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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE THOMAS FISHER RARE BOOK LIBRARY

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## *Special Issue: Fisher Staff Pick their Favourites from the Library's Collections*



In honour of the Library's fiftieth anniversary, this issue is dedicated to our collections. Fisher Library Director, Richard Landon, begins with an overview of the wonderful exhibition of highlights from the Library's holdings, which he curated. For those of you who have not seen the exhibition, or the impressive catalogue Richard has written to accompany it, we hope this will whet your appetite for both.

Richard's essay is followed by short pieces by members of the Library's staff describing their favourite items, ranging from individual titles to collections of works, in a variety of media. We hope this list of personal favourites will deepen the reader's appreciation of the range and depth of the Fisher Library's collections.

*Barry Walfish, editor*

*Reminder: The current exhibition closes  
at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 21, 2005.*



## **BIBLIOPHILIA SCHOLASTICA FLOREAT**

**Fifty Years of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Toronto**

The exhibition, which was officially opened on 25 October, and the catalogue, which accompanies it, were conceived and assembled to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of Toronto. Founded by Marion E. Brown in 1955, the department, which became the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in 1973, has experienced astonishing growth over the past fifty years; its collections, which were small and not very distinguished then, now number some 700,000 volumes and what had been a reading room with a small stack area has become a large and renowned building. Rare Books and Special Collections and the University Archives have, in fact, grown in parallel with the rest of the University Library system and the University of Toronto itself, especially the School of Graduate Studies. The Fisher Library now provides research resources of international significance and maintains an increasingly active role in the research and teaching functions of the University.

The intention of the exhibition has been to display and describe something of the range and depth of a few examples of the large and diverse holdings of the Fisher Library. I have tried to choose books and manuscripts from collections not as well known as they perhaps should be, but I have also included some of our most famous books shown in different contexts. Every book and manuscript contains its own story: the significance of its text, its physical embodiment, its provenance, and how it got to be where it is now. I have attempted to tell these stories and relate them

to academic research and to the collections they enhance. Each section of the exhibition flows into and overlaps with what follows it, even though the chronological range is from 1789 BC to 2002.

The first section contains examples of texts presented in several different forms: on clay, wood, parchment, and paper. They are very different in their intentions, ranging from the simple account of a cuneiform tablet or a tally stick to the formal presentation of prayers in a Book of Hours, to the complexities of the Zohar, the satire of the *Ship of Fools*, and the extensive treatise on the Latin language contained in the *Catholicon*. These are also all artifacts, each distinctive and unique, and each with its own provenance. They are thus important for the study of the history of the book.

The life and work of William Shakespeare are pervasive; hardly a week goes by without a book questioning his authorship of the plays or explaining his life and times (despite the daunting dearth of documentary evidence), not to mention a new all-female performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*. The Fisher Library certainly can't ignore 'Billy Big Boy', as Hollywood once referred to him, because our holdings are the largest in Canada. It has been fun to present a 'forest of Folios', six in one exhibition case, each of them distinctive, and it is possibly the first time the First Folio has even been exhibited open at a passage of Cymbeline, because the off-set impression of a seventeenth-century rosebud has left its mark. One of the two copies of the Second Folio was presented in 1962 as the millionth

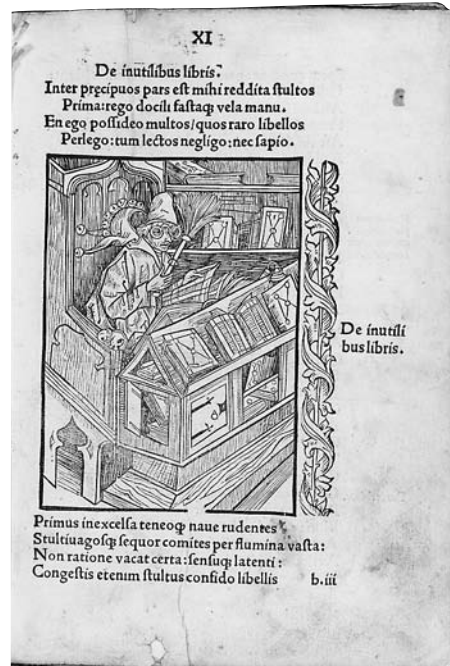
volume of the University Library and the other Fisher copy is in particularly fine condition. The rarest of the seventeenth-century Folios is the third, of 1663/4, due, it is assumed, to the Great Fire of London; our copy also has a distinguished provenance. Both Fisher Library copies of the Fourth Folio are fine ones, bound in full eighteenth-century calf.

Two of the great strengths of the Fisher Library collections are in the history of science and the history of medicine. There are only two items from the Hannah Collection in the History of Medicine displayed because early in 2006 a complete exhibition in that field will celebrate the seventieth anniversary of Associated Medical Services, one of our most important supporters. It is pleasing, however, to display *A Discourse of the Whole Art of Chyrurgerie*, Peter Lowe's pioneering work and to be able to use the *Rosa Angelica* of John of Gaddesden, the first printed medical work by an Englishman. More important to some than the text of the *Rosa Angelica* are the volume's vellum endpapers, consisting of the text of the most extensive surviving fragment of a mid-fourteenth century Dutch poem. The Dee Euclid of 1570, the first English edition, reflects the great strength of our Euclid collection; Galileo's first book, the 1605 *Dialogo*, suggests the strongest Galileo holdings in North America; and Isaac Newton's *Principia* (1687) is the cornerstone of any history of science collection. The Fisher Library has one of the largest Darwin collections in the world, including a unique copy of mixed sheets of the first and second editions of the *Origin of Species*. One of the most appealing items is a letter

written by Albert Einstein on 30 December 1914 to Michael Polanyi arguing about how to calculate absolute zero. Polanyi, the father of John, was then a twenty-three-year-old medical officer in the Austro-Hungarian army, but went on to renowned careers in physical chemistry and philosophy.

