Winter 1983

Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 4, no. 2]

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Available at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kentucky-review/vol4/iss2/8

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Selected Acquisitions

New in the Peal Collection

Upon his arrival in Lexington for the dedication of the Peal Collection on 15 October 1982, Mr. W. Hugh Peal presented to the university four splendid items which significantly augmented the extraordinary gift celebrated in the last issue of The Kentucky Review. Included was an incunabulum entitled Obsequiale Augustense, produced by the famous early printer Erhard Ratdolt at Augsburg in 1487. The work is printed in black and red gothic characters, twenty-six lines to the page; included in the text are several pages of printed music. According to the bibliographical authority Margaret Bingham Stillwell, this is the only copy of this book in America. As if this were not enough, the book features a magnificent exhibition binding which was carried out at St. Jean de Luz, France, in 1910 by Maria Louisa Darby. The richly gilt-tooled binding boasts leather inlays in two colors of brown as well as terra-cotta and green, in designs of oak leaves and acorns, crosses and arabesques; the spine is paneled and gilt-tooled; doublures are treated in the highly finished manner of the covers and the flyleaves are of tan silk. The binder was a native of Princeton, Kentucky, and died at her home, Villa Flournoy, in the Basses-Pyrénées in 1955.

Mr. Peal’s recent gift also contained three items of English literature, including a first edition of John Dryden’s heroic play All for Love; or, The World Well Lost, printed in London in 1678 by Thomas Newcomb; the John A. Spoor–Walter P. Chrysler, Jr. copy of a first edition of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s second book, A Moral and Political Lecture Delivered at Bristol, printed at Bristol by George Routh in 1794; and a copy, in the original boards, of Charles Lamb’s John Woodvil: A Tragedy ... To Which Are Added, Fragments of Burton, printed in London in 1802 by T. Plummer.
A 1487 incunable printed by Erhard Ratdolt, in a 1910 Mary Louisa Darby binding
Works of the English Romantics

Several items by the poet William Wordsworth have been acquired in support of the Peal Collection. These include an undated autograph letter to Charles Aders as well as copies of The River Duddon: A Series of Sonnets, 1820; Memorials of a Tour on the Continent, 1822; and a sequence of twenty-eight sonnets entitled Ecclesiastical Sketches, 1822. A number of volumes of verse of Sir Walter Scott were added to the collections, notably The Lay of the Last Minstrel, 1805; Ballads and Lyrical Pieces, 1806; The Lady of the Lake, 1810; Rokeby: A Poem, 1813; and The Lord of the Isles: A Poem, 1815. Several specimens of early editions of Scott’s fiction have been acquired as well, exemplified by Tales of My Landlord, 1818, and Woodstock, 1826.

From among the works of the later English Romantics we have been fortunate to acquire a copy of Lord Byron’s satirical arraignment of his contemporaries, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, 1805, formerly in the library of the noted scholar A.N.L. Munby, late librarian of King’s College, Cambridge. We have added also Rosalind and Helen, 1818; The Cenci, 1819; and Prometheus Unbound, 1820, by Percy Bysshe Shelley. John Keats’s Endymion: A Poetic Romance, 1818, is also prominent among new acquisitions from the Romantic period. Of particular interest is a copy of the gothic novel The Vampyre: A Tale, 1819, written at the time of Mrs. Shelley’s Frankenstein by John William Polidori, Lord Byron’s personal physician.

A Swinburne Masterpiece

The masterly imitation of classical Greek drama in Algernon Charles Swinburne’s Atalanta in Calydon brought this great Victorian poet instant fame upon its publication in 1865. Its first edition, recently acquired by the University of Kentucky, is a remarkable text in a remarkable setting, for the volume’s binding of white fabric with gilt roundels was the design of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Pre-Raphaelite painter and poet as well as intimate friend of Swinburne. The book enjoys a colorful reputation, for it was suggested by the now notorious bibliographer-collector Thomas J. Wise to exist in only one hundred copies. This assertion was only recently exploded by the celebrated Swinburne authority John S. Mayfield, of Washington, D.C., who heroically acquired one hundred and one copies of the famous book for his own library.
First edition of Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), with cover design by Dante Gabriel Rossetti
The Kentucky copy of this attractive item is an excellent example in near perfect condition.

**Fine Printing**

An important work of local architectural history as well as an example of modern fine printing has been added to the collection with the accession of *Elegant Homes of Lexington, Kentucky*, published by Arthur Graham at the Polyglot Press. This handsome portfolio consists of the text of an article printed in *The Commercial Tribune* of Cincinnati on 24 January 1897 and treating “choice examples of the most modern architecture from the Blue Grass country.” Along with the original story are six colorful serigraphic prints by Lexington artist Grace Perreiah depicting the houses described in the article. A commentary by architectural historian Walter Langsam, of Covington, accompanies the story and prints.

Another important acquisition in the book arts field is *Papermaking by Hand: A Book of Suspicions*, by Walter Hamady of the Perishable Press in Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin; the title page of this book is the work of calligrapher Hermann Zapf, who presented a workshop at the King Library Press’s first Seminar in Graphic Design in 1976.

**Kentuckiana**

The libraries have acquired a group of five letters of Henry Clay written between 1821 and 1851, along with approximately sixty pieces of manuscript material relating to Col. Eugene Erwin, Clay’s favorite grandson, who was killed while serving in the Confederate forces at the siege of Vicksburg in 1863. The lot includes a bovine pedigree signed by Clay—proof of his interest in livestock breeding. Another significant addition to our holdings of Henry Clay material is a letter written by Clay at Ashland, 22 September 1830, to James Madison. Clay sends a copy of a speech he made in Cincinnati on the problem of states’ rights and refers to the debate in South Carolina which would lead to the nullification movement there in 1832.

In addition to manuscripts, a variety of interesting printed material has been added to the Kentuckiana holdings, including two antebellum Kentucky imprints, one from Winchester and the other from Maysville. The first is *Principles of Politeness, and of*
Knowing the World, 1816, and the second is J.H. Hull’s Lectures on the English Language: Comprehending the Principles and Rules of Syntactical Parsing, 1834. The American bibliographer Douglas C. McMurtrie, in his 1932 Kentucky Imprints, was able to identify only one copy, incomplete, of the 1816 Winchester book. Of much greater significance, however, is George Nicholas’s anonymous To the Citizens of Kentucky, 1798, in which he defends the Republicans against the Federalists and opposes the excise tax which led to the Whiskey Rebellion. There are only two recorded copies of this Kentucky rarity. (The other is at the Henry E. Huntington Library in San Marino, California.) From among twentieth-century Kentucky writers we have acquired galleys of Thomas Merton’s Emblems of a Season of Fury, published in 1963.

—James D. Birchfield