

The Receipt of Manuscripts in New College Library 1624-1852

As part of our continuing project to recatalogue the college's manuscripts, we are investigating the history of the growth of the collection itself. The following notes, surveying accessions between the date of Thomas Man's catalogue (1624) and that of Henry Coxe (1852), are a contribution to that process, and hopefully this material will be refined and augmented in future iterations.

For roughly the first two centuries of its existence, New College owned, acquired, and circulated manuscripts because they were the primary means of communicating texts of current interest. The impact of printing started to erode this primacy, but slowly: printed books only arrived in the college library in significant numbers from the sixteenth century, and although the use of manuscripts as current texts declined sharply thereafter, it did not cease altogether, and in some cases—for instance clandestine texts—it persisted into the late seventeenth century.

If manuscripts were still in use, their function nevertheless changed. In many cases, a manuscript was increasingly likely to be presented, accepted, and viewed rather for its artefactual than for its textual value. This applied to early printed books, too: when, in around 1738, William Harris presented New College with a 1493 printed edition of Terence's comedies, it must have been as an example of an early piece of printing, and not because of the scholarship of the edition. And in 1755, when the physician John Smyth gave four books, three were manuscripts, accompanied by one incunable, a copy of the 1493 Nuremberg Chronicle.

The transition from text to artefact, however, was only one process. Another, focusing on the receiver rather than the thing received, reveals the rise of the institution as repository, somewhere safe to place books and indeed other kinds of objects. We might assume that this was a process kick-started by the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the 1530s, but in fact it proves difficult to identify any convincing campaigns to convey sets of books from one institution to another. The evidence suggests rather that, when dissolution came, individuals took their chances where they found them, and initiatives to preserve monastic libraries were usually driven by former monks who held such books in their families. It was only when it became clear in Elizabeth's reign that there was to be no restitution that these books started to appear as gifts to colleges and also on the second-hand market. Most of the monastic books in the college libraries, therefore, came by bequest and at several removes.¹

Many sixteenth- and seventeenth-century donations of manuscripts to college libraries might be thought of as less embattled actions, displaying rather *pietas* towards a nurturing institution, a *pietas* that could combine an interest in books that may or may not have become artefacts with a desire to place them in an institution that looked capable of guarding them in the long term.

Thus the evidence supplied by manuscripts coming into the collections in post-Reformation New College is varied and complex. The outstanding example here is the action of the executors of Reginald Pole, the last Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, who directed his Greek manuscripts and a substantial library of printed books to New College, in the hope that they would be safe in such a place. The transfer of Pole's books was made presumably in the hope that the Reformation, at least in England, might only be a temporary state of affairs. This might also be true for the very interesting donations of the recusant civil lawyer Thomas Martin, who in the later Elizabethan period handed over a small but valuable set of manuscripts of specifically English medieval

¹ For a survey of the issues, with some exceptions to the statement above, see James Carley, 'The dispersal of the monastic libraries and the salvaging of the spoils', in Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Teresa Webber, eds., *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland. Volume I. To 1640* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 265-91.

interest to what was by now a thoroughly Reformed college.² Martin was clearly possessed of *pietas* towards his old institution, as he was also the first published biographer of William of Wykeham (posthumously published in 1597). *Pietas* was probably intended too by the antiquary and pioneering Anglo-Saxonist Robert Talbot (1505/6–1558), who bequeathed his manuscripts to his old college. But he signalled that they should be handled by the Dean of Norwich Cathedral and the Dean of St Paul's, both also sometime fellows of the college. However, as Roman Catholics both these men were arrested early in Elizabeth's reign, and Talbot's manuscripts, despite his intentions, never arrived. A good number of survive, but they are now widely dispersed, and none are at New College. It would have been nice to have had some genuine Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in the collection.

Thereafter the presentation of manuscripts to the college library becomes intermittent, poorly documented, and dogged by the problem of loss. The first proper post-Reformation catalogue, that of college fellow Thomas James, was published in 1600 as part of James's union catalogue of the collegiate collections, the *Ecloga Oxonio-Cantabrigiensis*; the second, of Thomas Man, the first fellow to be salaried as college librarian, is a manuscript list dated 1624; and, as several scholars have worried, the two lists do not at all cohere. Ninety-three of the 285 manuscripts James listed for his own college are no longer there today, and many were missing by the time of Man's list.³ James, alas, can be shown to have 'donated' a few of these to his new employer, Thomas Bodley, after he was appointed Bodley's first librarian; but these only account for some of the major, and still unexplained, losses of the Jacobean period. These are really quite mild in the larger Oxonian context, however: James's list of manuscripts currently to be found in Queen's, for instance, an older foundation than New College, runs to merely four entries.