The Enlightenment, in both its French and Scottish manifestations, has long been a strength of the Fisher Library collections, which were considerably enhanced with the recent arrival of the Michael Walsh Collection. The foundation document of the Enlightenment in France was the *Encyclopédie*. Its thirty-five folio volumes, published between 1751 and 1780 were one of the first sets I collated and catalogued when I first joined the department in 1967 and it remains a source of fascination, particularly for its lengthy sections on printing and bookbinding. Both Voltaire and Rousseau contributed to it and it thus seemed a natural extension of our collections when we acquired a major Rousseau collection in 1971 and were given Harcourt Brown's extensive Voltaire collection in 1980. We continue to add to both these collections, as the works of both writers are bibliographically complex. David Hume's first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, was also his most influential, and Michael Walsh has been able to add Hume's very rare *Abstract* to the now almost complete holdings of the greatest of Scottish philosophers.

The history of book and manuscript collecting and the antiquarian book trade have long been one of my principal research interests and the collections of the Fisher Library have provided many of the resources I have used over the years. In 1984 we were fortunate to acquire the archive of Lord Amherst of Hackney, one of the greatest English collectors of the last half of the nineteenth century. Book collections, which have been dispersed by auction, as Amherst's was in 1908/9, are not often well documented, apart from the catalogue of the sale. He was, however, meticulous about his records and over three thousand communications from Bernard Quaritch, the London 'Napoleon of booksellers,' survive in this collection. The papers of Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872), the greatest collector of manuscripts ever, who also aspired to own one copy of every book ever printed, are at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The Fisher Library, however, has a collection of works produced by the Middle Hill Press, which he established in 1819 in a tower on his estate near Broadway. The press runs were very small, seldom exceeding twenty-five copies, and are valuable for research because many of them contain information not available elsewhere. Most useful are the series of catalogues of Phillipps's own collection which record his



Ship of Fools. Basel: Johann Bergman von Olpe, 1 March 1497.

acquisitions chronologically, including ms. 22230, an early-thirteenth-century life of Robert of Bethune by William of Wycombe, which he bought in 1837 at the sale of Thomas Bird and which was acquired by the Fisher Library in 1966.

The book arts are well represented in this exhibition in many implicit examples of beautiful books. More explicit is the display of bookbinders' finishing tools and bindings from the firm of Birdsall & Son. It was founded in 1792 in Northampton and became one of England's leading firms, executing bindings in many styles, especially those reflecting designs of earlier periods in Britain and Europe. The collection of 3245 finishing tools was acquired in 1968 from Anthony Birdsall, the last active member of the firm and is the largest collection of its kind in North America. In the 1990s we were able to add to it a collection of archival material, including rubbings of historical bindings, photographs, designs for tools, and maquettes. All this provides a research resource of great potential for historians of bookbinding.

Another Fisher Library collection that is not as well known as it might be is the Desmond Seaton Reid Collection of Juvenile Drama, often known as Toy Theatre. This genre emerged around 1810 in England, originally as souvenirs of theatrical performances which, by the 1830s, had become established as toy theatres for children. Sheets of engraved characters and scenery were meant to be coloured, mounted on card, carefully cut out, and arranged on slides for performance.

Play texts, adaptations of contemporary melodramas, were published so that an entire performance could be presented, complete with, in the case of *The Miller and His Men*, an explosion. Probably only the most patient and determined child could achieve a whole arrangement and one suspects that much adult assistance was required. By the time of R.L. Stevenson's nostalgic essay, "A Penny Plain and Twopence Coloured," in 1884, the toy theatre was largely a memory, but one of the many publishers of juvenile drama, Benjamin Pollock, survived into the twentieth century and Pollock's Toy Museum is still in business on Scala Street in London.

The first large collection to come into the newly formed Department of Rare Books and Special Collections in 1955 was the DeLury Collection of Anglo-Irish Literature. Alfred Tennyson DeLury spent his career at the University of Toronto as a Professor of Mathematics and Dean of Arts. His avocation was book collecting and early in the twentieth century he became acquainted with the writings of W.B. Yeats and his literary circle. He began to buy their books, often new off the shelf, and persevered until his death in 1951, by which time his runs of the works of the major writers of the period were virtually complete. He paid attention to the minor figures as well and many visiting researchers have been astonished by the completeness of our collection of Jane Barlow. As has often been the case the DeLury Collection provided the basis upon which to build an even stronger collection and much has been added to it, including John Butler Yeats's copy of W.B. Yeats's *The Wanderings of Oisín* (1889) with his extensive annotations.

I met Thoreau MacDonald in 1970 through Marnie Edison, who had asked me to describe and arrange her large collection of his graphic art for her book *Thoreau MacDonald: A Catalogue of Design and Illustration* (1973). I was captivated by his art, with its nostalgic rural content and its superbly controlled technique using pen and ink and pencil, often with water-colour washes. In 1976 Marnie donated her collection to the Fisher Library and at once established us as a major source for Thoreau's graphic art and book design. Major additions from several sources have been made since then and it is a great pleasure to display a substantial selection of his work for the first time since 1973. Thoreau (1901-1989) was the son of a famous father, J.E.H. MacDonald, a prominent member of the Group of Seven and Principal of the Ontario College of Art. He learned his artistic techniques from his father and from his own experience, working primarily on books commissioned by publishers. In 1933 he established The Woodchuck Press to produce his own work, primarily pen



and ink drawings reproduced from process blocks. The series of small books continued even after the imprint ceased to be used in 1946, until the last book, *Farm Drawings*, of 1971. He lived in the family home in Thornhill almost to the end of his life and although he would not now recognize the Thornhill he knew he might be pleased to know that the house is to be re-erected on the original site and the 'tangled garden' recreated.

Important collections often appear mysteriously and even more mysteriously reappear. James Lesslie (1802-1885), a prominent Toronto merchant and politician, created a scrapbook of some ninety items: broadsides, pamphlets, and newspaper clippings. Much of it relates to the fiercely fought 1836 provincial election and of twenty-seven handbills preserved in it, twenty-six are unique copies. When the Lesslie scrapbook was acquired by the Fisher Library in 1999, it was not unknown. Seemingly preserved in the Lesslie family until the 1960s, it was taken to Premier John Robarts's office and sent to the University of Toronto Library to be microfilmed. It was then returned to the Premier's office and disappeared, leaving researchers to make do with a poor microfilm. When our conservation staff detached the broadsides from the very poor paper of the scrapbook, they discovered a hidden broadside, "The Celebrated Horse Simon Ebenezer," with its risqué reference to 'poling' the ladies canvassing for a candidate in the 1836 election. It has been featured in Volume One of the *History of the Book in Canada*.

