

Introduction

‘Sir George Grey was one of the most remarkable nineteenth-century British colonial governors, and one of the most remarkable people who have lived in New Zealand’ wrote Sir Keith Sinclair.¹ Grey is remembered primarily as an administrator in New Zealand, South Australia, and the Cape Colony – colonial outposts where he spent over fifty years contributing much towards their political infrastructure.² He is the subject of six biographies.³ All focus on his long and controversial political life as a nineteenth-century governor and contain little about his book collecting and the formation of his libraries.

Grey was afforded the distinction of being the only book collector in the Antipodes to be noted in W. Carew Hazlitt’s list of 2580 prominent book collectors in Bernard Quaritch’s *Contributions Towards a Dictionary of English Book-collectors* (1898). His achievements warranted a kind of brief description not given to everyone: ‘This eminent colonial statesman collected a fine library of MSS. and incunabula which he presented to Cape Town’.⁴ Indeed, Grey contributed significantly to the cultural and intellectual heritage of South Africa and New Zealand. He gave away two libraries in his lifetime: the first to Cape Town in 1861, the other to Auckland in 1887. This was an action unparalleled in the annals of nineteenth-century book collecting.

Sir George Grey straddled two collecting traditions. One was the older ‘Dibdinian’ tradition, represented by the collecting of medieval manuscripts and incunabula (items printed before 1501). Such items reflected the tastes of a nineteenth-century gentleman; Seymour de Ricci claimed that ‘nearly every library built up in England during the first half of the nineteenth century conformed to the Dibdinian type of *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*’.⁵ As a part of this tradition, Grey embarked on similar lines of collecting – medieval manuscripts, early printed books, and classical works. These were constants, good old-fashioned fields of collecting. Specialisation, however, was not part of his nature. There was no sharp focus; not for him large runs of Elzevirs or Aldines. Driven by interests that were varied, he was, paradoxically, selective. He passed up works that certainly fell within his scope (and purse) and which, from descriptions evident in the catalogues, were significant, if not desirable. Simply put, Grey had his own priorities. He was also a man of his time, and he was susceptible to prevailing values and trends. He had a coat of arms, yet he did not use it as a bookplate. For ownership, his signature sufficed.

The other collecting tradition derived from the study of antiquities and was spearheaded by the collecting of natural history that arose from voyages and expeditions in the eighteenth century. It also embraced the growth of interest in

philology and linguistics, especially those promoted by German intellectuals. Key figures in the field, and of the wider area of linguistics and philology, were Sir Joseph Banks, James Cook, Andrew Sparrman and Alexander and Wilhelm von Humboldt. Aided by his physical presence in Australia, New Zealand and the Cape, Grey collected indigenous language materials. Not only did this material complement the older tradition, but it also enabled him to further his personal interest in philology that, as will be revealed, was something he enjoyed. Also, and in contrast to the traditional school of collecting, he was not so selective when it came to collecting language materials. Here he tried to collect as much as possible whenever he could: from single word definitions and ephemeral primers to larger documents recounting ancient myths and legends. Importantly, he valued these items at a time when few others did. That he did so indicates his vision as a collector.

This book is the first to provide a full account of Grey's collecting and the development of his two libraries. Throughout his long life he was much engaged in the collecting process. He was born in 1812, during the Regency period, and died in 1898, in the last years of Queen Victoria's reign. He was an explorer, army officer, author of scholarly works, and colonial administrator. His life experiences happened in such diverse places as: Bodiam, Sussex; Sandhurst, Ireland; Albany, Western Australia; Adelaide, South Australia; Cape Town; Kawau Island, New Zealand; and London.

Collecting has been defined by Werner Muensterberger in his *Collecting. An Unruly Passion* (1994) as 'the selecting, gathering, and keeping of objects of subjective value.'⁶ I have expanded Muensterberger's definition to include seeking out, organising, and deselecting or dispersal, because each, at times, for any good collector, is a necessary and legitimate activity. This expanded definition encompasses those processes in which Grey was actively involved.

