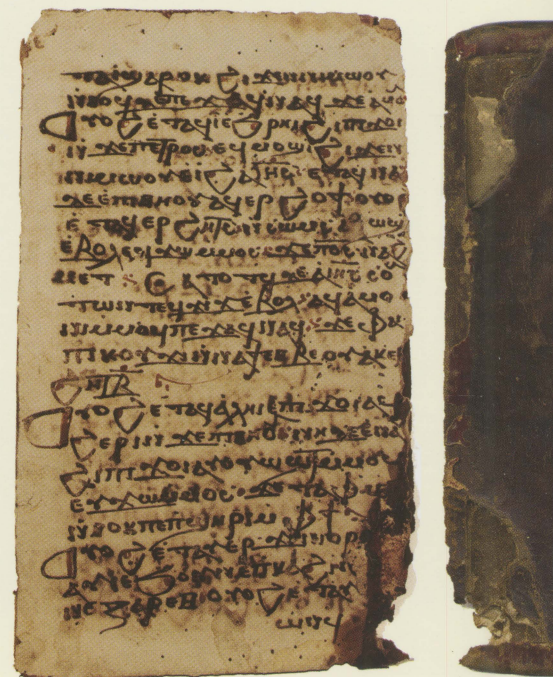
This Bible is written in Ge'ez, an ancient Ethiopian language; its written form is an adaptation of Coptic. The book is typical of classical Ethiopian binding structure, which has remained unchanged since at least the 13th century AD. Christianity is thought to have been introduced in Ethiopia during the 4th century AD under Coptic influence; therefore Ethiopian bindings are often considered to be close relatives of older Coptic bindings of which our record is incomplete.

The book is covered with wooden boards, laced onto a book block of parchment; its leather covers have been blind tooled; leather headbands are braided onto the top and bottom of the book block. The book has been repaired, as the spine has been covered with a leather of a slightly different color and style (see front cover.) The parchment pages are pierced along the outer edges; it is thought that pins were placed in the parchment, and lines drafted between them, to assist in alignment. The text is strongly regular and graphic, inscribed in carbon black and vermilion inks.

A leather case with a long strap houses the book. When the two sides of the case are nested together, the book is completely encapsulated. Because the case was designed to be carried on the body, it is likely that this Bible was intended for personal use.

Coptic Fragment, c. 7th - 13th century

This fragment presents a conundrum. One side displays a very old Coptic fragment on paper, resembling Coptic calligraphy of the Sahidic dialect, used in Egypt during the 5th and 6th century AD. The page is mounted to a book cover board, made of cartonnage (or ancient cardboard) and covered in leather, with an almond-shaped leather inset and tooled corner elements typical of Persian bookbinding; and lined with fragments of a floral textile. As the Arabic conquest of Egypt occurred around 640 AD, and the general use of Coptic writing extended until the 13th century AD, we may speculate that this very ancient-appearing hybrid object may have been created during the intervening years. It seems likely that the manuscript fragment and book cover board were not original to each other; however, the similar condition of the two sides suggests that they have been united for a very long time.



Palm Leaf Books

The leaves of large palm trees (Talipot and Palmyra) have been used as a writing substrate since very ancient times; Sanscrit was written on palm leaves more than 6000 years ago. Many old examples from South and Southeast Asia are extant, especially from India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand. The palm leaf continued in common use as a writing surface until some point between the 15th and 19th century, depending upon location, after which it was mostly replaced by paper.