The final two sections of this exhibition feature books from the collections acquired over the past fifty years which have individual stories to tell and which have a special interest for me. Under the heading Provenance I have assembled General James Wolfe's copy of Thomas Gray's *An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, with its evocative annotations, which accompanied Wolfe to Quebec; Archbishop Thomas Cranmer's copy of Oecolampadius's commentary on Ezekiel; and a presentation copy of Christian Huygens's *Horologium* to Christopher Wren. Sir Thomas Lucy, the grandson of the magistrate who earned immortality as Shakespeare's Justice Shallow, extensively annotated his copy of the 1548 edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and turned it into a research resource for the study of the close connections between Italian and English literature. John Evelyn, the great diarist and book collector, owned a copy of Gervase Markham's *Maister-Peace*, a treatise on horses which Evelyn had elegantly bound for himself and which remained in the family library until 1977. Few people have recently read the *Poems on Several Occasions* by Walter Harte, a protégé of Alexander Pope, but the Fisher Library copy has a spectacular provenance.

It is the Harte-Charles Chauncey-Nathaniel Chauncey-Bindley-Heber-Miller-Marsh-Christie Miller-Watt-Meyerstein-Thomas Fisher Library copy.

B.W. Arthur Sleigh published his three-volume novel, *The Outcast Prophet*, in 1847 and when I acquired a copy, in original boards, in 1979, I did so because part of the action takes place in Canada. I later learned that Sleigh, who founded the London *Daily Telegraph*, had been born in Canada. The really intriguing thing about this book was that, at the time, no other copy was recorded. I did some research on the publisher, Thomas Cautley Newby, which continues as one of several ongoing projects. The Fisher copy still seems to be the only copy in North America.

I have long admired the wood-engraved book illustrations of Robert Gibbings and the opportunity to acquire the original blocks for Lord Grey of Falloden's *The Charm of*



Faith Fenton, circa 1898.

*Birds* (1927), which occurred on the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day, was not to be missed. I realized that the large commercial printing of the first edition could not have been done from the blocks themselves, but from either electros or stereos and that the blocks had been used only for proofs. The next logical step was to arrange with the Barbarian Press to print from the originals and the result was *Gibbings & Grey and The Charm of Birds*, which the Friends of Fisher published together with the Barbarian Press in 1998. You see, we don't only collect books.

The history of the antiquarian book trade has been mentioned in connection with the collecting of Lord Amherst and Sir Thomas Phillipps, but the evidence of the early history of bookselling resides mainly in the published

catalogues of booksellers. They are notoriously rare, especially those issued before 1800, and an opportunity in 1997 to acquire four volumes of Thomas Osborne catalogues from 1752 to 1754 was seized with alacrity. He had a direct connection with Samuel Johnson and thus our holdings of eighteenth-century English literature were strengthened as well.

When the only known set of proofs of Robert Service's *Songs of a Sourdough* came up at auction in 1997 we bought it for what seemed a surprising price to some observers. We already had strong Service holdings, but this purchase, as is often the case, proved to be a catalyst for further growth. Last year we were offered a small group of letters from William Briggs, Service's publisher, which included a postcard of his cabin in Dawson with himself on the front stoop. On the day before the official opening of this exhibition I was shown a collection of signed photographs of 'important' Canadian women, and included in it was Faith Fenton, a reporter for *The Globe* who had covered the Yukon Gold Rush. Her real name was Mrs. John Brown and she had been sent the proofs of *Songs of a Sourdough* to solicit her opinion about whether it should be published. This is how collections grow and prosper.

I had never seen a manuscript like Robert Dodsley's early-eighteenth-century illustrated treatise on Biblical subjects, which employs poems, prayers, meditations, and short essays for what was presumably a pedagogical purpose. It is still mysterious to me and awaits its interpreter. We do not have a major collection of eighteenth-century English erotica (or French either), as examples, for obvious reasons, are rare and expensive. Thus *The Pleasures of Love*, acquired in 1992, fills in one small niche in a large desiderata list.

Scott Carter is still a mystery even though we have a large archive of his drawings, designs, and plans. He arrived in Toronto in 1912 and became a prominent architect and designer, many of whose works are visible in University of Toronto buildings. His illuminated address for the death of Sir John Craig Eaton in 1922, complete with its own jewelled casket, which we acquired in 2005 reminded us that we already had the original drawings for it. It has been satisfying to display them together.

The newest book in the exhibition is *Circus*, a Shanty Bay Press book of 2002, produced using *pochoir* for the illustrations and letterpress for the text in an edition of sixty copies. The complexities of this little-used technique were revealed by the proprietors of Shanty Bay Press, Walter Bachinski and Janis Butler at the Alexander C. Pathy Lecture on 21 November.

The past fifty years have been momentous for the Department of Rare Books and Special

Collections. It can now, as the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, be recognized as an integral part of the international community of research institutions and as a realization of one of the visions that transformed the University of Toronto into a great research institution.

