A Special List

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The attached spreadsheet contains an edited rendering of the books mentioned in the 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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The attached spreadsheet contains an edited rendering of the books mentioned in the list.
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.
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:


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
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.
These works are likely: Arlenius’ translation of Plutarch’s *Moria* 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LJS 431 : Sheet1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transcription</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polibii libri nunc Vulgatii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.


[5] Aventinus (Johann Turmair), who wrote the famed Bayerische 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.


[7] The noted Swiss humanist Konrad Gesner saw copies of these same
works when he visited Italy in 1543. See M. Schanz, "Uber 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.
Thanks Nancy for mentioning the NEH grant. I've just added a link in the post with the press release.