Collecting is also a highly individualistic activity, and the inclusion of biographical data is valid, the more so if it highlights new and pertinent details. Indeed, T.A. Birrell wrote: 'A private library is part of its owner's biography. The known facts of his life may help in the understanding of his choice of books. Conversely, his choice of books may add to the understanding of the known facts of his life, and perhaps reveal unknown facts. A private statistical analysis of contents is inadequate.'⁷

Books record the tastes and interests of their owners, and for the attempt to flesh out this aspect of Grey, it is fortunate that both his libraries are intact. This is important. This work is about assembly, not dispersal nor transfer. Grey did not, like some, buy collections or libraries en bloc. Each library was gradually formed, patiently accumulated through auctions, catalogues, personal purchases (from dealers or individuals) and gifts. Significantly, the collections were given away, each institutionalised during his lifetime. In size they are manageable; their scope easily visible: The Grey Collection in the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town, comprises 5200 books and manuscripts; The Grey Collection at the Auckland Central City Library comprises fifteen thousand books and manuscripts. In their totality, they have added greatly to the storehouse of information that has formed the literary and cultural heritage of South Africa and New Zealand. And

as intact collections they also reflect much of Grey – his character, his tastes, his interests and his passions.

One notable section of the Auckland collection is Grey's correspondence, amounting to eighty-three bound volumes: six hundred New Zealand and eight hundred overseas correspondents, totalling some 3500 letters. Some of the correspondents read like a muster-roll of eminent Victorians: Thomas Carlyle, Lady Franklin, Sir Austen Henry Layard, William J. Hooker, Florence Nightingale, Charles Darwin, Charles Babbage, Lord Melbourne, W.E. Gladstone and Sir Charles Lyell. There are also 120 letters from missionaries, most of them from Southern Africa, and a small number of Grey's own letters, for example, copies of letters to the ornithologist John Gould and to Grey's kinsman, the Earl of Stamford. Grey was proud of this material: 'As I have lived in an age of discovery and movement, to do this (i.e. to form this collection) was to preserve a record of the history of the world at a most interesting period, written in all the confidence of friendship by the men who made the history.'⁸ While not using all these letters, I have quoted from them extensively, taking the position that such documentation gives authority to the factual record upon which Grey's life and activities as a book collector stand. This is especially so with Grey where attention, for obvious reasons, has always been on his role as a politician and colonial statesman.⁹

The approach in this book is thus bio-bibliographical, which allows for coverage of four important aspects. First, there is the type and category of books and manuscripts Grey collected, with some brief bibliographical descriptions attached. As mentioned, he collected medieval manuscripts, incunabula, and numerous indigenous language materials in manuscript or book form. He also collected major English literary works such as Shakespeare First Folios and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, books on travel and natural history, mathematics and science, and contemporary biographies and memoirs. His collecting areas were diverse.

Second, there is the collecting process: how Grey acquired his books and from whom. In 1961, E.H. McCormick wrote *The Fascinating Folly: Dr Hocken and His Fellow Collectors*, a work that dealt in part with Grey's collecting. In his short account, McCormick claimed that 'there is no evidence that [Grey] bought in France, Holland, or Italy; and in London he confined himself to such well-known firms as Bohn and Quaritch'.¹⁰ He also claimed that Grey 'had little in common with the traditional connoisseur patiently building up a collection of rarities over a lifetime' and that his 'affinities were rather with the drinker who punctuates arid stretches of sobriety by bouts of excess or with the parsimonious housewife who seeks periodic release in a shopping spree.'¹¹ These generalisations can be dismissed. As will be revealed, Grey actually extended his search for medieval manuscripts and incunabula to other firms in London and Europe, and to individuals who sold second-hand books. He also began collecting early in his career and, in spite of some fifty-five years removed from the centres of the book world, he continued to buy. His chief method of purchase was through dealer catalogues, and, given the nature of these publications, his buying was largely serendipitous. Considering the relative difficulty of obtaining sale catalogues outside London, it is remarkable how much he achieved. McCormick does not cover Grey's collecting

of indigenous language materials, items obtained largely outside an established book market. Grey's accumulation of these materials was the result of networking, with letters (and more letters) sent to missionaries and printers in the field, agencies that published such primers and catechisms, and to other collectors. His position as governor certainly aided the collection of these often ephemeral items.

Third, there is the development and growth of both libraries that is allied closely to the changing face of the nineteenth-century English book-collecting scene in which Grey operated. As his story unfolds, so does this parallel world, with its long line of collectors and collections, the sudden availability of books and manuscripts, and fashions and trends in collecting. Indeed, Grey also operated on a local level, his collection having special relevance to the history of book collecting and the history of libraries in New Zealand and South Africa. On a wider level, Grey is placed in context with others, especially those rooted in the older English tradition of collecting. Assisted by better communication and affected by increased demand, changes in the book world eventually reverberated out into larger, wider arenas. Two are of particular note: the increased supply of books to the colonies, an aspect of the trade with which Grey was intimately involved, and the collecting of philological and linguistic material (in manuscript or printed form), a burgeoning field of endeavour, especially in nineteenth-century England and Europe.