Richard Landon

### Tasso's Crusader Epic, *Gerusalemme liberata*, Sumptuously Illustrated

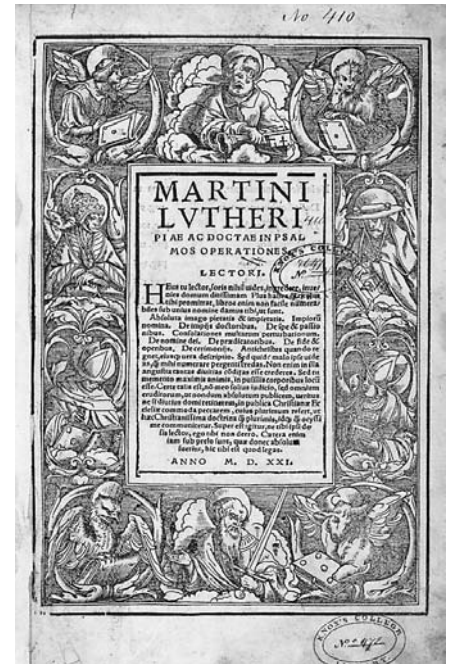
Tarquato Tasso has been called the greatest Italian poet of the late Renaissance. *Gerusalemme liberata*, his most famous work, has appeared in numerous editions since its first authorized publication in 1581. A combination of heroic epic and chivalric romance, the poem recounts, in twenty cantos, the exploits of Godfrey of Bouillon during the siege of Jerusalem in the First Crusade (1099). Suffering from mental illness and troubled by religious scruples, Tasso was not happy with his creation, and later rewrote it, as the inferior *Gerusalemme conquistata*. The poet had an unhappy life, dying in a monastery in Rome shortly before he was to be crowned poet laureate by Pope Clement VIII. Like Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, Tasso's text furnished many writers, including Ferrari (1639), Lully (1686), Handel (1711), Salieri (1771), Gluck (1777), Haydn (1784), Rossini (1817), and Dvořák (1904) with material for opera libretti. In this elegant, edition, (*Il Goffredo; ovvero, Gerusalemme liberata*. 2 vols. [Venezia, 1760-61]) printed by Antonio Groppo in Venice, eighty years after the first edition, each of the twenty cantos of the work is introduced by a beautiful hand-coloured full-page engraving by Giacomo de Leonardi, based on the work of Bernardo Castello whose work appeared in the 1617 edition of the poem. Another ninety-six hand-coloured illustra-

tions, scattered throughout the text, further adorn this sumptuous masterpiece.

Sandra Alston

### Luther's *Lectures on the Psalms*

Without the invention of the printing press, the Protestant Reformation would likely never have happened. Other reformers had appeared before that cataclysmic era, but without the means for disseminating their ideas, the thoughts of men like Wycliffe and Hus were easily contained. By the time Martin Luther confronted the Roman Church, however, the situation had significantly altered. Luther now had the means to communicate his ideas well beyond the confines of Wittenberg where he had penned his Ninety-five Theses in 1517. His audience was Europe, and Europe was reading voraciously – and trembling at what it read. In 1520 Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther, placing him and his writings under the ban. After Luther publicly burned Leo's Bull, the Pope issued a second decree condemning Lutheranism, demanding that all written works associated with the man and his movement be committed to the flames. A similar decree was issued by Charles V at the conclusion of the Diet of Worms in 1521, but to little avail. Of all the books printed in the Germanic territories in the first four decades of the sixteenth century, Luther's works alone accounted for one third. Among the earliest was this book, *Piae ac doctae in psalmos operationes* (Basel: Adamus Petri, 1521), with its magnificent woodcut title page and introduction by Ulrich Hugwald, containing Luther's lectures on the first thirteen psalms delivered in those anxious days preceding the Diet of Worms. It was printed by Adam Petri in March, just weeks before Luther actually attended that historic meeting at which his movement would be



Luther's *Piae ac doctae in psalmos operationes* (Basel: Adamus Petri, 1521)

ineffectively condemned by the Imperial Court. While Erasmus admired it, Luther was not as enthusiastic, complaining that, in its Latin state, it would not edify the people. He grumbled to his friend and colleague, Gerard Listrius of Zwolle that “these works are so little popular and do not capture many, nor have I yet decided to publish any more (for it is the food of the perfect), and not rather treatises more easy to be understood.” Basel, where the book was printed, was a city that had struggled for years to liberate itself from the rule of its Prince-Bishop, and had simultaneously and zealously taken the humanist ideals of the Reformation to heart. It should not be surprising, therefore, that in the same year that



Images from *Il Goffredo; ovvero, Gerusalemme liberata*.



this work appeared Erasmus decided to make Basel his home. Petri, who maintained a press there for twenty years until his death in 1527, had already benefited from the initial interest in things Lutheran, having been the first to publish the Ninety-five Theses immediately after their removal from the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral. This book, therefore, is not only an icon of the Reformation, but also of the forces that helped create the modern printing industry. Part of the Knox College collection (on deposit at the Fisher since 1995), it is also the oldest Reformation text in the Fisher Library, as well as the third oldest at the University of Toronto.

*P.J. Carefoote*

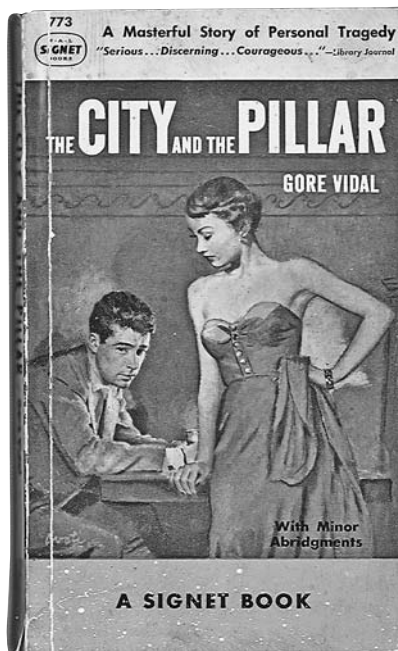
### The Gay Pulp Fiction Collection

My 'favourite' item is not a single title, but a collection – the Gay Pulp Fiction Collection – which we acquired in 2004, consisting of over 1100 fiction titles in mass market paperback form, by writers ranging from Richard Amory to Oscar Wilde, with cover art by artists as diverse as Tom of Finland and Ronald Searle. I am particularly fond of it because it so perfectly exemplifies the virtues of collaboration, at many levels. When Richard was on research leave I heard about the collection from David Mason, a knowledgeable and experienced bookseller with whom we have had a long and fruitful relationship. The individual who had assembled the collection, Ian Young, was ready to part with it to an institution that would keep it together, but was not in a position to be able to donate it. I was immediately struck by the research potential of such a collection – for sexual diversity studies certainly, but also for publishing history, for graphic design, and for social and cultural history. It was a collection that looked forward; it would tell an important story of the twentieth century to researchers of the future. Now the problem, as always, was to find the resources – money, space, and staff – that would be needed to house, catalogue, and preserve the collection.

