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A Special List

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A Special List

Abstract

Contextual essay about a manuscript fragment (LJS 431) which contains a 16th century list of books seen or purchased in Italy by Juan Páez de Castro (1512-1570).

Keywords

Book History, Early Printing, Manuscript, Phillipps

Disciplines

History

Comments

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11 *A Special List*

Saturday
Aug 2012

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≈ 2 COMMENTS

Tags
LJS 431

Returning from a mid-summer hiatus I thought I would highlight a unique item from our collections which was digitized this July. Over the past several years thanks to **funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities** the Penn libraries have been hard at work digitizing the majority of their pre-1800 manuscripts and putting them online on a special “**Penn in Hand**” site. Part of this project involves digitizing all of the manuscripts generously given by Larry Schoenberg and Barbara Brizdle as part of their **landmark gift to Penn libraries**.

Many of the Schoenberg manuscripts are ornate and **beautifully illustrated** – the kinds of manuscripts whose value strikes even the uninitiated viewer. Schoenberg however had an eye for collecting manuscripts which went beyond just the glossy and visually appealing to those which had real intellectual value or which captured the intellectual history of a particular moment in time. In some ways, it is often harder to find quotidian manuscripts produced to serve an immediate purpose and unlikely to survive due to their visual appeal and value. The manuscript fragment featured today is one of these rare glimpses into the everyday past.

□ WELCOME

Welcome to Unique at Penn, part of the family of University of Pennsylvania Libraries blogs. Every week this space will feature descriptions and contextualization of items from the collections of the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. The site focuses on those materials held by Penn which are in some sense “unique” - drawn from both our special and circulating collections, whether a one-of-a-kind medieval manuscript or a twentieth-century popular novel with generations of student notes penciled inside.

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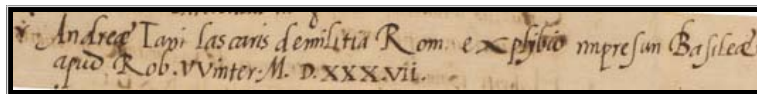
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Penn LJS 431: Manuscript list of manuscript and printed books, circa 1545

This one manuscript leaf provides a window on several intertwined layers of cultural and intellectual history both in its content and its history as a material object. The two images above show the front and back of the leaf, torn from a larger volume. In fact, if you look closely you can see the page number "136" written in the right hand corner of the front side. At first glance this is clearly a list, complete with bullet points like we might use today. But what kind of list?

The first clue to the contents of the leaf are the roman numerals boldly scrawled below several of the entries. A close reading of these entries reveals them to refer to printed books, with the name of a publisher as well as the date and location of printing stated. For example:



Entry reading "Andree Jani Lascaris de militia Rom ex plybio impresum Basileae apud Rob. Winter MDXXXVII" referring to Janus Lascaris' edition of Polybius printed in 1537 by Robert Winter in Basel [USTC 631380].

A list of books might seem fairly pedestrian but this particular list should hold our attention for a number of reasons. The original owner of the manuscript was the Spanish humanist, bibliophile, and

famous for advocating for the establishment of state libraries, lobbying Philip II of Spain to establish a library in Spain to provide scholars access to the ever-growing flood of books coming out of

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the printing houses of Europe [1].

He likely acquired or created this list sometime during his travels through the libraries of Italy in the 1540s (he attended the 1545 Council of Trent)[2]. LJS 431 above was once part of a much larger mass of manuscripts owned by de Castro relating to his book-collecting forays in Italy. Appropriately, it has continued to fascinate bibliophiles and since the 16th century has passed through the hands of some of the world's most famous book collectors and dealers before arriving at Penn [3].

