

The Acquisition of the First Sixteenth-Century Books for the Grand Valley State University Library¹

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Among the first books purchased for what was to become the Grand Valley State University Library were fourteen that were printed between 1502 and 1587, relatively early dates in the history of printing from moveable type. Where they came from and how they were acquired provides an interesting historical footnote to the establishment of Grand Valley as a four-year liberal arts college and its library.²

The goal that Grand Valley's first president, James H. Zumberge, had set for the college library was to have in place and cataloged some 10,000 volumes by the official opening of the institution in September 1963.³ One of the first staff hired by Zumberge in July 1962 was Stephen Ford, who as Library Director, was given the task of meeting this goal and approximately one year in which to accomplish it. Identifying the books necessary for a new college library in its first year of operation is not especially problematic because there are many bibliographies, catalogues, and professional literature that provide advice and specific guidelines for library development. More difficult can be the actual acquisition of

¹ This is a revised and expanded version of "Sixteenth Century Books in the University Library," *Grand Valley Review*, 6 (Spring 1991), 12-27.

² Stephen Ford (1924-1999), Librarian Emeritus, provided invaluable assistance with his recollections concerning the purchase of the Reeves library. In addition, Thomas Greenslade, archivist at Kenyon College, was able to supply some relevant biographical information on William Peters Reeves.

³ In its first year Grand Valley offered only freshman-level courses to its 226 enrollees; the second year both freshman and sophomore courses were on the schedule, and so on.

the books themselves, because what are considered standard works for some reason may not be available either from publishers or even from the antiquarian book trade for reasonable prices.

Three weeks after his appointment as Grand Valley's Library Director, Ford received a letter from Frances J. Brewer, Curator of Rare Books at the Detroit Public Library:

... We have been offered for sale the attached list of books which was the library of Mr. [William Peters] Reeves, forty years English Professor of Kenyon College. The list of books contains so many duplicate titles for the Detroit Public Library that it does not seem reasonable for us to purchase these books. However, for a college library just starting, the titles seemed extremely useful, especially since the library [i.e. Reeves'] includes so many standard sets....⁴

The letter went on to indicate that the widow of Professor Reeves, Florence Beckwith Reeves, hoped to sell her husband's books that numbered approximately 650 titles in 1000 volumes for \$1500. The list of books showed a scholar's library strong in the liberal arts, not only in the expected areas of language and literature, but also in fine arts, philosophy, religion, and the political and social sciences. To be able to obtain a substantial collection of standard authors and reference materials at one stroke was a very attractive proposition, even more so since the per-volume price was quite low, even in 1962 dollars. Negotiations for the purchase of the Reeves library began at once.

The books had originally been offered to the Detroit Public Library by Arthur G. Reeves, a prominent Detroit banker and nephew of Florence Reeves, who was acting as her agent and personal representative. Ultimately arrangements were made for Ford to inspect the entire collection at the Reeves home in Gambier, Ohio in October 1962.

⁴ Frances J. Brewer, letter to Stephen Ford, 26 July 1962.

During the visit to Gambier it became evident that the Reeves library indeed would make a fine beginning to the Grand Valley library; but at the same time Ford realized that a good part of it contained books of such specialized and esoteric natures that seemed to have no logical place in Allendale "at the present stage in the development of our library."⁵ Consequently, Ford offered to purchase only those works of standard authors and criticism that would be of immediate use to the new college, which comprised only about half of the Reeves library. Florence Reeves, however, was insistent that her husband's books be sold *en bloc* and in response, the college offered \$1150 to her for the entire collection. It was accepted.

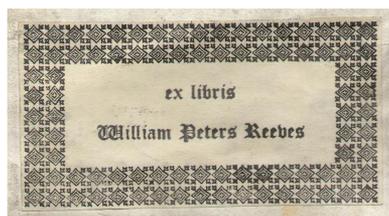
Upon their arrival at Grand Valley, the books were sorted and the preferred standard authors and sets were processed, cataloged, and shelved; they duly became the nucleus of the 10,000-volume opening day collection. The remainder of the Reeves library was added to the library over a period of time as the college and its curriculum grew and the sixteenth-century books that were part of it became the college library's first rare book collection.