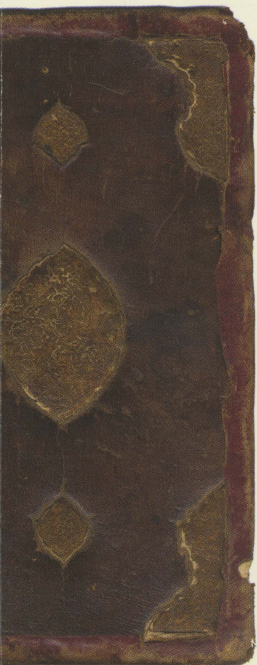
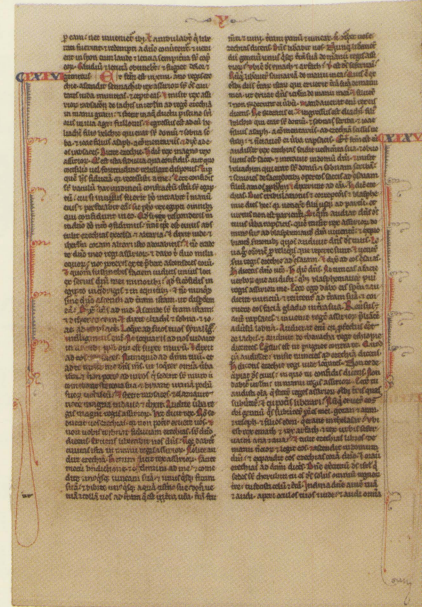
Preparation involves harvesting the large plicate leaves of the palms; boiling them in milk or water, smoothing their surfaces and trimming them to a uniform size. Texts (and sometimes patterns or illustrations) are incised on the palm leaf surface with a sharp stylus; then a sooty pigment is rubbed over the surface to deposit a dark color in the incised lines, resulting in a refined and beautiful calligraphy. Palm leaf books are made by gathering up large stacks of incised palm leaves, and binding them with one or more cords which are run through regular perforations in the leaves. Some palm leaves are inscribed on one side only, while others are written on both sides; large stacks of them often comprise a book, which can be very distinctive in its proportions: extremely long, quite narrow, and precipitously high.

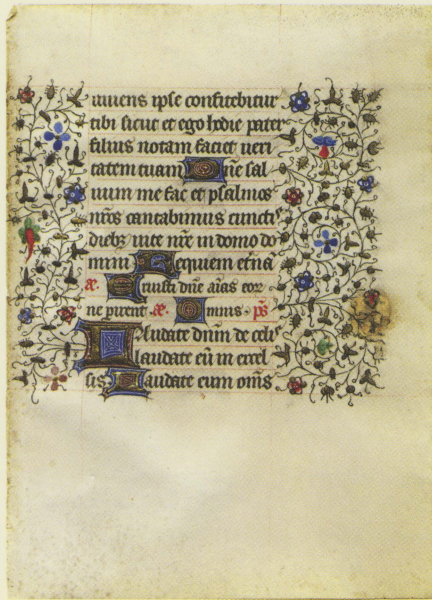
Hearst Estate Palm Leaf Book with Oak Scroll Box, c. 17th century

This remarkable palm leaf book, well-preserved in its enclosing scroll box carved from a solid piece of oak, once belonged to the estate of publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst. It has been identified as an "ancient Burmese manuscript," (from contemporary Myanmar) dating to the 17th century. The page size indicates that the leaves came from the Talipot palm. The top leaf is inscribed on one side only, with text and ornamental borders. The subsequent leaves are borderless, and inscribed on both sides. The leaves are perforated for threading on cords; and the perforations have been reinforced with a delicate embroidery. Although palm leaves have been used for various literary genres, this example produced in a Buddhist monastery, may likely contain a religious text.

Palm Leaf Book with Wooden Covers, c. 17th century — 18th century

Elegant and austere, this palm leaf book provides an interesting counterpoint to the example above. The leaves and dark wooden cover boards are unadorned. The beautiful rounded script has been identified as a language of Thailand; its subject is said to be a "Buddhist Prayer Book." Although the exact age of this book is unknown, comparable examples and its condition might lead one to think that it was made in the 17th or 18th century. The pages were made from the Talipot palm.





Illuminated Manuscripts

The term Illuminated Manuscript refers to any decorated or illustrated book made by hand, from the time of the late Roman Empire until the advent of the printed book in Europe.

In the Christian tradition, up until the 12th century, most illuminated manuscripts were produced in the setting of the scriptorium, a workshop set in a monastery or convent. During the 13th century some monastic orders were charged with bringing their religious teachings to the urban centers of Europe; they needed books which were more durable, more portable and better indexed than manuscripts produced for church use. This, in addition to the growth of the University system, led to an increased demand for less expensive manuscript books. Thus access to books spread, well before the introduction of printing. As a more diverse workforce from outside the scriptoria became involved in the production of manuscript books, the spread of literacy also accelerated.

In the Islamic tradition, an emphasis on reading, writing and calligraphy as a means to personal spiritual development dates to the life of the prophet Muhammed (c.570 – 632 AD). The Qur'an describes Allah as "He who teaches by the pen (qalam.)" Muhammed advocated literacy and the practice of calligraphy for both his male and female followers, which led to highly prolific cultures of reading and writing, libraries and book production. Manuscripts in the Islamic tradition comprise myriad languages and styles, including those of North Africa and Spain, the Middle East, Central and South Asia. Some Islamic visual traditions are aniconic, meaning that the depiction of living things is circumscribed; in these aniconic traditions, the development of abstract and calligraphic forms reaches a zenith of expression.