After some negotiation, an agreement was reached to share the cost, over two budget years, between the Fisher Library, the Collection Development Department, and the Centre for Sexual Diversity Studies, based at University College. In due course the material arrived and space and time were found to unpack and shelve it. The material was in no order, but the owner had provided a comprehensive annotated list, which would be helpful to us in cataloguing, and would also provide important contextual information for researchers. Given our current cataloguing backlog I knew it was unlikely that this large and somewhat complex collection could be added to the workflow of any individual Fisher

staff member. However, I was aware that the Faculty of Information Studies internship program had been expanded that year to include work opportunities in all areas of information management. So I added the Gay Pulp Fiction Collection to a list of collections suitable for a FIS cataloguing intern and immediately had a taker.

It was too large a collection for the student, Patrick Mooney, to finish processing within the allotted time for the practicum course, so we agreed on a somewhat novel compromise approach. Using Ian Young's excellent annotated list, the student would identify the most significant individual titles in the collection, and create detailed records for those in the University of Toronto Library online catalogue. These included for example Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar*, with cover art by James Avati. Then he would also create a catalogue record for the Gay Pulp Fiction Collection as a whole, which would be hyperlinked in the online catalogue to a pdf version of the full list (viewable, searchable, and printable). This meant that researchers approaching the library catalogue with an interest in the subject as a whole would be able to find the full list of titles, as well as the other information contained in the collection description. At the same time anyone approaching the catalogue with an interest in a particular author or illustrator would find a record for that item, but would also be alerted to the presence of a substantial collection of similar items at the Fisher Library.

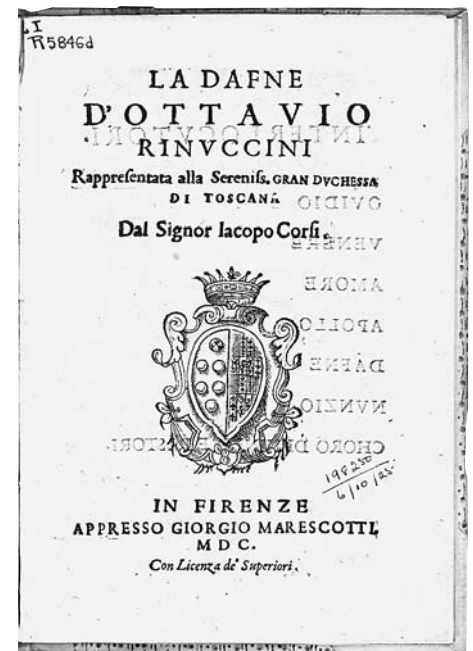


Patrick did an excellent job, cataloguing over 300 individual titles last winter, and over this past summer a recent FIS graduate, John Shoemith, finished the job by scanning and mounting the full list, linking it to the collection record in the OPAC. But what is most gratifying is that an important research collection is now available for use, and another item crossed off the Fisher backlog list.

*Anne Dondertman*  
Assistant Director

### Italian Libretti Collection

Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, I was hired as the German language materials catalogue. Naturally one of my first jobs was to catalogue a libretto by Pietro Metastasio in Italian. In those days, if you were given a work by a certain person, you were responsible for making available all the uncatalogued items by that same person. So being new and still vigorous, and knowing very little about opera, I did my duty and found all the other libretti by Metastasio. It turns out that my gentleman was *rather* prolific and wrote for a great many composers; so, I then was diverted and did the works by those composers and found other librettists, who it turned out wrote for other composers, and so it went on. A decade later, I had finished cataloguing the whole collection, just in time to start on the Rosenørn acquisition, which was the family library of a – wait for it – Danish family. But not before I had the chance to amaze an Italian scholar who was



Left: Cover of Gore Vidal's *The City and The Pillar* (New York: New American Library, 1950). Right: Title page of the first opera, *La Dafne*, by Ottavio Rinuccini (Florence, 1600).

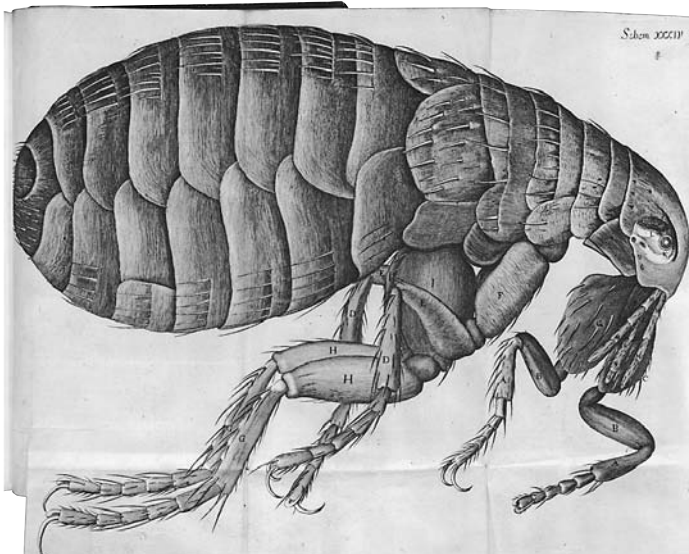
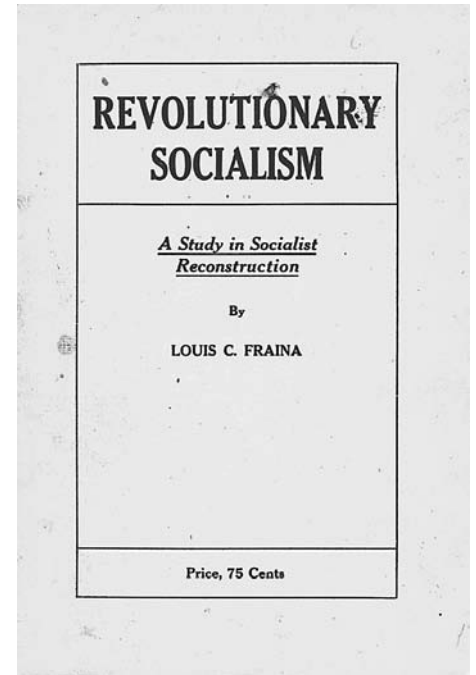
testing the breadth and depth of our Italian holdings. He wanted to see an uncommon item, *e claro che si*, I was able to show him the first edition of the first Italian opera. My work had been worthwhile.