William Peters Reeves (1865-1945) was born in Richmond, Indiana to Simeon and Lucretia Reeves. He attended Earlham College in Richmond before transferring to Johns Hopkins University where he received his A.B. degree in 1889 and Ph.D. in 1893, his dissertation entitled, *A Study in the Language of Scottish Prose Before 1600*. He taught at Union College and Iowa State College of Agricultural and Mechanic Arts (now Iowa State University) before his arrival at Kenyon College as professor of English and chair of the department in 1900. He held both positions continuously until his retirement in 1935.⁶ Between 1910 and 1911 he married Florence M. Beckwith (1879-1970), a teacher of music who lived only a block from him in Gambier.

⁵ Stephen Ford, letter to Florence Reeves, 16 October 1962.

⁶ "Dr. Reeves, Beloved by Kenyon Men, Dies." *Kenyon Alumni Bulletin*, 3 (Feb. 1945), 1.

Besides his love of scholarship, Reeves' interests and talents were many. He was the founder of the Ohio Athletic Conference in 1902, and took active interest in it; he played the violin and enjoyed producing dramatic presentations; and he reputedly was a marksman with both rifle and pistol.⁷ Reeves was highly regarded as a teacher by both students and faculty. His personal library reflected his wide interests, and memorial tributes at the time of his death made pointed references to these books. He was such an eminently respected figure on campus that a reading room in the Kenyon College Library was named in his honor at a special ceremony in 1936, shortly after his retirement. The dedicatory plaque proclaims that William Peters Reeves, "who for more than a third of a century has kindled the love of books in the hearts of Kenyon men."⁸



Printed bookplates of William Peters Reeves

⁷ Thomas Boardman Greenslade, *Kenyon College, Its Third Half Century* (Gambier, Ohio: The College, 1975), 33.

⁸ "Reeves Room Dedicated as New Library Reading Room." *Kenyon Collegian* (10 Mar. 1936), 1.

Catalogue of the Sixteenth-Century Books in the Reeves Collection

Of the fourteen books that comprise this part of the Reeves collection, more than half deal with Italian Renaissance literature and history, one of the scholarly interests of their former owner. Some of the rest are various commentaries on Aristotle and works dealing with medicine and religion. Most of the books appear to have been purchased during European travels of Reeves.

The following catalogue lists the books by date of printing, followed by standard bibliographical information with additional notes where appropriate.



1502

Dante Alighieri (1256-1321).

Le terze rime di Dante. Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1502.

Colophon: Venetiis in aedib. Aldi accurantissime Men. Aug. M.DII.

Dolphin and anchor printer's device on H3v.

Collation: Octavo. a-z⁸ A-G⁸ H⁴ (244 l).

Notes: Leaf f8 supplied in manuscript. Binding: Early 19th century half leather-covered pasteboard; spine stamped in gold: DANTE / INF.PUR.PAR / - / ED. ALDI / 1502. Leaf size: 154 x 95 mm.

Provenance: Ink inscription on H3v: "P. Carime / Paris 1848."

References: Adams D-83. Aldine Press 52.5. BMSTC-I 209.

Shelf mark: RARE PQ 4302 .B02

1505

Avicenna (980-1037).

Liber Canonis Avicenne revicenne revisus & ab omni errore mandaque purgatus summa quam cum diligentia impressus.

Venice: Octavianus Scotus for Bonetus Locatellus, 1505.

Colophon: Anno salutis M.CCCCV. die 24 Januarii.

Collation: Quarto. a-p⁸ q¹⁰ r-z⁸ 7⁸ 8⁸ 9⁸ A-L⁸ M-N⁶ O-Z⁸ aa¹⁰ bb-ee⁸ ff¹⁰ gg¹² (453 l).

Notes: Leaves misnumbered. Ink marginalia. Binding: Early 18th(?) century vellum covered boards; spine labeled in black ink: "Avicenna." Leaf size: 242 x 174 mm.
Provenance: Purchased by Reeves in Rome from C.E. Rappaport in 1929 for \$52. Reeves bookplate.
References: Durling 378.
Shelf mark: RARE RA 128.3 .A94 1505

1506

Council of Constance (1414-1418).

Acta scitu dignissima docteq[ue] concinnata Constantie[n]sis Concilii celebratissimi. Paris: Jean Petit, 1506.

Colophon: Anno domini millesimo quingentesimo-sexto die vero. xii. mensis maii.

Collation: Octavo. [a]⁸ b-x⁸ 2x⁴ (172 l).

Notes: Manuscript waste on front pastedown. Binding: Original(?) vellum covered boards with later repairs to spine; spine labeled in black ink: "Acta / Concilii / Constantiensis." Leaf size: 136 x 96 mm.

