

THE LIBRARY

Important MSS in the University Library

The Library has recently been able to acquire three interesting MSS, of which one is from the 13th and the other two from the 15th century. The intrinsic value of the texts and the link they represent between the times before and after the invention of printing make their presence in Australia an asset to humanistic scholarship. They also provide an opportunity for advanced students to learn and use palaeography and related studies on "live" texts.

Mr. Keith Sinclair, Senior Lecturer in French at the School of General Studies, Australian National University, and a specialist in medieval and renaissance studies, is compiling a list of such MSS and came to Hobart on October 17-19 to examine our recent acquisitions. His analytical notes and verbal comment form the basis of the following descriptions of the three MSS:

(1) *Unidentified Fragment*. Eight leaves of parchment approximately 215 x 155 mm. written in two columns, each of 40 lines, in a round 13th century *littera textualis* hand. Some initials are decorated with red and blue penwork. The parchment had once been used as "end-papers" of a book and the glue used to attach them to the covers has browned the leaves, especially at the edges. Part of the outer margins have been cut off when the parchment was removed from the bookcovers. The sheets used to belong to a well-known collector, H. Suchier, of Paris. The text is in Latin with some underlined headings in French; it deals with religious matters and appears to be parts either of a sermon or of a treatise on Feast Days.

(2) *Cicero, De officiis*. This important Ciceronian text was copied by the scribe Silvester who signed his name on the verso of the 153rd leaf with this farewell: "Finis deo laus virginique matri amen Silvester magistri iohannis phisici baldoli fulginatis trasripsit [*sic*] MCCCCLXV. VIII. kal. maias.". Silvester practised a charming handwriting known as Italian humanistic cursive and illumination has been applied at the beginning of each of the three major divisions of the text. The whole volume contains 157 leaves of a paper made some time after 1457; the watermark is clearly distinguishable. Silvester added to the *De officiis* a few fragments: some verses from

Catullus' *Carmina ad Catonem*, some lines from the *Aeneid Book I*, and a few moral verses as yet unidentified. There is also an entry on the inside front cover in an 18th century hand: "Antoni Lazzarani liber emptus in foro maceratar IV kal. aprilis an. 1751".

The MSS is bound in 15th century calf, blind stamped, showing remains of clasps.

(3) *Virgil, Aeneid, Moretus, Roša—Ovid. De arte amatoria, De remedio amoris*. This is a very substantial MSS of 324 leaves written by at least two different persons. The *Aeneid* and the two works by Ovid are written in a fairly large German hand (*littera bastarda*) of the middle of the 15th century; the *Moretus* and *Rosa*, however, are written in a much smaller hand albeit of the same school. At the end of *Moretus* is the note. "1484 intentione (?) Jacobi". Throughout the whole MSS there are interlinear and marginal glosses in Latin concerning variant readings, and explanations of words and of syntactical problems.

Several capitals are illuminated in red and some have extensive ornaments in black. The books of the *Aeneid* are numbered in red.

MSS of the two texts of Ovid present in this collection are rather uncommon. The MSS was bound or rebound in the 18th century when the pages were trimmed and quire signatures cut off.

It is interesting to reflect that the *De officiis* was first printed in Mainz by Fust in the same year in which our MSS was completed, 1465; that the *Aeneid* was not printed until 1469, though the number of editions issued before the end of the 15th century exceeds those of the Bible; and that the two works by Ovid did not appear in printed form until 1471.

The MSS may be examined on application in the presence of a member of the Library staff.

Gifts to the Library

The Library has recently received a number of gifts, including a useful and interesting collection of 250 books from Sir Rupert Shoobridge; and from Associate Professor Tuck an early scientific text by J. A. Nollet: "Recherches sur les causes particulières des phénomènes électriques", 1754.