Page from the Book of Isaiah from a Pocket Bible, Paris (or Northern Italy), c. late 15th century

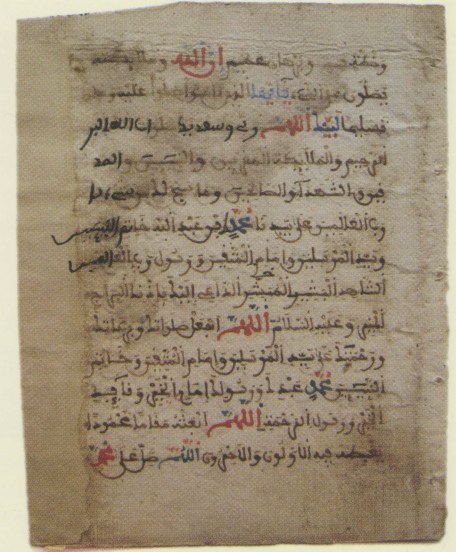
This tiny page is characteristic of pocket bibles that were produced on a relatively large scale by scribes both within and outside of the church, in Paris of the late 13th century. They were made for the use of teaching clerics, University students and a broadening pool of general readers. This page is from the Book of Isaiah, a book of prophecy from the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament.

Page from a Book of Hours, Paris or Bruges, c. 1420-1450

This page from a Book of Hours is written in black and red ink on vellum in a strong and regular gothic hand, accented by elaborated gold capitals. The charming ornamental borders of this illuminated page are comprised of botanical motifs, including vines, leaves, flowers and a beautiful carrot, rendered in fine ink line work with gold leaf and tempera embellishment.

Page with Donor Portrait from a Book of Hours, Paris c. 1480

A Book of Hours is a prayer book which contains the Hours of the Virgin, a sequence of prayers to Mary to be recited throughout the day. This rich and elaborate Book of Hours on vellum is thought to have been commissioned from an associate of the Maître François, a renowned miniaturist who created books for the elite of Paris and the French court. The figure kneeling in armor at the hem of the Virgin Mary is thought to be a portrait of the donor who commissioned the work.



Page from an Arabic Book of Prayer, 15th century

This elegant page has been written in brown, red and blue on an early and fine laid paper. At later dates, marginalia have been added, and water-faded words have been carefully overwritten in black ink. The first calligrapher has introduced rhythmic color changes within the text by using red and blue inks for specific words: a technically difficult and seemingly unusual stylistic choice.

Page from a Persian Illuminated Manuscript, 18th or early 19th century

Perhaps the charming freedom of the calligraphy and illuminations led one commentator to speculate that this page may be a "work of legend, folklore and history...evidently intended for the hoi polloi." The imagery is also reminiscent of fables. The ancient Panchatantra or Bidpai Fables were imported from India and translated into Arabic around 750 AD; these adaptations include a hermit figure, two jackals, talking birds and other animal characters. Could they be the characters seen here, conversing in flowery fields, with tails slipping into the margins?





Early Printed Pages with Hand Illumination

It's commonly thought that the earliest books printed with moveable type were the work of Johann Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg (c. 1398 – 1468) or a close contemporary. Manuscripts were the only prototypes for the first printed books; the earliest moveable types were designed to resemble the manuscript hand. Known as *incunabulae*, or “cradle books,” the earliest printed books also resemble manuscript books in design and format. Although usually printed in black ink only, many *incunabulae* were hand decorated in color, to enhance their appearance as well as to better simulate manuscript books. This decoration is called rubrication when the added color is primarily red, or used primarily to accent the text; and is known as illumination when multicolored images appear.

Page from Hortus Sanitatis (Garden of Health) J. Meydenbach, Mainz, 1491

Hortus Sanitatis is a traditional genre of popular manuals on health and science, commonly referred to as “Herbals.” They included information on herbal and mineral remedies, natural history, botany and horticulture. This page is drawn from a very early printed example of the genre. It may be the first work created by printer and publisher Jacob Meydenbach of Mainz, who commissioned the woodcuts, and may have edited parts of the text. This page was printed in black ink, and subsequently hand-colored. The edition from which this page was drawn also contains the earliest known printed depictions of a crystal and of petroleum extraction.