A note about the list written when it was still part of the larger mass of de Castro's papers described it as a "Catalog of new books that are now recently arrived out of Germany and Paris and Italy and Lyons." [4] This description fits well with what de Castro would likely have been doing, seeking out the latest and most interesting texts for his patrons whether in print or in manuscript copies. I've combed through the list and provided full titles and publication information on each one (available in the chart below). Most of the titles are editions of Latin and Greek works but also included on the list are two apologetic treatises for Christianity against Islam written by the Byzantine emperor **John VI (1292-1383)** and printed in Basel in 1543.

Given the fact that printed and manuscript texts circulated alongside each other in the 16th c. humanist world it is not surprising that de Castro and the unidentified scribe who wrote the list did not seem overly concerned about recording the form of a particular text. Of the 35 texts appearing on the list, there is evidence that 27 likely refer to printed editions available at the time with the rest existing only in manuscript form. For example, LJS 431 includes seven titles by the German humanist **Johannes Aventinus (1477-1534)** including his unfinished *Germania Illustrata* [5]. It is remarkable that de Castro found these present in Italy in the 1540s. Pieces of Aventinus' *Illustrata* exist today only in one manuscript copy in Salzburg and were not printed until the 19th century [6].

Likewise the list mentions two titles edited by the Dutch humanist Arnoldus Peraxylus Arlenius (1510-1582) which don't appear to have been printed and must have been circulating in manuscript copies. Like many humanists, Arlenius had been busy editing Greek and Latin manuscripts housed in the great libraries of Italy. For instance, the two titles below are examples of Arlenius working from classical manuscripts found in the library of Spanish ambassador Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-1575) – not surprisingly de Castro had used this same library in his travels as well.

Cataloging Blog

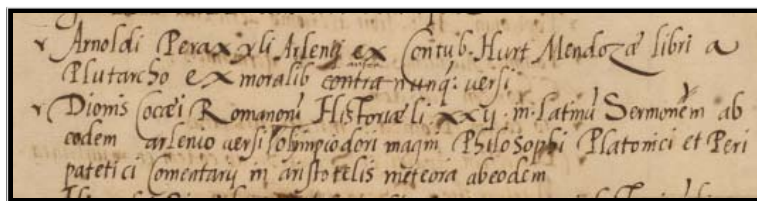
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Arnoldi Peraxii Arlenii ex Contub. Hurt. Mendoza libri a Plutarcho ex moralib. nunq. versi.

Dionis Coccei Romanorum Historia li. xxii m. Latinu Sermonem ab eodem Arlenio aersi olympiodori magni Philosophi Platonici et Peripatetici Comentarum in aristotelis meteorologia ab eodem

These works are likely: Arlenius' translation of Plutarch's *Moralia* from manuscripts in Mendoza's collection, Arlenius' translation of book 12 of Dio Cocceianus' *Historia Romana*, and Arlenius' translation of **Olympiodorus'** commentary on Aristotle's *Meteorologica* [7].

In short, this list of manuscripts, preserved and digitized at Penn as LJS 431, is a unique exemplar for teaching the history of humanistic learning and the circulation of texts and ideas. I hope the list of titles below inspires further research and brings more attention to this scrap of history.

The table below gives the full titles and publication information (including links to the **St. Andrew's USTC**) on the titles listed in LJS 431 in order beginning with the top of the first page:

LJS 431 : Sheet1	
Transcription	Full Title
	De morbis sive affectibus corporis de seminis humani natura polybi illustris medici, Hippocratis quondam & discipuli & successoris, opuscula aliquot nunc primum è Graeco in Latinum conversa, nempè de tuenda ualetudine, sive de ratione victus sanorum, liber I. De seminis humani natura, liber I. De morbis, sive affectibus corporis, libri II.
Polibii libri nunc Vulgati	Albano torino vitodurano interprete.
	Fragmenta duo e sexto Polybii historiarum libro de diuersis rebus
Sheet1	

[1]

For more on de Castro see Arantxa Domingo Malvadi's magisterial study *Bibliofilia humanista en tiempos de Felipe II: la biblioteca de Juan Páez de Castro* (Salamanca, 2011) as well as her freely accessible biographical essay on de Castro [here](#).

