A COLLECTION OF BOOKS RELATING TO
THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

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A substantial collection of books relating to the history of scientific thought, privately owned but housed with the Rare Books and Special collections of the University of Toronto Library, is available to the faculty and graduate students of the University.

The collection was formed primarily around the work of Galileo. Virtually all the original editions and collected editions of Galileo's works are included, together with most of their translations into other languages. Likewise, most of the contemporary works in which Galileo was attacked or supported in his scientific views are present. The post-Galilean discussions of his science, and the works of his most active pupils, are also in the collection, as are appraisals and critiques of the Galilean revolution in science down to the present day.

Of interest to students of the Renaissance and Reformation are the holdings of sixteenth-century science and philosophy. The original works of Nicolò Tartaglia, Guido Ubaldo del Monte, and Giovanni Battista Benedetti, for example, are nearly complete in the collection, together with some works of Girolamo Cardano, Alessandro Piccolomini, and similar Italian writers who dealt occasionally with scientific topics.

Special attention has been given to the collection of commentaries on Aristotle published in the sixteenth century, particularly those dealing with the Physica, De caelo, and the pseudo-Aristotelian Problems of Mechanics. Commentaries of Simplicius, Philoponus, Themistius, Nifus and Burleigh are well represented.

Sixteenth-century translations of scientific works of antiquity will also be found, particularly of Archimedes, Hero of Alexandria, and Pappus. Modern translations of those works are also present.

Biographies and biographical reference works with respect to scientific figures, and to a lesser degree philosophers, comprise one section of the collection. Other sections into which the collection has been roughly divided are history of science, philosophy of science, science before Galileo, science after 1650, religion and science, and technology.

A primitive card catalogue of the collection exists but cannot at this time be made accessible to others than personnel of the Rare Book Department. Arrangements are being made to provide a proper catalogue of the collection for general use, but it is expected that that will require at least a year. Meanwhile it will be necessary to ask at the Rare Book Room (45 Charles Street East, downstairs) whether a particular book not in the University Library is held in the collection. For obvious reasons, books in the collection will from time to time be unavailable except to the owner, but they will be returned to the collection whenever they are not in his active use in research.

A considerable number of manuscripts are included in the collection, though few of them are of the pre-Galileo period. Nearly all are of scientific or philosophical character, unpublished, and in either Italian or Latin. For the most part they are not manuscripts of great value, but would afford graduate students good practice in the handling and reading of manuscript material.

There are also a number of sixteenth-century printed books which have extensive contemporary marginal notes. It is believed that those volumes will amply reward study by specialists in the science and philosophy of the period. They are available on the same basis as other works in the collection, but it is expected that anyone intending to do extensive work on such a volume will first discuss the matter with the owner.

The only scientific incunable in the collection is the Epytoma of Regiomontanus on the Almagest of Ptolemy, a rather poor copy of a most interesting and neglected (though well known) work. Perhaps the most fascinating of the very rare early works is Giorgio Valla's De expetendis et fugiendis rerum of 1500, complete except as to the medical treatises.

Despite the heavy emphasis of the collection on Italian works of the seventeenth century, it is believed that much of interest and of use will be found in it by specialists in the Renaissance and Reformation periods. At a first rough check, the collection appears to duplicate the holdings of the University Library to only a small degree, and to offer possibilities of valuable research to many persons in the University. The purpose of the arrangements to house it with the Library was primarily to make it available to scholars in every field, who are not only invited, but urged, to make as extensive use of it as they can.

Inquiries to the writer at the newly-created Institute for the History and Philosophy of Science and Technology are invited. The address is 621 Spadina Avenue, and the extension is 5159.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Council of the Fédération Internationale des Sociétés et Instituts pour l'étude de la Renaissance met in Rome last June to make plans for the meetings in Moscow in 1970. The Council selected ERASMUS STUDIES as the theme of the meeting. More information can be obtained from the Secretary of the Fédération, Professor Robert Kingdon, Department of History, University of Wisconsin, Madison 53706, U.S.A.