*Luba Frastacky*

### **Viefeuille Book of Hours**

In my opinion one of the most beautiful books in the Fisher Library is the *Viefeuille Book of Hours*. When I was an undergraduate at Harvard in the 1960s, I remember passing a bookstore and seeing a book in the window that immediately caught my attention. It was the George Braziller facsimile of the *Très Riches Heures* of John, Duke of Berry, one of the great masterpieces of medieval illumination. I had heard of Books of Hours and seen a few reproductions (mainly on Christmas cards), but it was not until I had acquired this facsimile that I came to appreciate the artistry of the medieval illuminators. Since that time, I have acquired a number of facsimiles of medieval books of hours (usually at second-hand bookstores) and I find that the art of this period never ceases to amaze me. Although not as elaborate as the *Très Riches Heures*, the *Viefeuille Book of Hours* strikes me as a masterpiece of its kind—and the style of the illuminations seems to reflect a spirit of gentle reverence that is fitting in a prayer book of this type.

*Albert Masters  
Library Technician*



*Top left: Plate from the Viefeuille Book of Hours.*

*Top right: Cover from Louis Fraina's Revolutionary Socialism (New York, 1918).*

*Left: Pulex irritans from Robert Hooke's Micrographia (London, 1665).*

### **A World Revealed**

To choose a favourite book from among the Fisher's rich resources is no easy task. But if pressed I would have to settle on Robert Hooke's *Micrographia*, or *Some physiological descriptions of minute bodies made by magnifying glasses* (London, 1665). Soon after the invention of the telescope at the close of the sixteenth century, astronomers such as Galileo were scrutinizing the heavens to discover a multitude of worlds beyond their own. By the mid-seventeenth century, improvements in the telescope's relative, the compound microscope, encouraged natural scientists to turn their attention to the unseen world about them.

Robert Hooke, a founding member of the Royal Society, is regarded as the father of microscopy in England. *Micrographia* contains thirty-eight high-quality plates, engraved from Hooke's own sketches. They include magnified specimens from the vegetable and insect world, notably the gnat and its larvae, various species of louse, the sting of a bee, and the eye of a fly. But it is the most famous of these plates, that of the flea, that most captivates the imagination. The ubiquitous *Pulex irritans* must have been

all too familiar to a seventeenth-century audience. One can almost share the contemporary reader's sense of awe and revulsion on seeing for the first time and at such close quarters the monstrous flea in such terrifying dimensions. At the same time Hooke and his contemporaries were blissfully oblivious to this pest's critical role in the spread of the dreaded bubonic plague that devastated Europe for centuries. By a strange historical coincidence *Micrographia* was issued the year of the great plague of London, but it was to be another 232 years before the link between the rat flea and the plague was definitively established.

*Philip Oldfield*

### **Revolutionary Socialism**

This important book by Louis C. Fraina, the leading intellectual of the infant American communist movement, was published on the occasion of the first anniversary of the October 1917 Revolution. Fraina, who was employed as the editor of the *New Review*, a leading journal of the American left and artistic avant-garde, was only twenty-six when he wrote *Revolutionary Socialism: A Study in Socialist Reconstruction* (New York: "The Communist Press," 1918), but was already recognized as the pre-eminent theorist of the left wing of the Socialist Party. In 1918 he also produced *The Proletarian Revolution in*



*Russia*, a companion volume to *Revolutionary Socialism*, composed of writings by prominent Bolsheviks with his commentaries.

In *Revolutionary Socialism*, Fraina characterized the Great War as a watershed that marked “the definite, catastrophic end of an epoch of Capitalism,” yet, contrary to the optimistic speculations of some, did not signal “the end of Capitalism.” Echoing V.I. Lenin, he characterized imperialism as the “final stage of Capitalism” and asserted: “The alternative is either the collapse of all civilization, or the coming of Socialism.” Fraina discussed the mechanisms through which a tiny handful of plutocrats rule society with the tacit consent of the vast majority, and paid particular attention to the function of the “labor aristocracy” which he credited for helping transform the Second (or Socialist) International into “a counter-revolutionary party over whose prostrate corpse alone the proletariat could march to victory.”

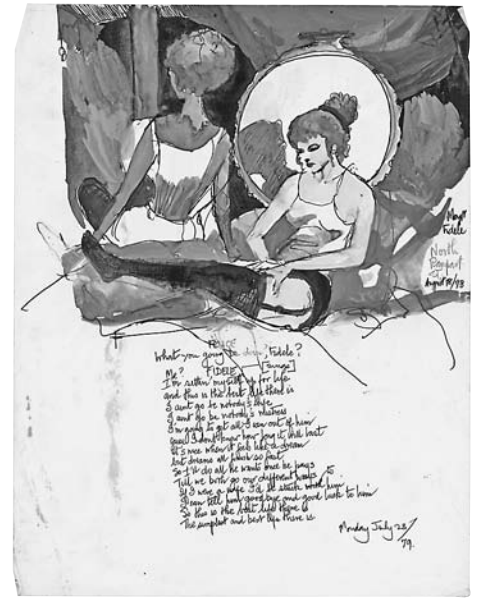
Fraina is considered to have been the single individual most responsible for the founding of the American Communist Party in 1919. But the early years of the CPUSA (unlike those of its Canadian counterpart) were marked by bitter, dead-end factionalism, and, although disinclined to participate, Fraina was the target of repeated attacks. In 1920 Lenin himself intervened to demand the retraction of one allegation against his talented American disciple.

A few years later, after an unsuccessful mission on behalf of the Communist International in Mexico, Fraina withdrew from the movement, changed his name to Lewis Corey and returned to New York where he commenced a career as a writer on economics and social studies. He published a number of books, including a 1935 best-seller, *The Crisis of the Middle Class*. He was eventually appointed to the faculty of Antioch College, a rare distinction for a high-school dropout. In 1940 he repudiated Marxism, but his apostasy did not save him from the McCarthyite witch hunt a decade later. After being hounded for several years, he eventually died of a stroke in 1953.