HARTMANN SCHEDEL, Page 545 from Liber Chronicarum (Book of Chronicles, known as the Nuremberg Chronicle) Nuremberg, 1493

Nuremberg was an influential center of early printing, and was renowned for large and encompassing book projects. This page came from the most famous of these, *The Nuremberg Chronicle*, which takes as its subject the history of the world since creation, in relation to biblical scripture. Subtitled *Serta Etas Mundi* (*Garland of the Ages of the World*) it was authored by Dr. Hartmann Schedel, who was a physician, cartographer, book and print collector, and historian. Publisher Anton Koburger was one of the most successful of his day, having once owned 24 presses in Europe. Artist Michael Wolgemuth prepared woodcuts which were used in more than 1800 illustrations, as well as creating the exemplars or page layouts for the entire 600 page book, which was published in Latin and German. Originally printed in black ink only, various versions of the *Nuremberg Chronicle* have been hand-colored with watercolors and other media by many different hands.

This page is a particularly interesting example. Drawn from a section which chronicles the lives of the Popes, page 545 features the portrait and biography of Pope Joan, a legendary figure who was believed to have disguised herself as a man and, through her superior scriptural acumen, ascended to the papacy. It was widely reported in 13th century accounts that she served as Pope for over two years, until she was discovered when she suddenly gave birth in the streets of Rome. Later church historians discounted the story as spurious, and it is ostensibly for this reason that her portrait and biography have been excised from this page.

Early Printed Books from Lyons, 1545 – 1561

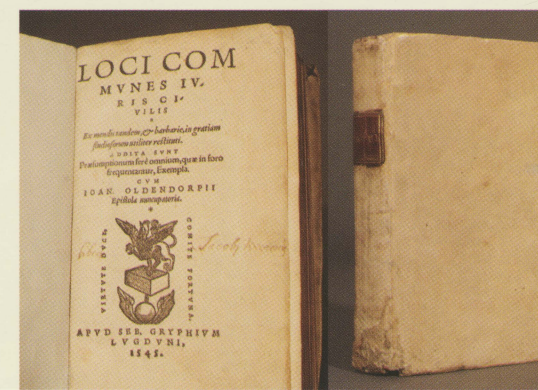
Lyons (Lugdunum) was founded as a Roman colony in 43 BC. By the 15th century Lyons was an important commercial center; it was a site of silk production, and an important center of early publishing. In a less repressive climate than that of Paris, Lyons fostered a lively popular print culture which specialized in poetry and histories of chivalry. A series of printers' strikes occurred in Lyons between 1539 and 1572, to protest the insufficient food and wages printers earned; and to demand more working hours; for apparently they were required to observe so many feast days for minor saints, that they were hard pressed to support themselves.

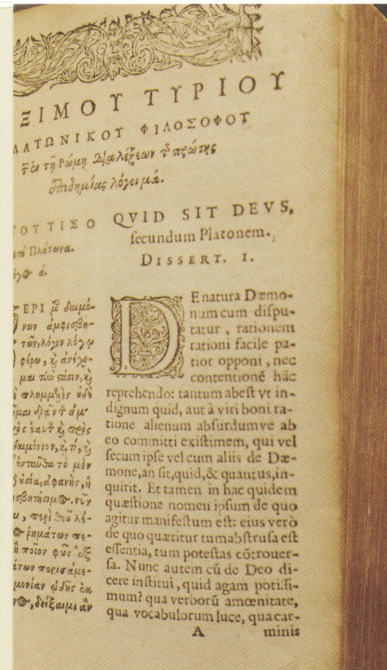
JOHANNES OLDENDORP, Loci Communes Iuris Civilis (Common Topics of Civil Law) Sebastian Gryphius, Lyons, 1545

Johannes Oldendorp (1480 – 1567) was a preeminent legal scholar who applied Lutheran Reformation ideals to the interpretation and practice of law. Oldendorp hoped to “teach the laws with special attention to their just consequences and their relationship to God's word, which, above all, must be pursued and taught.” The publisher of this work is Sebastian Gryphius (1492 - 1556) a German humanist, translator, printer and bookseller. The mark of the griffin with the globe is associated with Gryphius through hundreds of printed works. The Latin motto, *Virtute Duce, Comite Fortuna*, may be roughly translated as *Virtues Lead, along with Luck*. Gryphius was a dedicated publisher who sheltered heretical poets and published important contemporary works by Erasmus and Rabelais.

