

# Explore the Record of European Life and Culture

## About Collection 14

### Explore the evolution of Western thought and medicine

Early European Books Collection 14 returns to the holdings of the prestigious *Bibliothèque nationale de France* in Paris. Drawing from three of the library's departments – *Philosophie, histoire, sciences de l'homme*, the *Département Sciences et techniques* and *La Réserve des Livres Rare* – this selection focuses on **philosophy, medicine and science** from a time of major changes in these fields. As with previous releases, Collection 14 comes complete with USTC subject classifications for enhanced discovery.

### Highlights of works in philosophy

Many of the changes in thought during this era were inspired by René Descartes (1596-1650) and the Cartesian revolution named after him. Acknowledged as a founder of modern philosophy, Descartes was also an important mathematician and scientific thinker. Publications relating to the Cartesian revolution form an essential strand to the collection. These are supported with hundreds of items which testify to the spirit of curiosity that characterized the early modern period and demonstrate some of the remarkable medical, scientific and intellectual advancements of the time.

Despite these changes, the early modern period remained anchored in the ideas of classical antiquity. Thanks partly to medieval theologians, the significance of Aristotle to philosophy and science remained for a long time near-unassailable. Collection 14 include Jesuit anthology editions of his works. Stoicism grew in popularity during the early modern period and editions of Epictetus in Greek, Latin and French, as well as a French edition of Seneca, are included as well. Early modern Neo-Stoicism is represented in translations of the "English Seneca", the works of Joseph Hall (1574-1656) such as *Le Senèque ressuscité chrestien* (Paris, 1614); and as part of Urbain Chevreau's (1613-1701) *L'Escole du sage* in multiple editions.



No theologian did more to centre Aristotle than Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), and Collection 14 counts several Aquinas editions among its medieval items. Also featured is an early modern Aquinas commentary by Antoine Goudin (1639-95), a 1685 Paris text which would later influence 19th-century Neo-Thomism. Other medieval titles include a translation of Boethius by René de Ceriziers (1603-1662). Medieval medicine is represented by authors like Arnaldus de Villa Nova (1240-1311) whose *Tractatus de epidimia et peste* and *Regimen sanitatis Salerni* both appear in incunabula editions.



## Selections in science

From classical science, Collection 14 features editions of Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, as well as texts on farming by Cato the Elder and others in a Sebastian Gryphius 1541 Lyon edition. Also included are original 1629 Jerome Drouart editions of Claude Saumaise's (1588-1653) commentary on the *Polyhistor*, a 3rd-century CE work on natural curiosities. Another highlight is a 1664 French version of the *Oneirocritica*, a book of dream interpretation by the 2nd-century CE Artemidorus Daldianus.

Items relating to botany, horticulture and veterinary science include Miguel Agustí's (1560-1630) *Libro de los secretos de agricultura* and editions of Jacques Dalechamps's (1513-1588) *Histoire generale des plantes*. Also included is a 1647 Paris printing of Jean Jourdin's *Le parfait cavalier* and copies of Pierre Morin's *Remarques necessaires pour la culture des fleurs*. Mixed with a sample of items on other selected topics, Collection 14 draws on the magnificent holdings of the French national library to present a thematic study of rich and varied detail.



## Early medical texts

Early modern surgical texts include Jean Falcon's (1491-1541) *Guidon*, a popular Guy de Chauliac commentary. Multiple editions of works from Hippocrates and Galen are included in this collection as well, along with French editions of Guy de Chauliac's (1300-1368) major surgical treatise *Chirurgia Magna*. Works by Giovanni da Vigo (1450-1525) including *Teorica y pratica en cirugia*. Vigo was among the first to discuss treatment of wounds from firearms. Battlefield medicine was also a speciality of Ambroise Paré (1510-1590), the so-called "father of modern surgery. The "father of German surgery" Fabricius (1560-1634), is represented by a 1641 Lyon compilation of his case studies.



Texts on anatomy include titles by Jean Riolan the Younger (1580-1657) such as his *Censura demonstrationum Harveti pro veritate alchymiae* (Paris, 1606) – a rejection of William Harvey's theory of blood circulation. Swiss anatomist Théophile Bonet's (1620-1689) *Sepulchretum sive Anatomia practica*, anticipated pathological anatomy. A better known Swiss physician, Paracelsus (1493/4-1541), helped usher in the early modern "medical revolution." A transitional figure, Paracelsus became the "father of toxicology" without abandoning his esoteric interests in alchemy and Hermeticism.

Other critical works in this collection include Otto Tachenius' (1610-1680) *Hippocrates Chymicus* and a 1672 Paris copy of Charas Moyse's 1669 study on the medicinal properties of vipers. Also included are works by the Swiss polymath Conrad Gesner (1516-1565), credited as the father of modern zoology and botany. Other highlights include editions of the "father of embryology", Girolamo Fabrizi d'Acquapendente, (1537-1619) and a 1644 Paris copy of Robert Nicaud's curious case study, *Histoire memorable de deux estranges accouchemens d'une femme de Montluçon, en Bourbonnois*.