Provenance: Unknown.

References: BMSTC-F 121.

Shelf mark: RARE BX 830 1414 .A2 1506

1516

Thomas, Aquinas, Saint (1225?-1274).

Interpretamenta sanctissimi doctoris Thome Aquinatis in libros de celo [et] mundo Aristotelis: annotationib[us] tertium [et] commentorum Averrois: que in aliis voluminibus alias impressis minime habentur: in marginibus ornate: ac cum additionibus Petri alvernatis. Textus Aristotelicus cum duplici translatione: antiqua videlicet [et] Joannis Argyropyli: que in aliis voluminibus minime habetur. Fratris Hieronymi Savonarole Ferrariensis tractatus: in quo dividuntur o[mn]es sci[enti]e nuperrime in lucem editis. Tabula ordinatissima: que continet omnes questiones q[ua]s sanctus doctor solvit. Venice: Luca-Antonio Giunta, 1516.

Colophon: Venetijs impressa per d. Lucantonium de giunta florentinum. 4. Decembris. 1516. Leonardo lauretano imperante.

Collation: Folio. ⅆ⁶ A-L⁸ M⁶ (100 l); signatures K3 and K4 reversed.

Notes: Woodcut initials, diagrams, and printer's device. Binding: 19th century paste-paper covered boards. Leaf size: 306 x 213 mm.

Provenance: Ink inscription: "est l[ib]ri Aug:^m di Piramo[?]" Reeves bookplate.

References: Other copies only at Claremont Colleges (California) and University of Oxford.

Shelf mark: RARE QB 41 .A7 T5 1516

1543

Jean, de Jandun (1285?-1328).

Joannis Janduni philosophi peripatetici quaestiones in libris de caelo & mundo Aristotelis Stagiritae, nuper emendatissime lucubratae. Jacobus Philippus de Pellibus Nigris Troianus artium & medicinae doctor: moralemque philosophiam Patavii ordinarie legens nuper a Nicoletto Vernia theatino, emendatum exoravit. Venice:

Octavianus Scotus, di Amadei, 1543.

Collation: Folio. Aa-ee⁶ (30 l).

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's devices. Binding: 19th century paste-paper covered boards. Leaf size: 316 x 221 mm.

Provenance: Purchased by Reeves in Rome from Alberto Bocca in April 1930 for £60. Reeves bookplate.

References: Only other copy at University of Manchester.

Shelf mark: RARE QB 41 .A7 J6 1543

1553

Petrarca, Francesco (1304-1374).

Il Petrarca con la spositione di M. Giovanni Andrea Gesualdo. Al magnif. M. Bernardo Privli, fu del magnifico M. Giacomo.

Venice: Domenico Giglio, 1553.

Collation: Quarto. aa-bb⁸ cc⁶ A⁴ B-Z⁸ Y⁶ AA-VV⁸ XX⁴ a-i⁸ (438 l).

Notes: Woodcuts, woodcut initials and printer's device. Binding: 18th century(?) calf with spine stamped in gold, "PETRARCHA / POSITIONE / DI / GESUALDO" stamped in gold. Leaf size: 207 x 149 mm.

Provenance: Ink inscription, "Strevelshou_[?] Consilio 1737."

Engraved bookplate [Russian], "Библиотека к Гидрдр. Дено."

[Library of the Hydrographic Department, Imperial Russian Navy].

Pencil inscription from William Dudley Foulke (1848-1935), "WP Reeves / from his friend / WD Foulke / July 20/[19]15." Reeves bookplate.

References: BMSTC-I 505.

Shelf mark: RARE PQ 4476 .B53

1554

Petrarca, Francesco (1304-1374).

Francisci Petrarcae Florentini ... Opera que extant omnia. Haec quidem omnia nunc iterum summa diligentia à mendis repurgata atque innumerabilibus in locis, genuinae integritati restituta, & in Tomos quatuor distincta ... Insigniorvm atqve doctissimorvm in re literaria uirorum, de hoc autore testimonia in Praefatione habes.

Basel: Henricus Petrus, 1554. 4 vols. in 2.