CATULLUS, TIBULLUS, PROPERTIUS, His Acceserunt Corn. Galli Fragmenta, Haeredes, Se. Gryphii, Lyons, 1561

Catullus (c. 84 BC – c. 54 BC) remains one of the most widely read Latin poets. His lyric insights into an ill-fated love affair, epigrams that range from breezy to harshly satirical, and memorable elegies are strikingly modern in their sensibility. Perhaps less well remembered today are Tibullus (c. 55 BC – c. 19 BC) a poet of love elegies; and Propertius (c. 50 BC – c. 16 BC), an elegiac poet noted for vigor and sincerity. This work lists its publisher as “Apud Haeredes Seb. Gryphii,” that is, the Heirs of Sebastian Gryphius. It may be the work of Gryphius' son Antoine.





then the sea has submerged the ruins again. How wonderful that, when European culture turned to newly rediscovered classical ideas for inspiration, Leiden had a distantly remembered classical locale literally cast up on its beaches.

In 1575 William of Orange founded The University of Leiden, which was home to renowned scholars such as Justus Lipsius, Hugo Grotius, Daniel Heinsius, and Baruch Spinoza.

movement which revisited the ideas of Plato and sought to rebuff Stoic and skeptical readings of Platonic thought. Maximus' *Dissertations* are annotated here by Daniel Heinsius (1580 – 1655) an eminent Dutch scholar and classicist, who was Librarian of Leiden University. Curiously, the publisher (Ioannem Patium, or Johannes Patius) cannot be associated with any other publications.

TITUS LIVIUS, *Historiarum Libri (History of Rome)* Ex Officina Elzeviriana, Leiden, 1634

Titus Livius, known as Livy (59 BC – 17 AD) was a learned Roman historian. His life project—a 142 volume *History of Rome*—was a vast synthetic and nostalgic exercise, intended to lionize great men and great moments in Rome's history, and to contrive a patriotic foundation story for the Republic. As such his work is viewed as hyperbole with a measure of historical inspiration. This edition reprints some of the extant 35 books of Livy's *History of Rome*, as revised by Daniel Heinsius. The publisher is listed as *Ex Officina Elzeviriana*, from the offices of Elzevir. The Elzevirs represented a dynasty of publishers, printers and booksellers, founded by Lodewijk Elzevir (1540 - 1617) of Holland. Elzevir published some 150 works during his lifetime; five of his seven sons, and a number of their sons, followed him into the printing trades.

Early Printed Books from Leiden, 1614–1634

The city of Leiden is identified in these books as “Lugdunum Batavorum,” after an old Roman fort on the sea, west of modern Leiden in the Netherlands. Interestingly, only parts of the ruin were visible among the sand dunes during the 15th century; but storms exposed large tracts of the ruin in 1520, 1552 and 1562, bringing ancient artifacts to light. Since

MAXIMUS OF TYRE, HEINSIUS, *Dissertationes Philosophicae (Philosophical Dissertations)* Ioannem Patium, Iuratum e3 Ordinarium, Leiden, 1614

Maximus of Tyre was a Greek philosopher of the 2nd century AD whose essays are viewed as an early form of Neoplatonism, a mystical philosophical

Early Printed Books from Antwerp, 1608–1651

By the mid-16th century Antwerp was the most important commercial and financial center in Europe, and possessed the advantages of a cosmopolitan population and tolerant social policies. However, the city suffered terrible setbacks in the period of Dutch revolt, when in 1576 Spanish troops sacked the city, killing 6000 of its residents; and when the city was later captured by the Spanish following a lengthy siege. Despite these difficulties Antwerp was an important center for printing, primarily for the press established by French émigré Christopher Plantin (c. 1514 – 1589) and sustained by Plantin, his sons and daughters and their descendants until

1867, through ongoing vicissitudes. His success is attributed to his excellence as a scholarly publisher, and the grace and precision of his typographic production, distinguished by his use of types designed by Claude Garamond (1480 - 1561) and Robert Granjon (1513 - 1589.)