The first sight of new manuscripts coming into the college library after Martin's donation was probably in 1596 when Robert More or Moor, fellow of the college and prebendary of Winchester, gave a Greek commentary on the Acts of the Apostles and the Canonical Epistles (probably MS 58). The previous year Moor had taken his MA, and published at Oxford too his long Wykehamical world chronicle in Latin verse, the *Diarium historicopoeticum*. The library's Benefactors' Register does not record another new manuscript for over two and a half decades, when a 'Missale M^{ss}' came from one of the chaplains, John Phillips, in 1622; with this he also presented a 1577 Antwerp printed missal and an edition of the Genevan church discipline.⁴ We might associate these gifts of liturgical works with an interest in 'controversial theology', that staple of the Jacobean academe. However all three of Phillips's gifts are lost, and may never have been received.

The Man catalogue gave the manuscripts in the college in its compiler's day a number based on which academic faculty their texts belonged to (1-289), and these are the numbers still in use today. For subsequent accessions the only thing to do was to number them as they arrived, irrespective of genre, and thus—with, as we shall see, only limited security—the rising sequence after 1624 and from MS 290 ought to tell a chronologically coherent story of acquisition. What is puzzling is that, after Moor in 1596 and the lost missal of Phillips, we hear of no manuscripts at all in the Benefactors' Register until 1635, when MSS 296-99 arrived, as we shall see below. Although we might therefore suspect that the manuscripts now numbering 290 to 295 were all received between 1624 and 1635, in fact this seems unlikely. MS 291, a copy of Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*, was scribed in 1452. MS 292, a manuscript of Johannes de Burgo and another text, was certainly given to the college by Richard Andrew, Dean of York, in the early fifteenth century, and is

² William Poole, ['The 1588 Donations of Thomas Martin, Lawyer and Recusant'](#) *New College Notes* 4 (2013), no. 3.

³ It is now New College Library, LC/1.

⁴ 'The forme of Prayers and administration of Sacraments at Geneva' (STC 16581, or a subsequent edition, again no longer in the library).

acknowledged earlier in the Register (Benefactors' Register, p. 23). Likewise MSS 293 (Campanus's *Theorica planetarum*) and 294 (a collection of texts by Roger Bacon and others, in French and Latin) strike one as fifteenth-century working texts, and not curiosities presented for antiquarian interest two centuries later. The answer is surely that these were in the college all along, but had just eluded Man when he made his initial reckoning. We shall encounter this phenomenon again below. Of these five manuscripts, however, one, MS 295, has been lost for good. We can guess that it was a fifteenth-century English text, and all that survives is its description in the Man catalogue as 'An English booke of Astronomie', which began, rather unrevealingly, 'Heere beginneth ...'. Nevertheless I wonder if this were not the text that goes under the authorship of (pseudo-) 'Godfridus super Palladium', *This [or The] booke of astronomye* or *The knowledge of things vnkowne, apperteyning to astronomy*, first printed in 1522, c. three dozen editions to 1758, and indeed commencing 'Here beginneth the Booke of Knowledge ...'?

Thus no manuscripts are visible in the Benefactors' Register until 1635 because nothing new arrived. But in this year William Ferrars, described as a merchant of London and an alumnus, presented the college library with four manuscripts, three in Greek (MS 297, the grammatical works of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century scholars Manuel Moschopulus and Georgius Lacapenus;⁵ MS 298, the *Iliad* with scholia; and MS 299, Aristotle's *Organon* with Ptolemy's *Harmonics* and *Astrolabe*), and one in Arabic (MS 296, described as the 'Sharho Menhag', a commentary on a work by the thirteenth-century Islamic scholar Al-Baydawi). Ferrars presumably acquired these manuscripts through mercantile activity. Indeed, in 1634 William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, had ordered that every merchant ship of the Levant Company returning from the east should acquire one Arabic or Persian manuscript for the archbishop, who was collecting these for presentation to the Bodleian.⁶ Now Ferrars was indeed a merchant of the Levant Company.⁷ Was he responding to the spirit, but not the letter, of this scheme?

