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NOTES AND NEWS

ON 19th July the Chairman (Professor Emeritus Sir Harold Bailey) and members of The International Congress of Mithraic Studies were welcomed to the Library.

This Congress, held at the University of Manchester from the 13th to the 20th of that month and the first international gathering of its kind, was recognized by the Imperial Court of Iran as part of the official celebrations of the twenty-fifth centenary of the founding of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great. Special exhibitions were arranged in the Library Council Room and Committee Room in honour of the visit.

MITHRAIC
CONGRESS:
EXHIBITIONS

The former was drawn from the Library's Eastern manuscripts. It included notable texts from the Persian collection, together with illuminated codices of the works of Firdausī, Nizāmī, and other classical writers, as also examples of Turkish miniature painting. Among Arabic manuscripts shown were early copies of the Kur'ān in Cufic and a rare fifteenth-century trilingual text in Arabic, Persian and Eastern Turkish. Sanskrit and Armenian codices on display also included a number which are illuminated, among them an Armenian *Gospel Book* illustrated by an artist (Jacob of Djulfa) the only other examples of whose work are apparently in Soviet Armenia. The Ethiopic collection was represented by a manuscript of the Argānona Weddasē of 1590 and an eighteenth-century text of homilies for the festivals of St. Michael from Gondar, while from the Syriac collection came a sixth-century *Gospel Book*. Another early Biblical text was a seventh/eighth century Sahidic version of St. Luke from the Coptic manuscripts. Religious texts in Mongolian and Pali were also exhibited, the latter from a

collection presented to the Library by Rhys Davids. Perhaps most unusual as regards script, decoration and content were manuscripts of the shamans of the Mō-Sō, a non-Chinese people living in the Mekong valley and the provinces of South-West China.

In the Committee Room were displayed printed materials from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. They included the St. Christopher woodcut, the earliest European woodcut with an undisputed date (1423), and, from our blockbooks, an *Apocalypsis Sancti Johannis* of 1465 with, beside it, the only surviving printer's block of the fifteenth century. The first substantial book printed from movable type, the Gutenberg Bible, was also shown. Other examples of early printing included two editions (1483 and 1490) of *Bidpai*. Our Polyglot Bibles were represented by the first and most famous of them, the Complutensian, printed in Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek and Latin, and the fourth and latest, the London Polyglot, in Arabic, Syriac, Chaldee, Samaritan, Greek and Persian. Travel books included volumes relating to Persia, India and the East published between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, among them works by Breydenbach and Marco Polo. To encourage the study of Persian and Sanskrit in the eighteenth century the East India Company produced a group of texts, mainly with a Calcutta imprint, and of these rare works a selection was also exhibited. Finally, a group of engravings included a number showing depictions of Mithras.

The extent and quality of the Library's early medical books is perhaps not generally appreciated. In fact, many scholars may be unaware that such volumes are to be found in any numbers amongst our collections. A recent assessment has revealed that we possess nearly 300 medical books printed before 1700 and of these 108 are incunabula. It was intended to include our holdings in a supplement to the catalogue of the Manchester Medical Society's pre-1700 books in Manchester University Library, but it was decided to postpone preparation of the supplement until a later date, when all the early science books in the Rylands Library could be recorded and listed.

PRE-1700
MEDICAL
BOOKS IN
THE RYLANDS
LIBRARY

The early fathers of medicine are well represented in first editions of the works of Galen, Hippocrates, Avicenna, Oribasius and Dioscorides. The range of subject of the ancient writers on medical topics is wide and varied: in his *Tetrabiblion*, first published in 1534 by the Aldine Press, Aetius of Armida, a sixth-century writer, described a method of treating aneurysm, and his contemporary, Alexander of Tralles, made the earliest study of parasitology in his *Opera medica* published at Paris in 1548. Advances in medieval medicine are illustrated by the thirteenth-century treatise on urinoscopy by Joannes Actuarius, issued at Paris in 1522, and by the important work on toxicology, *Tractatus de venenis*, written by Petrus de Abano, published at Mantua in 1473. The first printed medical dictionary was also compiled in the thirteenth century by Simone Cordo and the Library's collections include the second edition, *Synonyma medicināe*, published at Milan in 1473.