Horatius cum Commentario L. Torentii (The Works of Horace, with commentary by Laevinus Torrentius) Plantiniana, Antwerp, 1608

Horace (65 BC – 8 BC) is an exemplary Latin poet, whose satirical lyrics, odes and epistles have been reread and translated countless times since they were written more than 2000 years ago. This book includes commentary by Belgian humanist

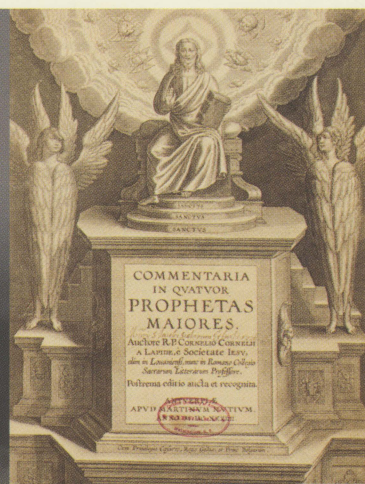
Laevinus Torrentius (1525 - 1595) and feature Plantin's famous printer's device, representing an angelic hand reaching down from the clouds, scribing with a compass. The motto in Latin, *Labore et Constantia*, may be translated as *Work and Persistence*.

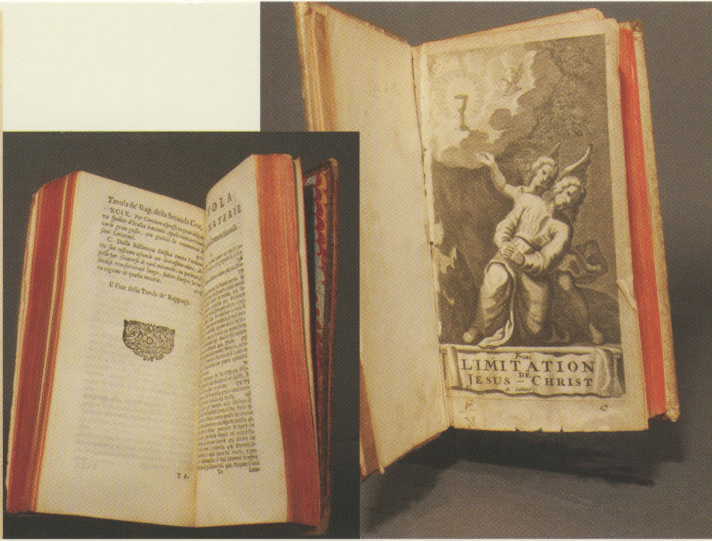
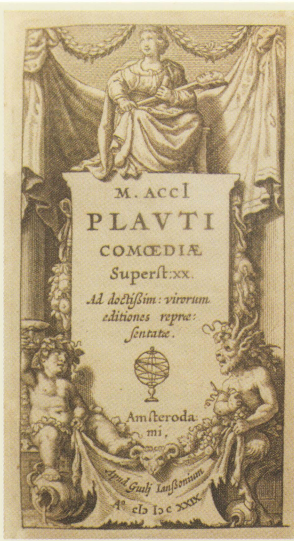
Prophetæ Isaias, Ieremias, Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, etc. (The Books of Isaiab, Jeremiab, Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, etc.) Plantiniana, Antwerp, 1629

This volume is part of an eight volume edition of *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis*; that is, the Biblical scriptures in Latin. The Old Testament prophets (the so-called latter prophets and minor prophets) whose books comprise this volume mostly lived between the 8th and 6th centuries BC.

CORNELIUS CORNELII A LAPIDE *Commentaria in Quatuor Prophetas Maiores (Commentary on the Four Major Prophets)* M. Nutium, Antwerp, 1634

Cornelius Cornelii a Lapide (1567 – 1637) was a Flemish Jesuit who published numerous commentaries on the Christian scriptures. Many of his works were published by the printer Martinum Nutium, who in spite of leaving many striking books behind him, remains an enigma.





Early Printed Books from Amsterdam, 1621–1683

17th century Amsterdam was an urbane setting, marked by tolerant religious attitudes, cultural and religious diversity, prosperity and increasing global awareness (as seen through the lens of colonialism.) It was a noted center of liberal thought and book printing; many books were printed in Amsterdam, which could not have been printed elsewhere in Europe due to religious censorship.

TITUS MACCIUS PLAUTUS, *Comœdiæ Guilijs Iansonium*, Amsterdam, 1629

Plautus (254 – 184 BC) was a Roman writer of comedies, born in Umbria. His plays were popular

during his lifetime and have been perennially read since, for their vivid depiction of the lives of middle and lower class Romans, told in broad humor and idiomatic language. His 21 surviving works are thought to have influenced Molière and Shakespeare. This tiny edition in its original parchment binding features an engraved title page, depicting a satyr, a debauched cherub, and an allegorical figure of comedy.