Last, there is a new light cast on Sir George Grey. Known primarily as a colonial administrator, here he can be viewed afresh, as a bookman and collector. As a bibliophile, he was passionate, knowledgeable (about the particulars of books and other libraries), and scholarly. Grey expressed his tastes firmly, and was no dilettante. Collecting for him was a serious but enjoyable undertaking. In addition, new and relatively unknown facts of his life are revealed for the first time here, some of which are integral to his development and activities as a book collector. This applies specifically to the first three chapters, which are largely biographical, and deal with his early childhood, his life in the army, and his social contacts in England.

There are three general caveats. This is not a study of Grey's political activities. Politics, however, was an integral part of his being and in his capacity as governor he amassed political pamphlets, official proclamations and treatises. While these are mentioned, it is the other areas of his collecting that are here given prominence. For coverage of his political life I recommend the aforementioned biographies. In addition, because the emphasis here is on chronicling Grey's activities as a collector, there is little attempt at any explanation of the psychology of collecting. This field I leave to others.

This book covers Grey's interests in languages, and his collecting of such materials as Maori waiata (songs), Ga and Xhosa grammars and catechisms, and Malagasy and Samoan scriptural works. It does not cover the more specialised areas of comparative linguistics and philology, nor involve the evaluation of the translations that he carried out. This specialised area is left to those better qualified.

Because Grey's libraries are intact, they make an excellent primary resource. A physical examination was undertaken by the author of all his books and

manuscripts. While this was an enjoyable exercise, albeit a somewhat grubby one, it also produced a number of significant results. It provided a greater awareness of the impressive variety of material Grey had accumulated. It also revealed the condition of many items, especially those of some known bibliographical interest. To further identify these volumes, I have tied most (but not all) to standard bibliographical works such as Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-title Catalogue (STC)*, Donald Wing's *Short-title Catalogue (Wing)*, the *Eighteenth-Century Short-title Catalogue (ESTC)*, and the more recent *English Short-title Catalogue on CD-Rom* (2003). The search also revealed a large store of annotations and marginalia written by Grey, some of which has been utilised. It also led to the discovery of the provenance of some of the books, which often included data pertaining to their purchase, and which particular dealer catalogue the books and manuscripts had been selected from. Importantly, this created a greater sense of the suppliers (be they dealers or donors) and Grey's patterns of buying.

Fortunately, the institutionalisation of both collections has resulted in the printing of catalogues of all or of some parts of them. No doubt encouraged into print by Grey himself, these catalogues provide permanent records of each collection and, at the time of publication, were excellent vehicles for promotion. Theophilus Hahn's *Index of the Grey Collection* (1884) offers the best coverage of the Cape Town Grey Collection, even though it includes many post-1861 items not collected by Grey and has a quirky index system that makes it a confusing and often unreliable work. The catalogues that specifically detail Grey's indigenous language material at the Cape are excellent resources. They are, briefly, *South Africa* (1858), *Africa* (1858), *Australia* (1858), *Papuan Languages* (1858), *New Zealand* (1858), *Madagascar* (1859), *Fiji Islands* (1859), and *Polynesia* (1859). Four other catalogues feature Grey's collection of European works at the Cape. They are Wilhelm Bleek's *Manuscripts and Incunables* (1862), his more detailed *Early Printed Books, England* (1867), *A Preliminary Catalogue* (1984), a South African Library publication that covers Grey's medieval and renaissance manuscripts, and the more recent *The Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Grey Collection of the National Library of South Africa, Cape Town* (2002) by Dr Carol Steyn.

Auckland is well served by the *General Catalogue of [the] Grey Collection* (1888) and its various supplements (1894–96). Its alphabetical arrangement allows an excellent overview of the collection, including his extensive yet less well-known pamphlet collection. There follows Henry Shaw's *Guide* (1908), a work that details the high points rather than the more general items. An important work that bears on Grey's printed Maori language materials is Herbert W. Williams's *A Bibliography of Printed Maori to 1900* (1924) and its *Supplement* (1928). While not generated by Auckland Library, these works detail much of the Maori materials that were transferred from Cape Town to Auckland in 1922. A.D. Sommerville's *A Supplement to the Williams Bibliography of Printed Maori* (1947) and the more recent *Books in Māori 1815–1900: An Annotated Bibliography* (2004) are useful resources which provide additional information on the collection's Maori language publications. Two other catalogues are important to Auckland's holdings of Grey's medieval and renaissance manuscripts. These are David M. Taylor's *The Oldest Manuscripts in*

New Zealand (1955) and *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in New Zealand Collections* (1989), by Margaret Manion, Vera Vines and Christopher de Hamel.