[2]

The list is not in de Castro's hand except for the last two works listed on the verso. A similar list of the manuscripts and books in what is likely the same hand as LJS 431 (also of similar dimensions and bearing page number "171") which has the same provenance was offered for sale in 2010 by Konrad Meuschel. See item 10 in his catalog [here](#)

[3]

LJS 431 and many other manuscripts belonging to de Castro have changed hands many times before coming to Penn. After de Castro's death many of his papers ended up in the collection of Don Simon de Santander San Juan and later his nephew Carlos Antonio de Santander (1752-1813) and later sold by the London dealer Thomas Thorpe to perhaps the most famous manuscript collector of all time, Sir Thomas Phillipps where they were grouped together as Phillipps Ms. 4135. This group was eventually acquired as part of a large lot of Phillipps' unsold manuscripts by New York dealer H.P. Kraus. It was later sold in lots, this leaf being sold to Schoenberg in 2002 [Kraus Catalog 219 n. 202]. For a listing of many of the manuscripts which formed Phillipps Ms. 4135 see P.O. Kristeller, *Iter Italicum* (Brill, 1990), v. 5, p. 359 and Malvadi, pp. 293-5.

[4]

In Latin: "catalogus librorum novorum qui nunc tam ex Germania quam Lutetia Parisorum et ex Lugduno et Italia recenter venere..." given as part of the description of Phillipps Ms. 4135 see Malvadi, p. 294.

[5]

Aventinus (Johann Turmair), who wrote the famed *Bayersche Chronik* began what was planned to be a massive Latin history of all Germany but only the index and one chapter were published. The index in 1630 (USTC 666584) and one chapter after his death in 1641 (USTC 622363) both in Nuremberg. For more on Aventinus and the project see Gerald Strauss, *Historian in an Age of Crisis: the Life and Work of Johannes Aventinus, 1477-1534* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963) as well as David J. Collins S.J. "The Germania illustrata, Humanist History, and the Christianization of Germany" in Van Liere et al. *Sacred History: Uses of the Christian Past in the Renaissance World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 101-120.

[6]

Stiftsbibliothek Sankt Peter, Salzburg Ms. b.X.35. Printed in volume 6 of [Karl Holm et al., Johannes Turmair's genannt Aventius: Sämmtliche Werke](#) (Munich, 1880-1908), pp. 72-164

[7]

The noted Swiss humanist Konrad Gesner saw copies of these same

works when he visited Italy in 1543. See M. Schanz, "Über Arnold Arlenius Peraxylus" *Zeitschrift für die österreichischen Gymnasien* vol. 35 (1884), p. 169. For another account of these manuscript translations see Pierre Bayle's *General Dictionary* v. 8 (London, 1739), p. 267.



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About Mitch Fraas

Mitch Fraas is the Scholar in Residence at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Pennsylvania Libraries. He is also the interim director of the Penn digital humanities forum. At Penn, Mitch works on a variety of projects cutting across general and special collections, with a special focus on digital humanities. He holds doctoral and master's degrees in history from Duke University and earned his bachelor's degree at Boston College. His doctoral dissertation examined the legal culture of British India in the 17th and 18th centuries, arguing for the existence of a unified early modern British imperial legal culture whether in Philadelphia, Bombay, or London.

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THOUGHTS ON "A SPECIAL LIST"



Nancy Shawcross said:

August 11, 2012 at 7:38 pm

The National Endowment for the Humanities has made possible the digitization of Penn's pre-1800 Western manuscripts. Its generous support through two grants totaling nearly \$600,000 has allowed us to share Penn's unique collection of non-print primary source materials.

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adminuatpa *said:*

August 11, 2012 at 8:04 pm

Thanks Nancy for mentioning the NEH grant. I've just added a link in the post with the press release.

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