A handful of manuscripts followed in the later 1630s. MS 300, a tiny fifteenth-century book of patristic authorities, once the property of a Benedictine of Christ Church Canterbury in 1531, came into the possession of John Grent (not 'Grene', as in Coxe's catalogue), who presented it to the college as a *quondam socius* in 1638. Although the donation does not appear in the register, Grent was indeed at the college, BA 1613, MA 1617, vicar of Aston in 1621, where he still was in 1639.⁸

It appears that the next donations came in 1639, when we find Edmund Hiorne, described as 'Generosus' (Benefactors' Register, p. 81), presenting an anonymous English tract of 1584 called 'A protestation of sundrie points concerning the Catholike feithe', with a tract 'De duplici martyrio'; the popular *Compendium Theologiae* of the thirteenth-century Dominican Hugo Ripelin of Strasburg ('Hugo de Argentina'); and a collection of dominical sermons by 'Walter Hilton', really John Felton, the early fifteenth-century vicar of the church of Mary Magdalen, Oxford. Now Hiorne was no academic but the town clerk and J.P. for Woodstock. He leased property from New College, and this is presumably the reason for his benefaction.⁹ We can confidently identify his texts as entered into the Benefactors' Register with the first and second items of MS 303, the first item of MS 304, and MS 305. Moreover Hiorne owned rather than simply acquired MSS 303 and 305 for

⁵ Often encountered together: e.g., Bodleian, MS Barocci 103; Clare College, Cambridge, MS G 3.6.

⁶ See Gerald J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The study of Arabic in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 108-9, for the scheme.

⁷ See Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 71. Not to be confused with the Middle Templar and Virginia settler of that name.

⁸ Clergy of the Church of England Database (CCED), Person ID: 12962.

⁹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, s.n. 'Hiorne, Edmund', by Mary Hodges.

donation, as he has signed them. The Felton manuscript had a previous college connection, as it had once been in the possession of William Porter, Warden of New College from 1494-1520. The entry in the Benefactors' Register here is of further value, as it identifies the author of 'De duplici martyrio' as Thomas Neel, and this must be Thomas Neel (c. 1519—in or after 1590), sometime fellow of the college, and a famous Hebrew scholar and recusant, although his memorial brass in his own parish church at Cassington suggests he reached some common ground with the Elizabethan church. This attribution does not appear to have been noted hitherto. The author of the first tract in this volume has concealed his name, but he has supplied several steganographical verses inviting the reader to crack the code and learn his name, and with any luck we shall soon do so. The final item is a treatise on 'humble patience' confected from Augustine and others. The manuscript is presented as if ready for the press, with a preface assuming such a destiny, and is in one hand throughout. It is possible that Neel is responsible for the whole performance.

Hiorne was followed by James Terry, another college chaplain, the next year, who presented an attractively coloured twelfth-century copy of Jerome on Matthew, followed by his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers, imperfect, and a more workmanlike fifteenth-century copy of various pieces by Cicero (Benefactors Register, p. 82 = MSS 301 and 302). Terry himself took his MA on 15 April 1635; it is possible that, although his manuscripts were entered on a page in the register headed 1640, this is a belated entry, as was common, and that his manuscripts perhaps marked a slightly earlier departure from the college; their numeration, before those of Hiorne, would support this hypothesis.

The next manuscripts in the numerical sequence are out of place. These are MSS 306 (the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaeum*) and 307 (actually a transcript of an incunable, the *Margarita poetica* of Johannes van Eyb), two manuscripts that certainly arrived in the college 1385 and 1480 respectively. That they bear these numbers shows that they were in the college but not in the library at the point of Man's numeration. One possibility is that they had somehow, as books and manuscripts often do, wandered into the warden's lodgings, a hard place for fellows to search for missing books. Circumstantial evidence is furnished by the next manuscript in the sequence, MS 308, a fine twelfth-century copy of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*. This came from the bequest of Warden Pinke, who died a wealthy man in 1647 after falling down the stairs in the lodgings, leaving an extensive library to his college. Further evidence that the manuscripts were received as a group of three is provided by the Man catalogue, still in use long after it was drawn up, where these three manuscripts are entered in a distinctive hand, quite differing from the entries before and after it. Given that Pinke had been Warden since 1617, the seeming truancy of MSS 299-95 when Man was first making his catalogue might just be down to Pinke too.

The chronology and transmission of manuscripts to the college over the next three decades is problematic. There were certainly problems of access: when Gerard Langbaine visited in 1651 to check a manuscript, the key to the relevant cupboard could not be found, and Langbaine reported that the college would probably be content to break the cupboard open if need be, as had been done 'upon a like occasion before'. In 1655 he visited to recatalogue the manuscripts, and inspected them with the librarian, Thomas Pelham. Langbaine found eighteen not on the shelves, but as they all later returned they were evidently out on loan.¹⁰ In 1656 the travelling fellow Thomas Tanner returned from the continent and presented a haul of books to the college, including a manuscript description of the election of Pope Alexander VII, installed in April 1655, accompanied by a portrait. Both are no longer in the college today, and indeed it is possible, as I suggested in an earlier

¹⁰ Both incidents are discussed in William Poole, 'Book Economy in New College, Oxford, in the Later Seventeenth Century', *History of Universities* 25 (2010), pp. 56-137.