Sir George Grey was also a scholar and a writer who published on a wide range of subjects: politics, literature, science, and the arts. Many of Grey's books were the tangible results of his collecting in the fields of natural history, philology and ethnography. They include his *Vocabulary of the Dialects Spoken by the Aboriginal Races of S.W. Australia* (1839; Second edition, 1840), his Maori language publications, *Ko nga Moteatea* (1853), *Tupuna Maori* (1854), and *Nga Tipuna* (1857), and his *Journal of Two Expeditions of Discovery in North-west and Western Australia* (1841). The last reflects Grey's early introduction to collecting principles, as laid down by others in the field and emanating from institutions such as the Royal Geographical Society and the Colonial Office. In the case of Maori language publications, these were groundbreaking works, and remain classics in their field. Others are less known: *Journeys of the Stoics* (c. 1882), his broadsheet piece on Thomas Carlyle, and *Letters of the Duchess of Atholl, and Lady Catherine Stewart* (1860), a compilation published by Monckton Milnes through the Philobiblon Society. Grey was also midwife to numerous publications, and the various dedications to him bear testament to his support, albeit because of his position as Governor.

There are a number of features that stand out in relation to Grey's book collecting which are worth mention. First, he followed the two traditions with a marked consistency. From an early stage Grey determined areas of collecting that appealed: medieval manuscripts, early printed books, including the classics and Bibles; indigenous language materials; colonial 'incunabula'; natural history publications; literary works; and historical and political publications, some of the latter having direct bearing on his activities as a colonial administrator. (Presentation copies, books not deliberately collected yet included in both libraries, formed another separately collected category). Once these preferences were established, Grey stuck to them, making little or no deviation. His ordering of similar types of books from dealer catalogues, and the content of and similarities in both collections, give ample evidence for this claim. Americana, and emerging fields of collecting like the late-Victorian trend for private press publications, did not attract him. These domains were left to others, for example, the younger Alexander Turnbull, who took out a standing order for all of William Morris's Kelmscott Press publications.

Second, Grey was persistent, a necessary attribute for one who was governor of three colonial outposts in turn and whose absence from the centre of the book world stretched over a period of fifty-five years. Given the relatively short-term tenure of a governor, the busy schedule, and the lack of incentive to invest energies into a place in which one was a transient, it is a wonder that Grey started collecting at all. Indeed, he could have resigned himself to the relative luxury of gubernatorial office and sat out his terms doing nothing.¹² Fortunately he was not so inclined. He was bright, intellectually inquisitive, and importantly, he had a penchant for collecting. As will be revealed, his persistence paid off, since ultimately he satisfied himself on both private and public levels.

A third feature of Grey's personality was his collegiality. In an interview late in life he was asked by F. Edmund Garrett: 'Looking back now over your long career,

Sir George ... what is the thing that most strikes you about it – you yourself?' After some hesitation, Grey replied: 'I think what strikes me most is – how I have been helped.' 'Helped?' replied Garrett, 'How helped?'. Grey responded: 'Oh, by everybody [...] Everybody has been so kind to me, and helped me on so. Things have come to me.'¹³ And 'things' did, in the form of books and manuscripts from 'persons in every rank of life'.¹⁴ Support and encouragement were also received, with many individuals devoting much time and effort to help satisfy his book requirements. He reciprocated, often giving his own publications away. This response – typical of his personalised approach to collecting – furthered the collecting process and often resulted in the formation of friendships. Indeed, in a survey instigated by Clifford Holgate, Grey acknowledged the help of the book dealers 'Bohn, Boone and Quaritch' who, through their guidance and experience, helped form his collections.¹⁵ Here, evident in the letters from these men, friendships developed that transcended the roles of buyer and seller.

Fourth, there is the role that Grey played in helping to build national identities in New Zealand and South Africa, albeit replicas of a dominant Anglo-Saxon culture. The books and manuscripts he gave away – representatives of a European tradition, and indigenous documents integral to the cultural and historical development of both colonies – were building blocks upon which others could craft self- and national identities. Their physical presence, made possible through Grey's initiatives, allowed that 'history with a difference', a past that would come alive. In short, books live. And, ever the optimist, Grey believed that future generations would utilise the books he had donated and, by this use, attach new and relevant meanings to them. The benefits emanating from these touchstones – frames of reference in a historical continuum – would extend to the wider community and ultimately impact on the colony's developing sense of nationhood. In 1880, he addressed staff and pupils at the opening of the Auckland College and Grammar School: 'I regard this institution as one instance of what I have been endeavouring to inculcate – that good done in the world not only never dies out, but that its effect constantly spreads in a continually increasing ratio.'¹⁶ This is directly applicable to the libraries he helped to form.

