

The Scholar's Bookshelf: The Middle Ages

Resource Guide

Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions
of important works typically found in medieval libraries;
in the Sheridan Libraries

Among the special collections in the Sheridan Libraries are examples from the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance of books typically owned and consulted by scholars and clergy. This Guide is an attempt to pull these treasures out of the seeming chaos of the library, and make them more visible for today's scholars.

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Bibles and other religious texts

MANUSCRIPTS:

Peter Lombard's Sentences. (Petrus Lombardus libri IV Sententiarum). Written on vellum, with the original wooden boards. The *Sentences* was the main textbook of the late Middle Ages. Inspired by Abelard's work *Sic et non*, and Peter Lombard compiled his work in Paris in the 12th century, a thematic collection of excerpts from existing theological works, covering the whole of Christian doctrine. Book 1 treats the Trinity and divine essence; Book 2 the Creation and Fall; Book 3 the Incarnation, Redemption, and the virtues of Christ and Christians; Book 4 the sacraments and eschatology. Lombard attempts to reconcile conflicting authorities using dialectics.

Special Collections: MSB 19

Commentary on the Psalms, arranged by the 4 cardinal virtues: Justice, Fortitude, Prudence, and Temperance. Written on vellum. Modern leather binding. See below: **Psalms**.

Special Collections: MSB 2

Treatise on the Sacraments, in Italian (Siena). Maestro Ugo, July 10 – October 11, 1442. Written on paper, with original boards covered in leather, with brass bosses and clasps. A collection of Franciscan sermons in Italian. A very nice example of an ordinary manuscript, the kind that rarely survives.

Special Collections: MSB 23

Book of Hours (Horæ Beatæ Virginis). France. Written on vellum. Extensive illuminations, including full page. Books of Hours have been called “the bestsellers” of the Middle Ages. Many were produced between 1250 and 1550, for private use. They resemble breviaries in structure and content, with short devotions marking each of the 8 canonical hours, and often also include a calendar, the Hours of the Cross, the Office of the Dead, and other texts. The Garrett Library has a substantial collection of *printed* Books of Hours. See below as well: (*Printing on vellum*)

Special Collections: MSB 7

Roman Missal (Missale Romanum). Written on vellum. Some illumination. A **missal** is a service book that contains the texts necessary for the performance of the Mass throughout the church year. This book included prayers in Latin and French.

Special Collections: MSB 6

Latin breviary. 15th or 16th century. Written on vellum, in several hands. A **breviary** is a service book containing all the texts necessary for the Divine Office (the canonical hours of prayer that priests and those in religious orders say daily). In the 11th century, the several books used in the Divine Office (Psalter, antiphony, lectionary, martyrology, and others) were combined to form the breviary.

Special Collections: MSB 1

Psalms (Psalter graece). Italy, 15th or 16th century. Modern half-leather binding. Psalms were a staple in medieval religious practice, for both the clergy and the laity. All of the psalms were recited at least once a week by monks and nuns. They were personal prayers as well for the laity, establishing a direct communication between the reader and God. They were also written in a Latin that was easier to learn than other texts, and they were not tied to specific days or seasons. They could be read or recited anytime. Psalters, books of psalms, then were the primary devotional, liturgical, and educational text of the Christian Middle Ages.

Special Collections: MSB 34

PRINTED BOOKS:

Biblia Latina. Venice : Nicholas Jenson, 1479. Jenson's 2nd edition of the Bible, considered “a more splendid book than the prior edition.” An excellent example of an early printed Bible. Some rubrication. Jenson, a Frenchman who worked in Venice, was known for his beautiful typography. (Copinger: 40, British & Foreign Bible Society: 6082)

