Most fruitfull and learned Commentaries of Doctor Peter Martir Vermil Florentine.
London. John Day. / 1564/ STC 24670. Dedicated by John Day to Robert Dudley, Earl of
Leicester. The date given in the catalogue as c. 1580 is incorrect.

James McConica

Professor Beatrice Corrigan of the Department of Italian and Hispanic Studies,
University of Toronto, is compiling a list of all EMBLEM BOOKS in Toronto, to be
published in a future issue of this bulletin. Please send her information on emblem
books in private collections in Toronto.

MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MANUSCRIPTS IN THE DRAKE COLLECTION

A recent issue of the bulletin (RR, 1,3) included a description of rare books on
pediatrics and children in the Drake Collection at the Toronto Academy of Medicine.
Since that time I have learned that the Collection includes a group of manuscripts and
unbound printed materials. Most of the latter are French edicts on foundling hospitals and
child-welfare, a few of them dating before 1700, but especially numerous for the period of
the French Revolution and after.

Most of the manuscripts also date from after 1700 (e.g., the accounts of a student
pensionnaire at the Jesuit College in Lyons in the mid 17th century; all kinds of reports
on foundlings), but there are five manuscripts from before 1700. None of them is
described in Ricci and Wilson, Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the U.S.
and Canada or in the recent Supplement to it prepared by Faye and Bond. Dr. Drake
collected these manuscripts because each had some reference to children or wet-nurses,
but their interest goes beyond these subjects. All of them were purchased from French
dealers in the late 1930's.

1. Alexander de Villadei: Doctrinale Puerorum, fragment.

Vellum, 3 ff., 20 x 14 cm., first half of the 13th century, red and blue illustrated
initials with glosses in later hands.

16th century signature: Lessar.

2. Louis de Merles: Book of personal and business accounts, 1464-1480, mostly in Latin
with a few promissory notes in Provencal.

Paper, 45 ff., 30 x 11 cm., written in southern France, 1464-1480 in several hands.
Encased in vellum with a notarized act on it.

Louis de Merles seems to have been a lawyer with numerous business dealings,
especially small loans. The accounts are organized chronologically with some effort to
separate the credits from the debits. Many entries have lines through them, as though
this were a memorandum book from which data was being drawn for a more systematic
account book. Yet sophisticated accounting methods are unlikely for a man who worked
only with Roman numerals. Rather he usually crossed items out when a payment had
finally been made.

Louis de Merles is the father of François de Merles, whose memoirs and accounts (1480-
1520) are in the possession of the University of Pennsylvania Library (Faye and Bond,
Supplement, p. 493). Rudolf Hirsch, Associate Director of Libraries at the University
of Pennsylvania, has written me that according to the genealogy in the Pennsylvania
manuscript, Louis married Agnete Pelegrine in 1459 and François de Merles was born in
1464. A family named de Merles was prominent in the town of Courthezon, near Avignon,
in the 16th century.

3. Angelique Goret: Receipt in French, Dec. 31, 1612, in which she acknowledges that she has received 600 livres from Raymond Philypeaux, seigneur de Herbaule, conseiller du roi and trésorier de son épargne, for having been wet-nurse to the Count of Soissons.
Vellum, 1. fl, 18 x 29 cm.

The Count of Soissons mentioned here is Louis, natural son of Charles de Bourbon. The latter had died November 1, 1612 and the royal treasury was settling his old debts. Louis had been born in 1604 (Les historiettes de Tallemant des Réaux, ed. A. Adam [1960-1] 1, 667, 859; thanks to Catherine Holmes for this reference).

4. Domestic accounts in French of an Avignon family, 1613-1618.

Paper, 1 f., 50 x 10 cm., with later accounts on the reverse and pasted to another sheet. Written in Avignon, France in 1613-18, perhaps by the mother of the family.

Information on the hiring and wages (in Arabic numerals) of wet-nurses, the purchase of a Luyette, the death of an infant, who had been given to a wet-nurse at Chateaufort and who was buried there "in the tomb of my brother-in-law George Jannand."

5. Colbert: Letter in French signed by Colbert, April 3, 1664, concerning construction at the chateau of Fontainebleau.

Paper, 2 ff., 22 x 17 cm.

A Paris, le 3e avril 1664

Je vous écris ce mot pour vous dire que Madame la Nourrice s'en allant a Fontainebleau pour quelques accomodements qui sont a faire dans son logement et dans celui des femmes de chambre Espagnoles de la Reyne. Il est necessaire que vous dressiez au plustost un memoire au just de tout ce a quoy montra cette despense, ce que vous me l'envoyiez afin qu'apres l'avoir fait resoudre, je puisse vous mander d'y faire travailler en diligence.

Colbert

This letter, which is not included in Pierre Clément's Lettres, Instructions et mémoires de Colbert (Paris, 1861-82), was written only a few months after Colbert had been made Surintendant et ordonnateur général des batiments. A note on the manuscript in a 20th century hand identifies the addressee as a "M. Arnault, architecte du roi a Fontainebleau," but no support for this identification is found in Clément's Lettres (vol. I) or in Jules Guiffrey's Compte des batiments du roi sous le Regne de Louis XIV.

Louis XIV had a son Louis, born 1661, and his wife was pregnant at the time this letter was written.

Natalie Zemon Davis