Collation: Folio. v.1: †⁴ ††⁶ †††⁴ A-Z⁸ aa-pp⁸ qq¹⁰; v.2-4: Aa-Zz⁸ AA-OO⁸ PP⁶ QQ⁸ AAa-HHh⁸ AAA-DDD⁸ EEE¹⁰

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's devices. Binding: 18th century(?) calf with spine stamped in gold, "FRANCISCI / PETRARCH / OPERA / OMNIA" stamped in gold. Leaf size: 309 x 199 mm.
Provenance: Ink inscription, "Madalo. sca. I. cas. 3." Ink inscription on title page, "Hic liber est expurgatus[?]." Ink inscription, "Purchased for W.P.R. by J.S.R. from / F. Olschski. Florence / cost \$32.40."
References: Adams P-776. BMSTC-G 685.
Shelf mark: RARE PQ 4475 .A1 1554

1557

Jean, de Jandun (1285?-1328).

Quaestiones super Parvis naturalibus, cum Marci Antonii Zimarae De movente et moto, ad Aristotelis & Averrois intentionem, absolutissima quaestione, ac variis margineis scholiis hinc inde ornatae. Venice: Hieronymus Scotus, 1557.

Collation: Folio. π^2 A-X⁴ Y⁶ (92 l).

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's devices. Binding: 19th century(?) vellum-covered boards with leather talle, "JANDUNI / PARVA / NATURALIA" stamped in gold. Leaf size: 315 x 215 mm.

Provenance: Printed paper label, "Pierre Duhem," (1861-1916) professor of physics, historian of science at Bordeaux. Purchased by Reeves on 24 April 1930 from Salamander Book Shop (Bloomsbury, London) for £2-2-0. Reeves bookplate.

References: Only other copy at University of Oxford.
Shelf mark: RARE B 444 .J6 1557

1559

Villani, Giovanni (d. 1348).

La prima [-seconda] parte delle Historie universali se suoi tempi di Giovan Villani cittadino fiorentino, nuovamente ristampata con tavole necessarie e postille in margine delle cose notabili, fatte per m. Remigio fiorentino. Venice: Giunti di Fiorenza, 1559.

Collation: Quarto. *⁸ **¹⁰ A-Z⁸ a-o⁸ p⁴; *⁶ Aa-Pp⁸ ([18], 588, [12], [6], 232, [8] p.).

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's devices. Binding: 18th century(?) $\frac{3}{4}$ calf over marbled boards with "G. VILLANI / HISTORIE / 1559" stamped in gold on spine. Leaf size: 207 x 149 mm.

Provenance: Engraved armorial bookplate of Count Dmitri Petrovich Boutourlin (1763-1829). Reeves bookplate.

References: BMSTC-I 726.

Shelf mark: RARE DG 737 .A2 V4 1559

1561

Bruni, Leonardo (1369-1444).

La historia universale de suoi tempi di M. Lionardo Aretino. Nella qual si contengono tutte le guerre fatte tra principi in Italia, & spetialmente da fiorentini in diversi tempi fino al MCCCCIII; con la giunta delle cose fatte da quel tempo fino all'anno MDLX. Et con l'annotationi poste in margine a suoi luoghi. Venice: Francesco Sansovino, 1561.

Collation: Quarto. *⁶ A-Z⁸ AA-HH⁸ ([6], 237, [16] p.).

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's device. Binding: 19th century(?) vellum-covered boards with "L. ARET: / STO. VNI. / DAL EDIF / DI FIRE / AL. MDLX / TR. D'ACC" stamped in gold on spine. Leaf size: 199 x 146 mm.

Provenance: Signature in ink: "Wm Peters Reeves / Gambier, Ohio."

References: Adams A-1560. BMSTC-I 128.

Shelf mark: RARE DG 737 .A2 B819 1561

1573

Seneca, Lucius Annaeus (ca. 4 BCE-65 CE).

L. Annaei Senecae, philosophi stoicorum omnium acutissimi, Opera quae extant omnia: Coelii Secundi Curionis vigilantissima cura castigata, & in novam prorsus faciem, nimirum propriam & suam, mutata: quorum lectio non modò ad bene dicendum, verumetiam ad bene beate[ue] vivendum, prodesse plurimùm potest. Post Herculeus insuper C.S.C. labores, Vincentii Pralli H. opera ac studio, innumeris in locis emendata ac restituta. Totius emendationis ratio, quidq[ue] superiori aeditioni accesserit, ex sequentibus statim cognosces. Accessit index rerum et verborum copiosus. Basel: Eusebius Episcopus, 1573.