Special Collections: Machen Incun. 1479 .B5

Biblia Latina, cum glossa ordinaria Walafredi Strabonis. 3 volumes. Strasbourg : Adolf Rusch, for Anton Koberger, (not later than) 1480. The earliest Latin Bible printed with glosses. Contains glosses in the margins by Walafridus Strabo (a 9th century writer), and interlinear glosses by Anselmus (believed to be Anselm of Laon who flourished c.1100). (Hain: 3173, Copinger: 44, British & Foreign Bible Society: 6083)

Garrett Library Manuscripts: Incun. 1480 .B575a
Stacks (facsimile): BS 75 1480f FOLIO

Biblia Latina, cum postillis Nicolai de Lyra et additionibus Pauli Burgensis. 4 volumes. Nuremberg : Anton Koberger, 6 September 1497. The Latin Vulgate with Nicolas of Lyra's glosses.

Garrett Library: Incun. .B5

Other Incunable Bibles: there are many incunable Bibles at the Garrett Library. Consult the Rare Books Curator, John Buchtel, for more information.

Saint Augustine. De trinitate and The city of God. Augustine of Hippo was one of the 4 major Latin Fathers of the Church (Jerome, Ambrose and Gregory the Great were the other 3). Throughout the Middle Ages, Augustine was the preeminent authority on biblical exegesis, the Trinity, grace, and predestination. His works appear in all medieval library catalogues.

Special Collections: Incun. 1489 .A8

Decretum. Gratian. Decretals were collections of papal decisions. Gratian's collection (c. 1140) was the most important book on canon law from the 12th century. In effect, it was a code of the ecclesiastical laws then in force. Later collections include the important Decretum of Gregory IX. Gratian's Decretum is a heavily glossed book (by the 13th century writers Joannes Teutonicus and Bartolomeo ds Brescia), and the early printed editions strongly resemble the glossed manuscripts in layout.

Garrett Library: Incun. 1472 .G7 and Incun. 1483 .G7

Golden Legend (Legenda aurea). Jacobus de Voragine. A collection of legendary lives of the saints, written c. 1260. used for regular devotional readings in chapter houses and refectories of monastic institutions. It was probably the most popular non-liturgical work of the late Middle Ages; nearly 1000 manuscripts survive, and it was one of the most often printed books in Europe in the 15th and early 16th centuries.

Garrett Library: Incun. 1481 .J31

Missale [cu]m mores romane curie. A printed missal, a book used during the Mass.

Special Collections: BX 2015 .A2 1501

Missale Romanum : nouissime impressum, [et] summa reuisum dilige[n]tia

Special Collections: BX 2015 .A2 1549

Peter Lombard's Sentences. A printed edition from 1563, with printed marginalia, index of first lines, subject index. Quarto, in contemporary limp vellum binding. See description above for **MSB 19**.

Special Collections: BX 1749 .P3 1563R

Rationale divinatorum officiorum. Guillaume Durand. The most important medieval book on the liturgy, originally written between 1285 and 1291. A detailed account of the laws, ceremonies, customs, and mystical interpretation of the Roman rite. Called "the standard authority on 13th century ritual", it includes books the physical church itself (including the altar, pictures, bells, churchyard), the vestments, the Mass, canonical hours, and the astronomical and religious calendar. Durand extrapolated patterns and meaning immanent in the buildings, and thus continued in the tradition of seeing the earthly as a mirror for the divine.

Special Collections: Incun. 1470 .D8

Garrett Library: Incun. 1477 .D89

St. Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas was one of the most important medieval theologians, of particular importance for his careful, subtle, and precise treatment of faith and reason, his effort to show that philosophy and theology were compatible with each other. Receptive to pagan thought, he showed that natural reason could cast light on revealed truths.