Tom Reid

### Walcott Watercolours

Selecting a ‘favourite’ item from the manuscript collections proved a difficult task, as our collections are so rich and varied. On any given day one could choose a different ‘favourite.’ Upon quiet reflection it was hard to resist these paintings. These gorgeous watercolours representing theatre characters from the 1970s attracted my attention from the moment the donor brought them to us. Purchased by the donor in the 1970s directly from Derek Walcott, they had been lovingly kept for over



Theatre characters created by Derek Walcott in the 1970s.

thirty years until 2004, and now reside within the Fisher manuscript collections.

Derek Walcott received the 1992 Nobel Prize for Literature, “for a poetic oeuvre of great luminosity, sustained by a historical vision, the outcome of a multicultural commitment” (<http://nobelprize.org/literature/laureates/1992>), perhaps most notably illustrated by his masterful epic poem, *Omeros*.

Arriving on the page fully formed, these characters perfectly transcend the borders of Walcott’s imagination to appear before us:

“And here they are, all in a single Caribbean city, Port of Spain, the sum of history, Trollope’s ‘non-people.’ A downtown babel of shop signs and streets, mongrelized, polyglot, a ferment without a history, like heaven. Because that is what such a city is, in the New World, a writer’s heaven.” (Derek Walcott, “The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory,” Nobel Lecture, December 7, 1992)

Jennifer Toews







precious possessions of a great library, it is an extraordinary work in every regard. Its 1494 pages include 84 different groups of texts, including sections of the Bible, prayers for all occasions, various legal texts and hundreds of poems, reflecting the tastes of its wealthy medieval patron. The manuscript is extensively illuminated, with numerous full-page miniatures, portraying biblical figures and scenes from biblical stories. Marginal decorations, showing a variety of grotesques, arabesques and various animals and flowers are found throughout the manuscript. The quality of the artwork rivals that of the finest artists of the High Gothic period. Many of the figures portrayed in this manuscript have become almost iconic. Images of Moses, Aaron the High Priest, Kings David and Solomon, to name a few, have become part of the Jewish cultural heritage and are frequently reproduced in books and art calendars. When I was looking for a suitable cover illumination for my book *Esther in Medieval Garb* (Albany, NY, 1993), I turned to this manuscript for its image of Esther standing before Ahasuerus. Yet, very few scholars have been able to hold this manuscript in their hands and examine it in detail.

Recently this manuscript was reproduced in facsimile by Facsimile Editions of London, England, whose publications are distinguished by their meticulous attention to every detail, in an attempt to produce as close a copy of the original as is humanly possible. The quality of this publisher's work is extraordinary. The facsimile is produced on vegetable parchment specially milled to match as closely as possible the texture and thickness of the vellum of the original. The photography was done over several months in order to achieve proofs that were virtually indistinguishable from the original. Gold leaf, both raised and painted, was applied by hand to every copy. Pages were cut to the outline of the original and aged to match. Natural holes in the skins are replicated in the facsimile. The final result, bound in dark calf skin with gold tooling is truly magnificent.

The Fisher Library is fortunate to own this and other works of this publisher, all facsimiles of medieval Hebrew manuscripts (including *The Kennicott Bible*, *The Rothschild Miscellany*, *the Barcelona Haggadah* and *the Parma Psalter*). The price of these fine facsimiles puts them out of the reach of most individuals. I am grateful that the University of Toronto Library has been able to acquire them, and thus afford its patrons the privilege of being able to examine some of the finest manuscripts produced in the Middle Ages.

Barry Walfish



### Paul Clifford

"It was a dark and stormy night." So begins Edward George Bulwer-Lytton's tale of a chivalrous highwayman who wants to reform himself. The language is overblown by today's standards, but what attracts me to this novel, the author's fifth, is that its popularity during the nineteenth century is reflected in the Fisher's collections today. It is part of three different collections, in three different formats, thereby exemplifying the Fisher's broad and comprehensive collection policy.