Note, that Tanner himself removed this manuscript and re-presented it to the Bodleian in 1660.¹¹

As for the manuscripts we may infer to have arrived between the mid 1640s and the decade-and-a-half immediately following the Restoration, we would very much like to know more. MS 309 is a fine fifteenth-century manuscript of the Quran, provenance unknown. It is very tempting to associate this with the six printed books, all for the learning of Arabic, donated by the ejected Warden Stringer in 1654 (Benefactors' Register, p. 84), as the numeration of the Quran renders this a plausible date for its receipt. But we lack conclusive evidence, and it is odd that the crowning jewel of this donation, if it be such, was not set down with its supporting texts. The ingress of MS 310, a fine fifteenth-century Latin devotional manuscript, is completely mysterious; likewise of MS 312, a sixteenth-century collection of texts commencing with Regiomontanus's (printed) astronomical *Ephemerides*, and concluding with several medical texts in Dutch, but its most recent owners appear to have been from Merton and Oriel colleges.¹² MS 313 is a copy of the 'Donations' of Robert Sherborne, the early sixteenth-century Bishop of Chichester, and is a beautifully illuminated manuscript on vellum in very fine binding, clearly an artefact worth keeping. In fact it is one of two copies of this manuscript in the college, as one was officially presented to the college, Sherborn's own society and a beneficiary of some of the donations, and has since that time remained in the archives (NCA 9432). The copy under discussion here was later in the hands of one Christopher Brone (i.e. Brown), but an inscription at the front marks the admission of one Daniel Gardiner to the Bursal Prebend at Chichester in 1571. Gardiner appears to have added this inscription himself, and the manuscript presumably was in his hands at and after this point; he died in 1592, and was succeeded by Henry Ball, DD of New College, who died in 1603, and this may take us a step closer to the college.¹³ It was evidently presented to the library as a kind of artistic curiosity, while the archives rightly retained the official college copy. This is confirmed by the iteration of the text represented by either copy: the library copy is Sherborne's superseded second version, while the one in the archives is the final, third edition.¹⁴ So while MS 312 was potentially still a useful text, especially its astronomical components, MSS 310 and 313, however, had become artefacts.

MS 311 is a fascinating manuscript, as it is a copy—in fact two separate copies—of Nicholas Harpsfield's notorious 'Treatise on the pretended divorce', i.e. of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Harpsfield (1519-1575) had been a Roman Catholic fellow of the college, and this anti-Henrician treatise was still political dynamite in the later seventeenth century, and indeed was not published in full until the late nineteenth century. The script of both the college's copies shows (despite what is claimed in Coxe's catalogue) they were made in the seventeenth century, perhaps commissioned clandestinely by the college; neither is mentioned in the Benefactors' Register. One was there by 1670, when Anthony Wood saw it.¹⁵ The text was certainly read: a mutilated loans register for the period survives, and we find this text borrowed by Edward Hanbury in 1671, by Richard Rowlandson in 1674, and by Richard Traffles, a future warden, in 1698. The same 'Leiger book', as it was called, indeed shows that manuscripts were quite often borrowed by

¹¹ See Poole, ['Thomas Tanner \(1630–1682\): A Cosmopolitan Fellow of the Interregnum and his Donations to the Library'](#), *New College Notes* 6 (2015), no. 7.

¹² It once belonged to a William Daunton, possibly he who was fellow of Merton, 1590-99, who had received it from Thomas Levis of Oriel, as he notes. The inscription is probably Jacobean, but there is no such Thomas Levis/Lewis listed in Foster.

¹³ *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541-1857: Volume 2, Chichester Diocese*, ed. Joyce M Horn (London, 1971), pp. 71-80, 'Residentiary canons of Chichester', where his admission however is dated to 1574.

¹⁴ Information from James Willoughby's draft catalogue entry for this manuscript.

¹⁵ For more details see Poole, ['Two Copies of a Clandestine Manuscript in Late Seventeenth-Century New College'](#), *New College Notes* 1 (2012), no. 11.

fellows in this period.¹⁶ Finally, MSS 309-13 may not have arrived in the order reflected by their numbering—it is likely that, as is very common in large or disorganised libraries, new accessions accrued in the library throughout this turbulent period, and were later processed in one batch.