TRAJANO BOCCALINO, ROMANO *De' Raguagli Di Parnaso (The Tabloids from Parnassus)* G. Blaeu, Amsterdam, 1669

De' Raguagli Di Parnaso is the major work by Italian satirist Trajano Boccalino (1556 – 1613) who offended a lot of his literary contemporaries in

attorney, a fine orator, and a recognized poet. But this charming anthology presents Montauban as a tragic-comic pastoral playwright. A title page announces the work as “*Theatre de Jacques Pousset Sr. de Montauban*,” collected in 1666. But in fact the volume comprises five separately published plays which were bound together as a custom-made book. They are united by the vigorous, if somewhat rustic, stylistic signature of publisher Guillaume de Luine, who also published the plays of Molière and Corneille.

Early Printed Books from Paris, 1660–1671

Paris has been a leading intellectual center of Europe since the Roman period. The University of Paris, founded around 1150, and the college of the Sorbonne, founded around 1250, became the basis of the University of Paris.

JEAN-LOUIS GUEZ DE BALZAC, *Les Entretiens de Fev (Conversations in February)* Augustin Courbé, Paris 1660

Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (c. 1597 – 1654) was an essayist who was widely admired as a stylist and reformer of French prose. As a young man, the aristocratic Guez de Balzac took to the road and travelled with the performing troupe of the French dramatist Théophile de Viau; the two enrolled at the University of Leiden in 1615. Guez de Balzac's letters home became the basis of his literary reputation as an epistolary essayist.

JACQUES POUSSET DE MONTAUBAN, *Theatre de Montauban (Les Charmes de Felicie, Zenobie, Seleucus, Indegonde, and Le Comte de Hollande)* Guillaume de Luine, Paris, 1666

Jacques Pousset de Montauban et de Saint Mars la Bruyère (c. 1610 – 1685) was a popular and learned

this light and fantastic satire. This volume follows his death by 56 years, and is in the original Italian. Joan Janszoon Blaeu, whose name is italianized as Giouanni, represented the second generation of a noted Amsterdam printing family that specialized in globes, maps and atlases. A contemporary account reports that Blaeu's shop had “nine type-presses, named after the nine Muses, six presses for copper-plate printing, and a type-foundry.”

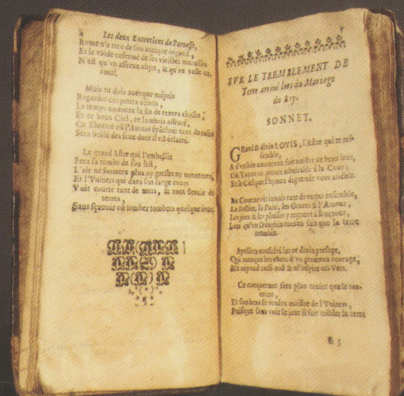
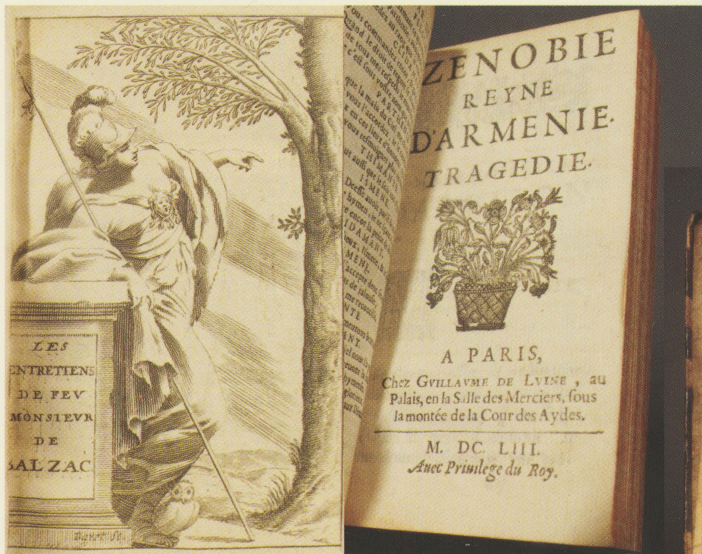
THOMAS À KEMPIS, *Kempis Communou, Les Quatres Livres de L'imitation de Jesus-Christ (Collected Kempis or, The Four Books of The Imitation of Christ)* Henry Wetstein, Amsterdam, 1683