Collation: Folio. α^{10} a-z⁶ A-Z⁶ Aa-Cc⁶ Dd⁸ (- α 2-3); ([16], 582, [22] p.).

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's devices. Binding: 19th century(?) ½ vellum over pasteboard with remnant of red leather label on spine: "L. ANNAEI: / SENECAE / PHILOSOPHI" stamped in gold. Leaf size: 327 x 220 mm.

Provenance: Ink inscription: "Collⁱ flo? Loci Jem. Catal^o intemps [?]." Reeves bookplate.

References: Adams S-887. BMSTC-G 809.

Shelf mark: RARE PA 6661 .A2 1573

1578

Dante Alighieri (1265-1321).

Dante con l'espositioni di Christoforo Landino et d'Alessandro Vellutello sopra la sua comedia dell' Inferno, del Purgatorio, & del Paradiso: con tavole argenti, & allegorie, & riformato,

riveduto, & ridotto alla sua vera lettura, per Francesco Sansovino, fiorentino. Venice: Giovanni Battista Sessa, 1578.

Collation: Folio. a⁸ b⁶ c⁴ d¹⁰ A-V⁸ X¹² Y-Z⁸ AA-ZZ⁸ AAA-CCC⁸; ([28], 163, [4], 164-392 l).

Notes: This book was never catalogued and is missing from the collection; it may not have been part of the final purchase.

Provenance: Unknown.

References: Adams D-108. BMSTC-I 210.

Shelf mark: None

1584

Petrarca, Francesco (1304-1374).

De' rimedi dell'una, et l'altra fortuna di M. Francesco Petrarca. Libri II. Tradotti per Remigio [Nannini] Fiorentino. Venice: Domenico Farri, 1584.

Collation: Octavo. A-Z⁸ Aa-Zz⁸ Aaa-Fff⁸ Ggg⁴.

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's device. Binding: 17th century(?) limp vellum with boards with "Petrarcha" in black ink on spine. Leaf size: 153 x 102 mm.

Provenance: Ink inscriptions: "Ad usum ___ Negri CRB[?]" ; "Dorsy Callignari et amicorum comodo"; "Cos_[?] Galear_[?] Scotti"; "Wm Peters Reeves / Gambier, Ohio."

References: BMSTC-I 506.

Shelf mark: RARE PQ 4495 .D4 N2 1584

1587

Medici, Sebastiano (d. 1595).

Sebastiani Medicis, Florentini, I.C., Equitis S. Stephani, & Prothon. Apostol., Summae decretorum, peccatorum, haeresum, virtutum. In quibus quicquid est fere' de fide, moribus, & iudicijs in decretalibus pontificum, decretis conciliorum, & monumentis patrum breui quodam compendio per communes conclusiones explicatur. Cum summarijs, ac indice locupletissimo in lucem editae. Venice: Bernardo Giunta, 1587.

Collation: Folio. †⁴ A-Q⁸; 2A⁶ 3A-N⁸ O¹⁰; 2†² 4A-I⁸ K⁶; *⁴ 5A-E⁸ F⁴ ([4], 136, [6], 115, [3], 78, [4], 44 l).

Notes: Woodcut initials and printer's devices. Binding: 17th century(?) vellum over thick paper boards with illegible title words in black ink on spine. Leaf size: 308 x 207 mm.

Provenance: Reeves bookplate.

References: Adams M-981.

Shelf mark: RARE BV 4626 .M42 1587



References

- Adams Adams, H.M. *Catalogue of Books Printed on the Continent of Europe, 1501-1600, in Cambridge Libraries* (Cambridge University Press, 1967).
- Aldine Press *The Aldine Press: Catalogue of the Ahmanson-Murphy Collection of Books by or Relating to the Press in the Library of the University of California, Los Angeles: Incorporating Works Recorded Elsewhere* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).
- BMSTC-F *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in France and of French Books Printed in Other Countries from 1470 to 1600 in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1966).
- BMSTC-G *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in the German-Speaking Countries and German Books Printed in Other Countries from 1455 to 1600 Now in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1962).
- BMSTC-I *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in Italy and of Italian Books Printed in Other Countries from 1465 to 1600 Now in the British Museum* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1958).
- Durling Durling, Richard J., comp. *A Catalogue of Sixteenth Century Printed Books in the National Library of Medicine* (Bethesda, Md.: The Library, 1967).
- Mortimer Mortimer, Ruth, comp. *Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts. Part 2, Italian 16th Century Books* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).