We only regain the chronological thread in 1677, with the bequest of Thomas Philpot (BA 1611, MA 1615, DD 1646, d. 1671), whose books included a set of manuscripts, being an incomplete Franciscan concordance, the reformer Martin Bucer on the ceremonies of the church, bound with some other items,¹⁷ Boethius in English verse, a copy of the Wycliffite Psalms, and a collection of Elizabethan and Jacobean guides to the legal system (MSS 315, 317, 319, 320, 325). Philpot had had some of these manuscripts for some time: MS 320, for instance, bears on a blank page (46r) Philpot's copy of his 1646 supplication for his DD. Either there was a delay between Philpot's death and the college's receipt of the MSS, or there is an error in the dating of the entry in the Benefactors' Register.

At the end of some pages of entries commencing in 1678, and just before a fresh page headed 1682, we next find Thomas Shephard, MA and chaplain—this is the third time we have encountered a chaplain in this connection—giving what is described simply as 'Biblia M^{ss}', and this might equally describe MS 316 or MS 318, two fourteenth-century imperfect Vulgates, of which the former once belonged to one Robert Iluston, a gift from one Robert Yonge. Perhaps Shephard gave both. Firmer ground is achieved in 1686, when Charles Tooker, a London 'bibliopola', presented the college with MS 314, a copy of the English poet Chaucer he had no doubt obtained on the London market. Tooker appears to have been an auctioneer.¹⁸ In 1688 William Preston gave an Armenian Psalter (MS 321); he received his BA in that year, and this may be connected with that event, although it is squeezed in after his donation of a two-volume edition of Descartes' letters, and it might rather be associated with his MA, of 1692. How he got his hands on this rarity is unknown. Then in 1693 came one of the most famous donations to the college, being the De Brailes Psalter and a Book of Hours (MSS 322-23), given by Henry Howell, London merchant and son of the Bishop of Bristol. The latter is a sixteenth-century Flemish piece; the former is the celebrated thirteenth-century 'New College Psalter', illuminated by the manuscript artist William de Brailes (fl. 1230–60), one of the most elaborate of his works.

This whole block from MS 314 to MS 325 is somewhat jumbled internally, but we can at least say that all these MSS arrived between 1677 and perhaps 1693. Matters are rendered more complex, however, because in the next published catalogue of New College's manuscripts, that contained within the *Catalogi Manuscriptorum Angliæ et Hiberniæ* (*CMA*) (Oxford, 1697[8]), the list for New College ceases at MS 323, one before a particularly eccentric member of the collection, MS 324. This is not a manuscript at all, but a Chinese printed book, a late Ming fascicule or *juan* of the Confucian text known in the West as Mencius. It bears the note: 'Mr Grimes. I haue sent y^u a booke printed in [y]^e languag[e] of Chyna to shew yow y^e form of theyre print, w^{ch} Language noe man cann vnderstand but them selues:'. It would seem therefore that there is a window between 1693 (receipt of Howell's books) and early 1698 (final publication of the *CMA*) in which the catalogue that would be published in *CMA* was made, but which stopped short of the

¹⁶ These are all discussed in Poole, 'Manuscript Economy', pp. 66-9, where the relevant section of the 'Leiger' is also edited.

¹⁷ I.e. a treatise on the marriage of bishops and priests, and Sir John Pryse on the restitution of the coinage of England, 1553. The latter was first announced in Anthony Wood, *Athenæ Oxonienses*, ed. Philip Bliss (4 vols, London, 1813), vol. 1, col. 218, from the information of 'the rev. T. Penrose, fellow and librarian of that society'.

¹⁸ See the British Book Trade Index (<http://bbti.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>), with reference to Giles Mandelbrote, 'The Organization of Book Auctions in Late Seventeenth Century London', in *Under the Hammer: Book Auctions since the Seventeenth Century London*, ed. by Robin Myers and Michael Harris (London, 2001), pp. 15-50.

Mencius fragment and the final (and slightest) Philpot manuscript, MS 325, a late shelving of the final piece of an earlier bequest.