The fifteenth-century preoccupation with the discovery or rediscovery of syphilis is reflected in several medical works in the Library. Joseph Grünpeck in the first edition of his *Tractatus de pestilentiali scorra*, c. 1496, made significant conclusions concerning the duration and progress of the disease, and Niccolò Leonicensino in his *Libellus de epidemia quam vulgo morbum Gallicum vocant* (Venice, Aldus Manutius, 1497) described for the first time syphilitic hemiplegia. The invention of printing quickly led to the use of the vernacular in textbooks of medicine and surgery. The German surgeon Hieronymus Braunschweig issued one of the earliest illustrated medical books in his own language, *Dis ist das Buch der Cirurgia*, Augsburg, 1497. Notable for its detailed description of gun-shot wounds, the work was so popular that it was translated into English in a rare edition published at London in 1525. Another English edition of the same author, *The vertuose booke of Distyllacyon*, London, L. Andrewe, 1527, is of great rarity; only a few copies are known to be extant. To the fifteenth century also belongs Girolamo Fracastoro, author of a famous poem on syphilis, whose more prosaic work represented in his *Opera omnia*, Venice, 1555, was of genuine scientific value, especially in the field of epidemiology.

The cruellest epidemic disease of the age was, of course, the plague, and the Library's collections include some rare and interesting books on the subject. One, *A litil boke for the pestilence*, 1485, based on the work of J. Jacobi, papal physician and colleague of Guy de Chauliac, is attributed to Bengt Knutsson, Bishop of Västerås, and is apparently unique; it has the added distinction of being the first medical work to be printed in England. Another, a collection of prayers by Paul Bushe, Bishop of Bristol, entitled *This lytell boke contayneth certayne gostly medycynes to eschewe the comen plague*, London, Redman, c. 1531, has a similar claim to great rarity. Later publications concerning the disease carry more scientific weight and are important to the historian as records of actual occurrences. Privy Council orders for limiting the spread of the disease were issued in 1625, and in the year of the great plague of 1665 the Royal College of Physicians published directions for the control of the epidemic.

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries witnessed a tremendous development in the literature associated with *materia medica* and the use of plants in the treatment of disease. The Library is rich in this branch of medical knowledge. It possesses the first illustrated herbal of 1485, the *Hortus sanitatis* of 1491, and an English translation of a Spanish work by Nicolas Monardes published in 1577 containing the first account of medicinal plants of the New World in Central America. It has also a 1636 edition of the text of the most famous of English herbalists, John Gerarde, and two editions of the London Pharmacopoeia, 1659 and 1661.

The major medical achievement of the sixteenth century was, however, in anatomy and surgery. As soon as the revolutionary procedure of dissecting corpses became part of medical studies, the way was paved for the publication of the first complete textbook of anatomy by the great Belgian surgeon Andreas Vesalius. The Library possesses the first and second editions of this masterpiece published in 1543 and 1555; the second, more sumptuous than the first, contains improvements in the text made by the author. Another anatomist, Charles Estienne, provided the earliest illustrations of whole systems,

venous, arterial and nervous, in his *De dissectione partium corporis humani*, Paris 1545, and his nephew, Henri Estienne, produced in 1564 a *Dictionarium medicum* which furnished the basis of modern anatomical nomenclature. A French surgeon, Jacques Guillemeau, pupil of Paré, wrote a classic work on ophthalmology which was translated into English in 1586 under the title *A worthy treatise of the eyes*. The progress made by sixteenth-century obstetricians and gynaecologists must not be ignored. In the Library's possession are the *Opera omnia*, 1606, and *Observationes anatomicæ*, 1562, of Girolamo Falloppio who gave accurate descriptions of the genito-urinary system; and there are three editions, 1565, 1604 and 1634, of *The birth of mankynde*, the English version of a useful handbook for midwives written by Eucharius Roesslin.