Quodlibeta ("Various Subjects") *Garrett Library: Incun. 1473 .T5*

Super quarto libro Sententiarum ("On the 4 Books of the Sentences")

George Peabody Library: Rare Book Room Incun. 1481 .T150 Quarto

Commentaria in omnes epistolas Sancti Pauli ("Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul")

George Peabody Library: Rare Book Room Incun. 1498 .T212

Secular literature

Platonis. Opera translatione Marsilii Ficini, emendatione et ad graecum codicem collatione Simonis Grynaei. Ficino's translation of Plato's works. The majority of Plato's writings were not known in the early Middle Ages, but a few of his works had a great impact on medieval scholarship and theology, especially the *Timaeus*. Plato was reconciled to Christianity by positing that a knowledge of creation (the material world) will lead to a knowledge of the mind of the Creator (God). It was Ficino's work (translations and commentaries of Plato's works), built upon centuries of medieval thought and learning, that transmitted Plato and platonism to the modern world.

Special Collections: PB 2280 .A4 F4

Aristotle. Opera. With the commentary of Averroes, 5 volumes in 2. The translation of the text which is in numbered sections is the "new" translation from the Arabic; the unnumbered is directly from the Greek. The works on logic are the translation by Boethius; the *Ethica*, *Politica* and *Economica* are translated by Leonard de Arezzo and also include his commentary. Only a small number of Aristotle's works were known in the early Middle Ages. But by the 12th and 13th centuries, his works reached Western Europe in significant numbers and were enormously influential, and controversial, in the early universities.

Garrett Library: Incun. 1489 .A7,

Opera Graece. The celebrated Aldine *editio princeps* (1st printed edition) of Aristotle in Greek. 5 volumes in 6.

Garrett Library: Incun. 1495 .A7

Eclogues of Vergil. 14th century.

Special Collections: MSB 16

De officiis. Cicero. 1471. Manuscript bound in morocco leather.

Special Collections: MSB 3

Naturalis historia. Pliny, the Elder. Printed in Venice by Nicolaus Jenson, 1472. Very few classic authors wrote on the physical sciences. Pliny's work was an encyclopedia (37 volumes) that served the Middle Ages and early modern Europe as a scientific text. It described the natural sciences, including geography, anthropology, botany, zoology, medicine, mineralogy, and the arts.

Special Collections: Machen Incun. 1472 .P72

De bello Judaico (The Jewish War). **Flavius Josephus**. An account (written in Greek) of the Jewish war of independence (66-73 AD), written by a prominent Jewish historian who was a participant. Josephus both served as commander-in-chief of the Jews in Jerusalem during the uprising, and later was part of the imperial retinue. His works were among the most widely read texts of the Middle Ages.

Garrett Library: *Manuscript Gar. 15*

George Peabody Library: *Rare Book Room Incun. 1486 .J438 and 1481 .J437*

De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii. The marriage of Philology and Mercury. Martianus Capella's textbook of the early Middle Ages. A compendium of classical mythology and the 7 liberal arts.

Garrett Library: *Incun. 1499 .M3*

Consolation of Philosophy. Boethius. Printed in Strasbourg in 1491, by Johann Pruss. One of the most popular and most translated books of the Middle Ages. Boethius aspired to fuse the doctrines of the Church with Aristotelianism. His projected Latin translation of Plato and Aristotle was thwarted by his execution for treason in 524. The Consolation was a standard textbook in medieval schools, and was also popular among laymen.

Garrett Library: *Incun. 1492 .B6*

Plotinus: Enneads. The first translation of this work by Marsilio Ficino. Called the last great pagan philosopher and the founder of Neo-Platonism, Plotinus wrote 6 Enneads, or treatises, in Greek.

Garrett Library: *Incun. 1492 .P6*

Historia regum Britanniae. Geoffrey of Monmouth. Written circa 1136, this work chronicles the lives of the kings of Britain, covering 2000 years from the end of the Trojan War up to the 7th century. It formed a major part of what later was called "The Matter of Britain", or the Arthurian cycle.

Garrett Library: *DA 140 .G43 1508*

Gesta romanorum. A medieval collection of anecdotes with moral reflections, probably first written down by a priest in the late 13th or early 14th century, and most likely intended as a source of moralistic tales for preachers. The collection was extremely popular during the Middle Ages, and many manuscripts were circulated and copied. Several early printed editions exist as well. The collection provided a mine, not only for the clergy, but also for poets; Chaucer, Boccaccio, and Shakespeare (among others) used the tales.