In all this Grey was also affected. His own identity, his own self-worth, and notions of immortality (how he saw himself remembered) were also inextricably involved in the activity of collecting and his ultimate gifts to both countries. Indeed, in the same address of 1880, he stated: 'Oh, the supreme pleasure of that man who knows that his great thoughts will never die out – that his influence for good will ever live in the work! [...] His power, his might, his usefulness must ever remain.'¹⁷

And finally, overarching all of the above is Grey's role as a rescuer and salvager, one who saved books and manuscripts from destruction or loss. With regard to this role, it is pertinent to remember A.W. Pollard's remark: 'It is mainly by the zeal of private collectors that books which would otherwise have perished from neglect are discovered, preserved and made to yield up their secrets, with the result that almost every great library owes more on its historical side to their generosity than to the purchases from its own resources.'¹⁸ While Grey gave equal attention to a medieval

manuscript and a Yoruba primer, not all items were netted. Priorities, circumstance and serendipity dictated. Nevertheless, his achievements were remarkable. Indeed, in the area of indigenous language collecting, he stands as a rescuer supreme, an important figure in the then burgeoning areas of Victorian anthropological and ethnographical investigation.¹⁹ As has already been mentioned, he went further by actively encouraging efforts to collate and document his collections. These now form permanent records of what he achieved.

Grey's libraries are exceptional in scope, content and condition. They are invaluable to individuals interested in diverse and specialised fields such as philology, art history, settlement history, early printing, and the history of the book. They are also available for all to enjoy. No matter what they are used for, they remain as monuments to a man who thought much of the future generations of the Southern Hemisphere. His public-minded generosity, unparalleled in the annals of nineteenth-century book collecting, establishes his right to be called the 'Patron of the Southern Hemisphere'. This then is his story.

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Birth, Early Beginnings and the 'White Bear'

On 18 May 1812, Robert Harding Evans, the London auctioneer and dealer, was upstairs in the library of the late Duke of Roxburghe at his house in St James's Square. It was there that he commenced the sale of the Duke's library, a collection of books and manuscripts that amounted to some 9353 lots. The sale generated much excitement. In his *Bibliographical Decameron*, T.F. Dibdin, while certainly not the most reliable of bibliophilic commentators, wrote: 'The curiosity of the spectators was increased in proportion to the numbers which flocked into the room. Short men were smothered; and nothing but the standing upon a contiguous bench saved the writer of the *Bibliographical Decameron* from suffocation'.¹ The sale ended on 4 July 1812 and realised £23,397. The fifteen Caxtons brought record prices, the Duke of Devonshire giving £1060 10s for the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, while five others were purchased by Lord Spencer.² The greatest moment in the sale was the bidding between Earl Spencer, the Marquis of Blandford (later the Duke of Marlborough) and the Duke of Devonshire. Each of them vied for ownership of a 1471 copy of *Il Decamerone*, now commonly known as the Valdarfer Boccaccio. After much bidding, the Marquis of Blandford acquired the book for £2260. It was an unprecedented event, the first time a book had sold for four figures. Dibdin, in his excited manner, continued: 'The echo of that fallen hammer was heard in the libraries of Rome, of Milan, and St Mark in Venice. Boccaccio himself startled from his slumber of some five hundred years; and Mr Van Praet rushed (but rushed in vain) amidst the royal book-treasures at Paris to see if a copy of the said Valdarfer Boccaccio could there be found! The price electrified the bystanders, and astounded the public!'³ In one part of his extensive notes he added: 'The price given for the Valdarfer Boccaccio of 1471 – may be truly said to have astonished the whole BOOK-WORLD. Not a living creature anticipated it; but this might be called the grand era of Bibliomania.'⁴ In truth, the auction and this auspicious event did signify the coming of age of modern English book collecting.

A month before this landmark auction, on Tuesday, 14 April, George Grey was born in Lisbon, Portugal. In the same tradition of English book collecting to which Earl Spencer and the Duke of Devonshire had belonged, this future collector of books and manuscripts would also embrace areas of book collecting particular to those lands on the far side of the world where his career lay: Australia, the Cape Colony, and New Zealand. It was in the last two places that he would make his own distinctive mark in the world of book collecting.