These problems of the internal dating of blocks of numbers resolve in the eighteenth century with MS 326, a manuscript of Gower. This was once the property of Thomas Salver, then passing into the Mompesson family, as it is signed by John as a gift from Giles, 1650, and finally donated to the college by Thomas in 1705, as he himself notes at the end of the manuscript; it is nevertheless on a page headed 1714 in the register where it is marked as a legacy. Giles is Sir Giles Mompesson (1583/4–1651x63), the notorious projector; the Thomas who ultimately presented the manuscript took his BA at New College in 1686, his MA in 1690, and was one of the proctors in 1699; he died in 1713.

MS 327 is a seventeenth-century biblical commentary in English by John South, fellow of the college and regius professor of Greek at Oxford in the final years of James VI & I's reign. This manuscript was given in trust to Wardens Woodward (1658-75) and then Nicholas (1675-79) successively to hold for South's grandson, to be given to him should he enter into holy orders. Both wardens kept this trust, and the grandson, now an ageing clergyman, presented the manuscript back to the college library in thanks. This is not recorded in the register, but in an undated and unsigned presentation letter written at the beginning of the manuscript itself.

MS 328 came from John Woodford (BA 1693, MA 1697) in 1710, the year in which Woodford became rector of Bucknell, a college living, and is an interesting collection of original warrants from the time of Edward VI to that of Oliver and Richard Cromwell. This was evidently presented for its documentary and antiquarian value, and perhaps in gratitude for Woodford's advancement. It is not a manuscript text but a collection of documents, and must have been gathered together over time by Woodford, or the person from whom he obtained it.¹⁹

MS 329 is a seventeenth-century tract, *The Parsons Law*. This manuscript has hitherto not been attributed, but it is a manuscript copy of the work of that name by the translator and legal compiler William Hughes (1587/8–1663?), first published in 1641, but which he had, as he explained in the preface to his second edition (1663), distributed widely in manuscript copies after its composition in 1634.²⁰ This is likely one of these early manuscripts, a folio in its original limp parchment binding, and reflecting the text at a stage just prior to that of the first printed edition (subsequent printed editions were revised). It was not, however, entered into the Benefactors' Register. Indeed, it is hard to date the entry of these manuscripts as a group, and catalogues can be misleading: the entries for MSS 327-29 are added to the Man catalogue in the same hand, differing from those before and after, and so on that evidence we would associate this group in time. And yet if we turn to the new manuscript catalogue, drawn up in 1729, we find that the sequence ceases at the Gower (MS 326), with MSS 327-31 as obvious later additions. This seems too late, especially for MS 328, which, as we saw, was noted as a gift in 1710. What these conflicting pieces of evidence really show is that the chronology of administrative documents is, frustratingly, not necessarily the same as the chronology of accession they appear to describe.

Then there was a long hiatus in the college, corresponding with a general decline in the eighteenth century in donations to the library, which after all now had funds at its disposal to buy books, and which had profited from several duplicate sales. It is only in

¹⁹ Jason Morgan, 'New College MS328 and Jane the Quene', *New College Notes* 1 (2012), no. 2.

²⁰ Hughes, *Parsons Law*, 2nd edn. (London, 1663), sigs. A2r-A3r. Several copies were first distributed 'to some Eminent men of the Clergy ... as also to many other Honourable and Worthy persons' in 1634; then in 1636 Hughes sent a copy to the Lord Chief Justice (at that point Sir John Bramston), who passed it to Archbishop Laud, who in turn encouraged print publication.

1755 that John Smyth (BA 1732, MA 1636, BM 1739, MD 1742, d. 1792) is recorded as donating three (titles, actually just two) manuscripts, of primarily heraldic interest, of the seventeenth century (MSS 330, 336).²¹ Then in the 1760s the scholar Gloucester ('Gloster') Ridley—direct descendant and biographer of the martyr Ridley—gave his working collection of Philoxenian Syriac biblical manuscripts. He had failed to produce the Gospel edition on which he had long been labouring, and the project was taken on by Joseph White, Laudian Professor of Arabic, appearing as *Sacrorum Evangeliorum versio Syriaca Philoxeniana* in Oxford in 1778, edited from two (MSS 333, 334) of these important manuscripts.