The seventeenth-century medical books in the Library contain more technical discoveries and reveal a more clinical approach. The first edition of Harvey's *Exercitationes de generatione animalium*, 1651, corrected many erroneous ideas of the past. Regner de Graaf in his *Traitté de la nature et de l'usage du suc pancréatique*, Paris, 1666, described experiments on dogs to determine the quantity and nature of the pancreatic secretion. John Browne, author of *Adenochoiradelogia*, 1684, was the first to identify cirrhosis of the liver. Francesco Redi, a prominent Italian physician, in his *Esperienze intorno alla generazione degl'insetti*, 1668, disproved by experimental methods the theory of spontaneous generation.

In most collections of early medical books there are curiosities. In this category fall Christopher Irvine's treatise on "the rare and wonderful art of curing by sympathy" published in 1656 and Edward May's case history, issued in 1639 under the title *A most certaine and true relation of a strange monster or serpent found in the left ventricle of the heart of John Pennant*.

The following is a list of recent Library publications consisting of reprints of articles which appeared in the latest BULLETIN (Spring 1971):

RECENT
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"The Manson Memorial Lecture, 1970".
"Nicodemus and Jesus: Some Observations on Misunderstanding

and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel." By M. de Jonge, D.Theol., Professor of New Testament, University of Leiden. 8vo, pp. 23. Price 35p.

"Galatian Problems. 3. The 'Other' Gospel." By F. F. Bruce, M.A., D.D., Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 19. Price 30p.

"Antonin Artaud and the Avant-Garde Theatre." By G. F. A. Gadoffre, D. ès L., Ph.D., Professor of Modern French Literature in the University of Manchester. 8vo, pp. 8. Price 18p.

"Swift's Political 'Conversion' and his 'Lost' Ballad on the Westminster Election of 1710." By George P. Mayhew, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of English, California Institute of Technology. 8vo, pp. 31. Price 40p.

"Landor's Letters to his Family: 1802-1825." By A. LaVonne Ruoff, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English, University of Illinois at Chicago Circle. 8vo, pp. 36. Price 50p.

The following reprints consist of the two articles on these subjects which appeared in the BULLETINS for Autumn 1970 and Spring 1971:

"Prelude to the Last Decade: Dante Gabriel Rossetti in the Summer of 1872." By William E. Fredeman, M.A., Ph.D., Professor of English in the University of British Columbia. 8vo, pp. 106. Price £1.25.

"The Gospel Book of Abbess Svanhild of Essen in the John Rylands Library." By Rainer Kahsnitz, Kunsthistorisches Institut, University of Bonn. 8vo, pp. 84, with two plates. Price £1.10.

The following is a list of the public lectures (the seventieth series) which have been arranged for delivery in the Lecture Hall of the Library during the current session 1971-72 at 5.15 p.m.:

13 October 1971. "Dickens and his Readers." By J. D. Jump, John Edward Taylor Professor of English Literature in the University of Manchester.

10 November 1971. "Galatian Problems. 4. The Date of

the Epistle." By F. F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the University of Manchester.

8 December 1971. "Agriculture or Industry? A French Dilemma at the Period of Henri IV." By F. E. Sutcliffe, Professor of Classical French Literature in the University of Manchester.

19 January 1972. "Man and Nature—The Ecological Controversy and the Old Testament." By James Barr, Professor of Semitic Languages and Literatures in the University of Manchester.

9 February 1972. "The Quest for Personal Identity in Stoic Thought." By G. B. Kerferd, Hulme Professor of Latin in the University of Manchester.

8 March 1972. "Irish Immigrants and Anglo-American Relations." By M. A. Jones, Commonwealth Fund Professor of American History in the University of London.

10 May 1972. "Law and Letters in Fourteenth-Century Durham." By C. R. Cheney, Professor of Medieval History in the University of Cambridge.

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