Thomas à Kempis (1379 – 1471) was a German monk who is believed to have authored the four volumes of *The Imitation of Christ*, one of the most influential devotional tracts of the Reformation. The books suggest that the path to Christian spiritual advancement leads not through human intellect but through the individual's cultivation of a humble, Christ-like impoverishment and mystical personal devotion. The four volumes collected in this edition have been translated from Latin into more broadly accessible French. Printer Henry Wetstein was also a publisher, editor, author, and book seller; he is associated with over 300 publications in 10 languages, including early publications of Molière and Machiavelli.

CLAUDE TUPIN, *Les Doux Entretiens du Parnasse, ou Le Thresor des Esprits du Temps (Sweet Conversations from Parnassus, or the Treasure of the Spirit of the Times)* Claude Tupin, Paris, 1667

Les Doux Entretiens du Parnasse is a poetry anthology. An 18th century source reports that 172 works are included, of which 83 may be attributed. Claude Tupin appears to be the editor, publisher and printer of this ambitious collection; perhaps his own verses

appear within? The book is notably rustic in its printing, and features many compound ornaments (designs created by clustering small printers ornaments into shaped figures.)



Idaho
Center
for the **Book***
newsletter

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Boise, ID
Permit No. 1

Vol. 19/No. 2/October 2012



Idaho Center for the Book
Boise State University
1910 University Drive
Boise Idaho 83725

<http://www.lili.org/icb>
IdahoCenterfortheBook@boisestate.edu
Director: Stephanie Bacon

** Book, construed to include
all forms of written language.*

paper blog

According to the new issue of **Library of Congress Magazine**, the venerable fables of Aesop (c. 620 - 560 BC) have been adapted as an app for devices you are no doubt acquainted with. The app is based upon a 1919 edition of the fables, illustrated by the brilliant Milo Winter. As it happens this is the edition I read as a child, which had belonged to my father, and was old already when he was a child. It was my favorite book.

It bemuses me a bit to envision the technologically *au courant* pondering those hard Aesopian truths, such as "Familiarity breeds contempt," and "Notoriety is not fame," and "You are judged by the company you keep," in between texts and tweets.

At the risk of osterizing the obvious, the cultures of reading and writing are in rapid flux. With the entire internet to read, perhaps comparatively few of us have had time to note the passing of cursive writing, let alone to lament it. But (concurrent with the increasing pressure on schools to prepare students for standardized testing, digital literacy, etc.) it seems that many schools have discontinued the teaching of cursive handwriting skills; and the trend seems likely to spread. Cursive writing may become functionally extinct in the near future.

TRICA (Treasure Valley Institute for Children's Arts; www.trica.org) has formed an apt response in a new series of workshops. Instructor Jeanette Ross relates, "In our class, **Beautiful Writing**, we will re-introduce the cursive style of writing. With copy-book sheets for guidance, we will practice writing the alphabet and our names in cursive, then add flourishes to our capitals. We will practice a few letters and flourishes with steel nib dipping pens. We will experiment with our own blueberry ink, once used by country school children. When we are ready we will make a fancy copy of our name in ink, on fine paper, with as many flourishes as we can manage. Ink sticks, a grinding stone, Chinese brushes and bamboo dipping pens will be available for the adventurous. The instructor will provide examples of beautiful cursive, including the Declaration of Independence and other documents. Examples of copy books, pen flourishing by Zaner-Bloser, cursive Arabic, Cyrillic and Chinese script, plus contemporary Korean-inspired rainbow writing, will all be available for inspiration. Classes will take place in Boise on Saturday January 12 at Collister Library (1 PM - 2 PM) and the Cole & Ustick Library (3 PM - 4 PM) and on Sunday January 13 at the Main Library (1 PM - 2 PM) and Hillcrest Library (3 PM - 4 PM.) The workshops are designed for ages 5 - 12; no preregistration is required; **free**.

We would welcome news of cursive activity from other parts of the state. SB



From the opening receptions for
"Chapters from the History of the Book,"

Above, Rare Book Collectors David and Nancy Leroy

Below, from Left:
Research Assistant Amaura Mitchell, Curator and ICB
Director Stephanie Bacon, Collector Extraordinaire
David Leroy, Research Assistant Earle Swope.