Ridley is stated in the Benefactors' Register, however, to have given fully twenty-six manuscripts ('tractatus'). Perhaps these comprehend the Syriac texts just mentioned, but 'tractatus' does not seem the right word for such impressive biblical manuscripts. This points to a more interesting answer. Ridley's Syriac manuscripts, I believe, were not entered into the Benefactors' Book at all, and the twenty-six tracts referred to are the short, mainly seventeenth-century pieces, now collected in MSS 337, 339, 340, and 344. Browsing through the individual items contained in these manuscripts, it is striking how many of them have a number inked onto them, the surviving ones running between seventeen and, indeed, twenty-six.²² These, I propose, are Ridley's 'tractatus', and this is confirmed by the seventh item of MS 344, a long autograph letter by the Caen scholar Jacob Bochart to George Morley (1598?–1684), future bishop of Winchester but at that time (1650) in exile on the continent, which has Ridley's name written at the end of it twice, as well as Morley's own docketing.²³ Indeed, several of these items appear to descend from Morley's papers, although it is not yet known how Ridley, who was only born in 1702, acquired these.²⁴ As the surviving tracts appear out of numerical sequence, however, and as the first item of MS 344 demonstrably came from Joseph Trapp in 1752, we can conclude that these tracts were all bound up out of order and in different volumes after accession.²⁵ As the total number of Ridley tracts is only twenty-three, however, either some are now lost, or we should include in the reckoning MS 338, an anonymous seventeenth-century theological tract in English,²⁶ and just possibly MS 343, a valuable collection of mid-sixteenth-century

²¹ The first is the official College of Arms Visitation of Leicester in 1619, in a copy composed by the scribe John Middleton in 1677, who has signed it thus. The second once belonged to George Smyth, perhaps John's brother of that name, also of New College (they came from Corley in Warwickshire). It contains separate texts, including a transcript James VI & I's speech in parliament of 30 January 1620, the herald Brian Dawson's lists of the nobility, probably from the 1620s, and then a similar text, but with blazons, dated 1631.

²² MS 337 (V items): I '13'; II --; III '25'; IV '20'; 5 '7', with '26' at end.

MS 339 (VII items): I '16', with '12' at end; II --; III '21'; IV '22'; V '15'; VI --; VII '19'.

MS 340 (IV items): MS 340: I --; II '16'; III --; IV --.

MS 344 (VIII items): no such numbering, but 'Dr Ridley' twice at the end of item VII.

²³ This letter was printed in Paris and also in Amsterdam in 1650 under the title *Samuelis Bocharti Epistola, qua respondetur ad tres quaestiones: I. De presbyteratu & episcopatu. II. De provocatione à iudiciis ecclesiasticis. III. De iure ac potestate regum*. It was also published in Paris in that year in a French translation. One Bodleian copy of the Paris 1650 Latin imprint, 8° C 566 Linc, was purchased and annotated by Thomas Barlow of Queen's in the year of publication.

²⁴ Three of the five pieces in MS 337 are by Morley; and the final item of 344, being Presbyterian exceptions against the Book of Common Prayer (given 4 May 1661; printed by Richard Baxter in London in 1661; see Wing B1278A and E3841) has 'I am to have Mr Morley ale this afternoon' scrawled on the back. Baxter and Morley were closely associated, the relationship turning sour (see *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). Whereas MS 340, item 4 (verses by Wykehamists on the visit of Edward VI to Winchester), came from the herald Peter Le Neve, who obtained it from the executrix of John Gibbon, Gibbon in turn having received it as a gift from the bookman John Bagford.

²⁵ We may note a comment at the end of MS 339, item 4, dated 24 May 1768: 'All the pages of this MSS, from the 9th to the 24th both inclusive, were missing. T. H.'

²⁶ This is a folio in limp vellum, untitled but in four chapters, the first commending 'Of Gods proceedings with Man immediately after his creation as we find it recorded in the story of adam'. The manuscript is a fair

letters on ecclesiastical matters by Johannes à Lasco, Peter Martyr, Martin Bucer, Thomas Cranmer and others, docketed ‘Controversia Vestitaria’, many autograph, in this category.²⁷

The Ridley tracts will receive fuller treatment in time, as there are several potentially important pieces among them. For now I mention only one, in MS 344, item 6, a discourse on (indeed against) women marrying a second time within a few months of the decease of a former husband. Coxe could not read the appended signature, but it is clearly that of Robert Sharrock of New College, the well-known theologian and early plant scientist, friend and editor to Robert Boyle. He was also the college librarian in the early Restoration and a benefactor to his own library, and this is a hitherto unknown piece of his work, in his hand.²⁸

When Coxe published his landmark catalogues of the college manuscripts in 1852, he recognized New College holdings only up to the number 344, where we cease investigations for now. He was clearly working on dated information, as MS 348 (*olim* MS 347 until our recent renumbering of post-Coxe MSS), the fascinating travel journal of Daniel Vivian, a college fellow who toured Italy in 1636, was purchased by the college in 1850; this is the subject of another Note in the current edition.²⁹ Coxe, who did his own research, cannot have allowed his work to have become too dated, and so it would seem likely, then, that the two volumes of Syriac gospel transcripts (MSS 345-46; more Ridley materials, I suspect, drawn up and collated by him against Bodleian MSS), and a sixteenth-century copy (36 Hen. VIII = April 1544-April 45) of the statutes of Winchester Cathedral (MS 347), entered the collections shortly before 1850. What happened from 1852 to the current day will be the subject of a subsequent Note.