Special Collections: *Incun. 1493 .G4*

Garrett Library: *Incun. 1493 .G4 and 1489 .G4*

George Peabody Library: *Rare Book Room Incun. 1499 G275 Quarto*

Bibliotheca mundi, or Speculum. 4 volumes. Vincent de Beauvais. A widely read encyclopedia from the 13th century. Encyclopedias were enormously popular during the Middle Ages, as the attempt to gather all knowledge in one place mirrored the all-encompassing power of the book of God's word, the Bible. These works assumed that knowledge was stable and total, and that all learning could be cataloged and contained.

Special Collections: *AE 2 .V77 1624 F C*

Book of cosmology (Liber de macrocosmo). Marcus Trivisano. Italy, late 14th century. Written on vellum, with illuminations. Bound in 18th century calf gilt.

Special Collections: *MSB 17A*

Bestiary. Facsimile of Ashmole Manuscript 1511. Probably part of the 12th century family of bestiaries that were expanded rearrangements of the 4th century Latin *Physiologus*. Bestiaries were compilations of stories in which the characteristics of animals (real and imaginary) serve as allegories for moral and religious instruction. The *Physiologus* sought to reveal the nature of God by unveiling correspondences between the natural world and heavenly archetypes.

Special Collections: PC 2055 .B4 P4 1982 Quarto

Decameron. A manuscript believed to be in Boccaccio's hand. (facsimile)

Special Collections: PG 1267 .A1 H33 1975 FLAT FOLIO

A typical classification scheme for medieval libraries

This guide follows the most basic order found in medieval library catalogs, and reflects the medieval attitude toward the written word.

- The Bible and biblical commentaries come first
- Then the writings of the Church Fathers, those closest in time to Christ: Gregory the Great, Jerome, Origen, Ambrose, Augustine, Basil, Athanasius, Cyprian, Hilary
- Followed other writings concerning the Church: liturgical books, canon law, homilies, saints' lives, hymns
- And lastly secular works, including writings of Greek and Latin authors; school books (rhetoric, arithmetic, logic, grammar); medical treatises; bestiaries and herbals; histories (chronicles)

A strong current of neo-Platonism runs through the Middle Ages, and so the divine leads the library catalogs, and divinity emanates downward through the texts, gradually giving way to the worldly writings of Greek and Latin writers, who, nevertheless, retain a spark of the divine.

Variations to this basic scheme of course existed. But there exists a remarkable similarity among early medieval library catalogs; from St. Gall to Corbie.

Artifacts and specialized teaching resources

Specimens of Parchment. A portfolio with 9 specimens of different parchments.

Special Collections: TS 1165 .R41 1976 QUARTO

Ars minor. Donatus. A fragment of a Donatus grammar, possibly printed by Gutenberg, around 1455.

Garrett Library: Incun. X .D6

West-European incunabula: 60 original leaves from the presses of the Netherlands, France, Iberia and Great Britain. text by Konrad Haebler. Individual leaves of early printed books, mounted on mats.

George Peabody Library, Rare book Room: 093 H133W FOLIO

Loose **individual leaves of 15th and 16th century printed books**

Special Collections, with teaching materials

Books in Sheets: Prima elementa historiae urbis Augustae Vindelicorum, in uncut octavo sheets that illustrate how books first take shape off the printing press.

Special Collections : DD 901 .A92 P95

Woodblocks.

Examples of how most printed book illustrations were made in the 15th century:

- 17th century woodblock (abbot blessing boy).

Special Collections, with teaching materials

Printing on Vellum

Book of Hours. Paris, 1505. Printed on vellum, without border; 18 full-page woodcuts, and many smaller figures illuminated by hand; borders and capitals illuminated.