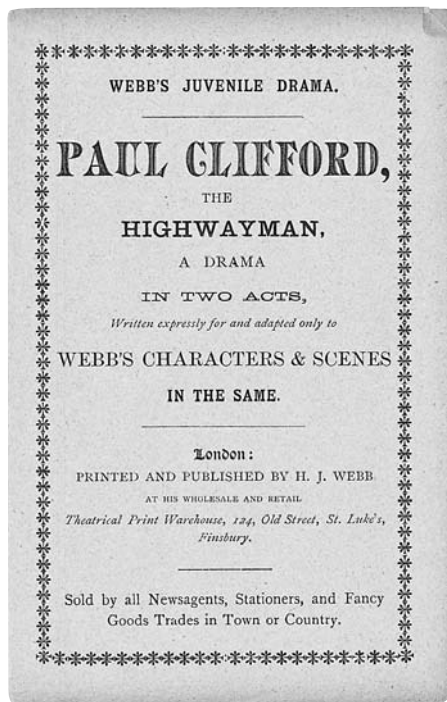
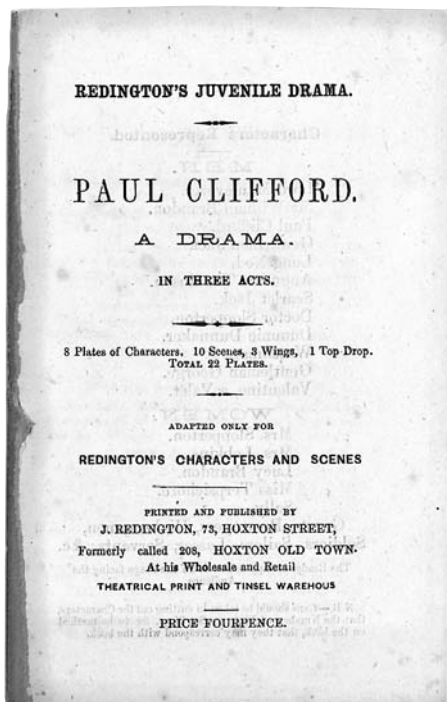
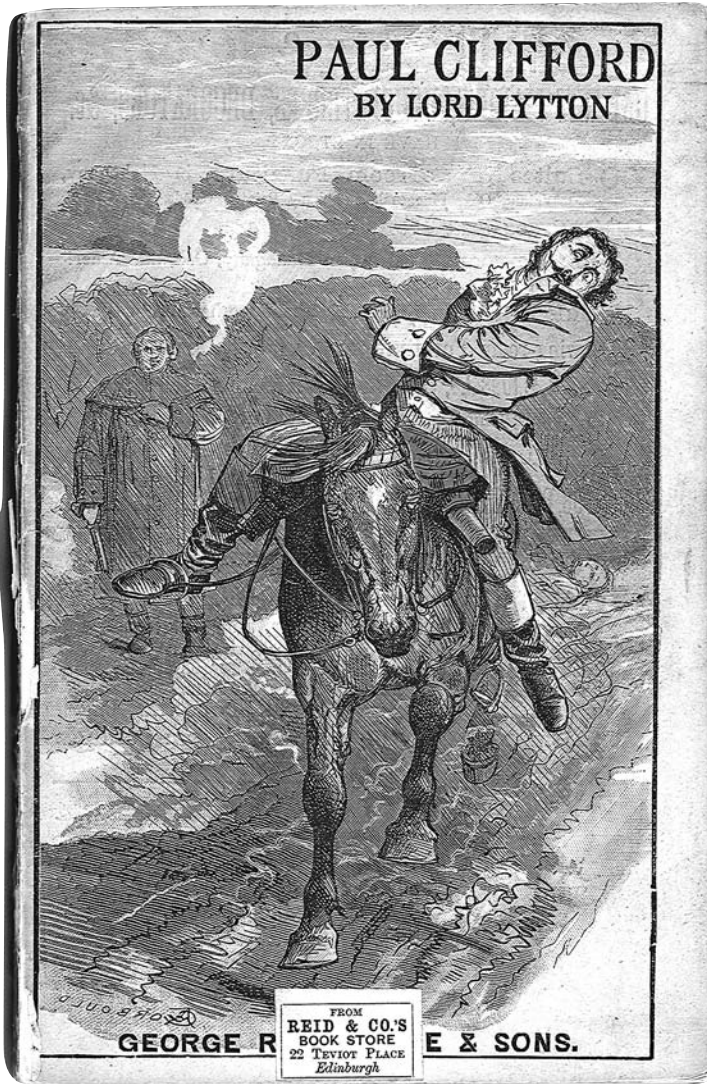
Of course, the Library has the first edition, published in London in 1830 by Colborne and Bentley in the three-volume set known as a triple-decker. The novel is also represented in the Yellowback Collection. According to Chester Topp, there were nine editions of the novel published in this cheap, popular format between 1854 and 1896, years which coincide with the popularity of the Yellowback itself. The Fisher edition is from 1879, published by Routledge.

Finally, "Paul Clifford" as a stage-play is found in the Juvenile Drama/Toy Theatre Collection, published by both John Redington and William George Webb. The Fisher has a nearly complete set of coloured and uncoloured sheets of characters and scenes by each publisher, along with a playbook. Redington's production is in three acts, Webb's is in two. In addition, Redington published an individual actor's portrait showing Mr. [John] Collins in the role of Paul Clifford, possibly intended for tinselling.

The author has long since lost the literary popularity he once enjoyed. However, he has been forever immortalized by having his name attached to an annual Fiction Contest "that challenges entrants to compose the opening sentence to the worst of all possible novels." Moreover, readers of the ever-popular comic strip *Peanuts* will recall that Snoopy always begins his attempts to write his best-selling novel with the same words: "It was a dark and stormy night ..."

Mary Garvie Yohn





Images clockwise, beginning on page 10: Actor John Collins as Paul Clifford. Cover of Paul Clifford, 1879 edition, published by Routledge. Some of Redington's characters and scenes for Paul Clifford. Webb's and Redington's dramatic versions of Paul Clifford.



  
**New Card for  
the Holidays**

Are you looking for something a little different? The Library has a new Christmas card for 2005!

You can purchase Christmas cards, note cards, and most exhibition catalogues at the Short Term Loan Office, Room 3008, on the third floor of the Robarts Library, or through the Fisher web site at [www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/publications/cards.html](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/publications/cards.html). You can also buy cards at most fall meetings of the Friends of the Fisher Library.



Snowy Day on Campus: *From the image bank of the University of Toronto Archives.*

## Mark your calendar for upcoming events...



**23 January – 28 April 2006**

*Ars Medica: Medical Illustration through the Ages*  
Exhibition opening: Monday 13 February 2006



**Planned Events 2006~2007**

All lectures begin at 8:00 p.m.

**Thursday 16 February 2006**

***The David Nicholls Memorial Lecture***

Publishing Chaucer in the Sixteenth Century  
Professor Alexandra Gillespie,  
Department of English, University of Toronto

**Wednesday 15 March 2006**

***Special Lecture***

The Modern Crime Novel  
Peter Robinson, award winning author  
of the Inspector Banks novels.

**Thursday 30 March 2006**

***The Gryphon Lecture on the History of the Book***

Trial by Fleur: The Master of Walters 219  
and the *Très riches heures*

Roger Wieck, Curator of Manuscripts,  
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City

## Editor's Note

This issue was edited by Barry Walfish and Maureen Morin, and designed by Maureen Morin. Comments and/or suggestions should be sent to Barry Walfish, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1A5 (416) 946-3176.

*The Halcyon: The Newsletter of the Friends of The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library* is published twice a year in June and December. *The Halcyon* includes short articles on recent noteworthy gifts to and acquisitions of the Fisher Rare Book Library, recent exhibitions in the Library, activities of the Friends and other short articles of interest to the Friends.

Members of the editorial board of *The Halcyon* are Anne Dondertman, Philip Oldfield, and Barry Walfish, Fisher Library, and Maureen Morin, Information Commons.

For more information about the Fisher Library, please visit the web site at [www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/](http://www.library.utoronto.ca/fisher/)

*The*

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