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Library Notes: Selected Acquisitions [v. 1, no. 1]

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Selected Acquisitions
Books and Manuscripts

Three Henry Clay Letters
The following letters by the American statesman from Lexington were purchased this spring at auction at Sotheby’s. 1) Autograph letter signed, three pages, written at Ashland, 1 June 1829; directed to Dr. S. S. Griffin in Virginia, it discusses at length the advantages Kentucky offers those wishing to emigrate. 2) Autograph letter signed, one page, written at Philadelphia, 25 November 1833; written to Clay’s son Thomas, it conveys information and advice about the management of the Clay estate, Ashland. 3) Autograph letter signed, one page, written at Washington, 18 April 1840; in writing to A. J. Burnley, Clay gives his view of the current political atmosphere in the country during the Presidential campaign year. He gives a gloomy picture of the present state of affairs and predicts the defeat of President Van Buren. Purchased on the Samuel M. Wilson Fund.

Travels with Byron
An interesting addition to the collection of nineteenth-century literature in English is John Cam Hobhouse’s Journey Through Albania and Other Provinces of Turkey in Europe and Asia, to Constantinople During the Years 1809 and 1810, 2d edition (London, 1813). Written in the form of a series of letters, this handsomely bound travel journal (with colored plates and maps) gives an intimate view on one of the world’s most curious nations. Hobhouse includes anecdotal material about Lord Byron, a lifelong friend. Hobhouse and Byron travelled together in Albania, Greece and Turkey in 1809 and 1810, shortly after their graduation from Cambridge. Hobhouse was Byron’s best man and executor of his estate, as well as a source for portions of Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage.
An Early History of the World

An influential piece of Americana recently acquired is the Rapsodiae Historiarum Enneadum of Marcus Antonius Sabellicus (Lyon, 1535). It is an universal history from the earliest times, written in a series of “enneads,” or nine-book segments. Sabin notes its early (1503) reference to Columbus’s discovery of America. Because it was written before there was anything other than a few letters and unofficial second-hand descriptions, it forms the basis of all subsequent accounts of Columbus’s voyage.

Sabellicus (whose real name was Marcantonio Coccio, 1436-1506) was member of Pomponius Laetus’s Academy, librarian at the Marciana, and one of the scholars who worked on the texts for the Aldine Press at Venice.

Cleanth Brooks Correspondence

The Libraries have acquired a collection of twenty-nine letters from Cleanth Brooks, a Kentuckian who is one of the most influential editors and critics of the twentieth century, and Arthur Mizener, also a critic and a professor of English at Cornell. The correspondence covers the years from 1939 to 1964 which Brooks began as managing editor (with Robert Penn Warren) of The Southern Review and ended as Gray Professor of Rhetoric at Yale University. Brooks discusses in detail the management of Southern Review and reasons for its demise and comments on the many literary figures he was meeting regularly, including Allen Tate, Robert Lowell, and Jean Stafford.

Jesse Stuart Correspondence

An extensive correspondence between Kentucky’s poet-laureate Jesse Stuart and Carlton F. Wells, who taught English at the University of Michigan from 1920 to 1977, has been acquired. The collection of sixty letters spans a period of over forty years, 1935-1977, beginning when Stuart was principal of Greenup County High School. Stuart fully reveals his rich and exuberant personality in the correspondence as well as his personal views about people, politics, religion, and, of course, his writing.