William Poole
Fellow Librarian

copy as if made ready for the press, but entirely unsigned and undated. It is obviously seventeenth century, but little more can be said for now.

²⁷ It was once owned by a Henry Wallis, perhaps in the late sixteenth century, not obviously a college fellow.

²⁸ See Anna Svensson’s [Note on Sharrock](#) in this issue. In the same manuscript we might note that item 4, unattributed by Coxe and badly damaged, has had its leaves disordered, and that the conclusion is really the foot of fol. 89r, where we find our author and date: Adam Blaire, 15 December 1650.

²⁹ Thus Sewell’s note at the end of his entry on Vivian in Warden Sewell’s Register (kept in the Archives).

Appendix: Manuscripts, accession dates, donors

MS number	Description	Accession	Donor	Benefactors Book
296	Arabic commentary	1635	William Ferrars	p. 80
297	Greek grammar	1635	William Ferrars	p. 80
298	Homer	1635	William Ferrars	p. 80
299	Aristotle	1635	William Ferrars	p. 80
300	Patristic authorities	1638	John Grene	<i>no entry</i>
301	Jerome	1640	James Terry	p. 82
302	Cicero	1640	James Terry	p. 82
303	Neal and others	1639	Edmund Hiorne	p. 81
304	Hugo Ripelin	1639	Edmund Hiorne	p. 81
305	John Felton	1639	Edmund Hiorne	p. 81
306	Chrysostom	1385	William Rede	p. 19
307	Albert of Eyb	1479	Robert Mason	p. 27
308	Bede	1648	Robert Pinke	p. 108
309	Quran	<i>c.</i> 1648-77	?	<i>no entry</i>
310	Devotional materials	<i>c.</i> 1648-77	?	<i>no entry</i>
311	Harpsfield	<i>c.</i> 1648-70	?	<i>no entry</i>
312	Regiomontanus etc.	<i>c.</i> 1648-77	?	<i>no entry</i>
313	Sherborne	<i>c.</i> 1648-77	?	<i>no entry</i>
314	Chaucer	1686	Charles Tooker	p. 131
315	Bible	1677	Thomas Philpot	p. 121
316	Bible	1678-82?	Thomas Shephard?	
317	Bucer	1677	Thomas Philpot	p. 121
318	Bible	1678-82	Thomas Shephard	
319	Boethius	1677	Thomas Philpot	p. 121
320	Wycliffite Pslams	1677	Thomas Philpot	p. 121
321	Armenian Psalter	1688[/92?]	William Preston	p. 133
322	De Brailes	1693	Henry Howell	p. 141
323	Book of Hours	1693	Henry Howell	p. 141
324	Mencius	1693-97	?	<i>no entry</i>
325	Robinson	1677	Thomas Philpot	p. 121
326	Gower	1705/1714	Thomas Mompesson	p. 161
327	South's biblical commentary	1705-1710	South's grandson	<i>no entry</i>
328	Warrants of Edward VI	1710	John Woodford	p. 158
329	Parson's Law	<i>c.</i> 1710	?	<i>no entry</i>
330	Leicester Visitation	1755	John Smyth	p. 171
331	Syriac theology	<i>c.</i> 1764	Gloster Ridley	<i>no entry</i>
332	Caryophylus's Stephanus	?	?	<i>no entry</i>
333	Syriac theology	<i>c.</i> 1764	Gloster Ridley	<i>no entry</i>
334	Syriac theology	<i>c.</i> 1764	Gloster Ridley	<i>no entry</i>
335	Syriac theology	<i>c.</i> 1764	Gloster Ridley	<i>no entry</i>
336	Dawson's nobility	1755	John Smyth	p. 171
337	Walker's journal, etc.		Gloster Ridley	p. 177
338	C17 theology		Gloster Ridley	p. 177
339	C17 theology		Gloster Ridley	p. 177
340	C17 theology		Gloster Ridley	p. 177
341	Clementine Constitutions		?	
342	<i>De regimine principum</i>		?	
343	C16 ecclesiastical letters		?/Ridley?	
344	Trapp's collations of Virgil	1752	Trapp and Ridley	p. 173