Garrett Library: BX 2080 1505

Book of hours. Paris, 1508. Printed on vellum, elaborate woodcut borders, 27 full-page illuminated engravings, illuminated capitals, vignettes and printer's device on title page.

Garrett Library: BX 2080 1508

Book of hours. Paris, 1526. Printed on vellum.

Special Collections: BX 2080 1526

Rubrication in printed books

Naturalis historia. Pliny, the Elder. Printed in Venice by Nicolaus Jenson, 1472. Manuscript marginalia, slightly cropped. Rubricated, with rubricator's date 1474 on last text leaf.

Special Collections: Machen Incun. 1472 .P72

Type and Composing Sticks / Galley tray and Furniture

Artifacts from hand-press printing, illustrating how books were printed in the 15th century.

Cage, with teaching materials

Handmade Paper: facsimile sheets of handmade paper that demonstrate the various book formats (folio, quarto, octavo)

Special Collections, with teaching materials

Selected bibliography of secondary materials

Dictionary of the Middle Ages: an excellent background source.

General Reference: D 114 .D51 1982

Medieval Christian literary imagery : a guide to interpretation. R.E. Kaske. An indispensable bibliography of sources.

Moravia Park:BR 117 .K33 1988

Medieval foundations of the western intellectual tradition, 400-1400. Marcia Colish

CB 351 .C54 1997

The mind of the Middle Ages, A.D. 200-1500 : an historical survey. Frederick B. Artz.

CB 351 .A7 1980

Glossed books of the Bible and the origins of the Paris book trade. Christopher De Hamel.

Z 6 .D441 1984

The idea of the book in the Middle Ages. Jesse Gellrich

Z 6 .G441 1985

Commerce with the classics : ancient books and Renaissance readers. Anthony Grafton

PA 3013 .G68 1997

Leaves of gold: an exhibition catalogue of illuminated manuscripts from Philadelphia collections, with very good short essays on manuscript production. Ed. James R. Tanis.

ND 3125 .L43 2001 quarto

The intellectual climate of the Early University. Ed. Nancy Van Deusen.

CB 351 .S83 1997

The intellectual life of Western Europe in the Middle Ages. Richard Dales.

CB 351 .D271 1992

The Bible as book : the manuscript tradition. edited by John L. Sharpe III and Kimberly Van Kampen.

BS 4.5 .B53 1998

The Bible as book : the first printed editions. edited by Paul Saenger and Kimberly Van Kampen

BS 447.5 .E85 B53 1999

Scribes and scholars: a guide to the transmission of Greek and Latin literature. L.D. Reynolds.

PA 47 .R5 1991

Relevant Electronic Resources and Web sites

The ORB : Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies.

<http://the-orb.net/>

The Labyrinth, resources for medieval studies. Georgetown University

<http://labyrinth.georgetown.edu/>

Internet Medieval Sourcebook

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.html>

Medieval Manuscript Manual, a very valuable, in-depth resource for the study of manuscripts. Includes sections on materials and techniques, patronage, typology of the medieval book, and glossary.

<http://www.ceu.hu/medstud/manual/MMM/home.html>

Scribner's Encyclopedia of Early Modern World

Available from the *Gale Virtual Reference Library*. Click on the link on this page:

<http://library.jhu.edu/eresources/databases/g.html>

DScriptorium : devoted to collecting, storing and distributing digital images of Medieval manuscripts.

<http://www.byu.edu/~hurlbut/dscriptorium/>

New Catholic Encyclopedia: a very good source for background information on authors of the MiddleAges.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>

Other Resource Guides available or projected:

L'Encyclopédie

The Scholar's Bookshelf : The Renaissance

Censorship

The Bible

French Theater Collections in The Sheridan Libraries

Manuscript Books in The Sheridan Libraries

German Theater Collections in The Sheridan Libraries

Dante

Don Quixote

Latin American Codices

Goethe

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