

“This Dooth Erasmus Williams Represent”

Richard Haydock

1608

Gift to New College for the Library by Mark S. Byford

This is the caption we have placed under a print recently presented to the library of a fine monumental brass done in or just after 1608, and featuring Erasmus Williams, an Elizabethan fellow of the college. The print was taken by inking the monument itself and printing directly from it, with the consequence that of course the resulting print is back-to-front, including all the lettering.



Erasmus Williams took his MA in 1578, and in 1589 was appointed rector of St Mary Magdalene, Tingewick, Bucks, a college living. This is where he died and where his funerary brass remains, the source for this print, in the chancel of his church. It is a striking piece of work, featuring Williams on his knees in prayer, placed between two columns, one classical (on which he turns his back), the other (towards which he faces)

biblical, from 1 Kings 7, the description of Solomon’s Temple. We will return to this design and its accompanying inscriptions.

Who engraved this piece? Happily, the verses under the kneeling Williams are signed, by one Richard Haydocke, and he was also the engraver and designer of the whole brass. Haydocke (1569/70-c. 1642) is a well-known figure, a fellow of New College (BA 1592, MA 1595, BM 1601) who became not a clergyman but a physician, practising in Salisbury. He is best known for his translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo’s *Trattato dell’arte de la pittura* (1584), which he published on the Oxford press of Joseph Barnes under the title *A tracte containing the artes of curious paintinge, carvinge & buildinge* (1598). Haydocke himself executed all the engravings for this book, and the good-looking head on the title-page may be a self-portrait. Many fine copies of the book survive, including exemplars in New College and Winchester College libraries.¹



Detail from frontispiece of *A tracte containing the artes of curious paintinge, carvinge & buildinge* (1598), from New College, BT1.27.15(1).

This was the first such translation to be published in English, and in it Haydocke used his dedication, to Sir Thomas Bodley, to announce Bodley’s major project, namely the Bodleian Library itself, which finally opened its doors in 1602. The book also contains an epistle to the translator by the well-known Oxford teacher John Case (1540/41?–1600), sometime chorister at New College, an interesting association given Case’s known ‘popish’ beliefs. In this connection it is interesting to note too that Haydocke initially received Lomazzo in Italian from Thomas Allen (1540?–1632), the famous Oxford mathematician, antiquary, and of a similar persuasion to Case. In his preface Haydocke writes of his own leisure interests in New College in the 1590s: following the wording of the title of his translation, painting, carving, and building. Haydocke is also notorious for the scandal he later caused as ‘The Sleeping Preacher’, as he was overheard delivering (somewhat puritan) sermons in his sleep. It was a habit Haydocke had

¹ New College’s copy is BT1.27.15(1). It was certainly in the library by the Restoration, as it appears in the lending register in 1665 (William Poole, ‘Book Economy in New College, Oxford, in the Later Seventeenth Century’, *History of Universities* 25 (2010), pp. 56-137, at p. 72).

assumed at Oxford; and, summoned before the king, he found himself unable to sustain his performance, and recanted. He pleaded a speech impediment and may have suffered from nerves, and his official apology, an excruciating document, survives in the state papers. At royal command, Haydocke then composed a manuscript treatise on sleep from the physician’s point of view, the ‘Oneirologia’.²

Haydocke carved several such monumental brasses: the striking but now slightly grubby memorial to the physician Thomas Hopper in New College chapel, for instance, is one of his pieces. This is on the south side of the east wall of the antechapel, and displays Haydocke’s liking for mathematical designs and for framing between two pillars, with balanced inscriptions, here the medical ‘THEORIA’ versus ‘PRAXIS’, in Greek lettering. At the bottom there is an inscription noting that the brass was commissioned by Hopper’s wife, and executed by Haydocke as not only a fellow of the same college but a member of the same faculty. (Hopper, incidentally, was also a major donor of medical texts to the college library.) Two other Haydocke brasses can be seen nearby in Oxford, in the chapel of Queen’s College, these ones commemorating Henry Robinson and Henry Airay, both Provosts of that college.³ Other brasses of Haydocke’s making further afield include those for Thomas Sparke in Bletchley, William Button at Alton Priors, Robert Longe at Broughton Gifford, and a now lost one for John Gordon, Dean of Salisbury, where Haydocke based his medical practice. Not only were all of these engravings heavily emblematic, but their inscriptions show that Haydocke, again in keeping with the literary sensibilities of his time, liked to pun. ‘His brasses’, writes Peter Sherlock, ‘exhibit the most integrated use of words and images in early modern commemorative media’.⁴ Later in life he donated to the college a large painting, an allegory of the Gunpowder Plot, with extensive Latin verse included at the bottom of the painting (it now hangs in the Chequer).

Williams was himself a competent draughtsman, as has been discussed in an earlier Note by Jennifer Thorp. In 1590, as part of a legal dispute concerning rights to the lands around the rectorial manors of Brill, Oakley and Boarstall, Williams was asked to draw up a map, and this formed the basis for two elaborate manuscript estate maps still in the college archives.⁵ Williams was, as his pupil recalls in his monumental verse, Haydocke’s tutor, and after he departed for Tingewick he kept up his scholarship by writing a complete commentary on Revelation. It remained unpublished, and is now Bodleian, MS Rawlinson A 439.⁶

Williams’s scholarship is also underlined by the remarkable set of books he donated and bequeathed to his college. In an appendix I present these in the format we

² For Haydocke see L. G. Wickham Legg, ‘On a Picture Commemorative of the Gunpowder Plot, Recently Discovered at New College, Oxford’, *Archaeologia* 84 (1935), 27–39; J. E. Gordon, ‘Richard Haydocke: physician, engraver and nocturnal preacher (1570–1642(i))’, *The Practitioner* 198 (1967), pp. 849–54; Karl Josef Hölting, ‘Richard Haydocke: Translator, Engraver, Physician’, *The Library*, v, 33 (1978), 15–32; and most recently Alexander Marr, ‘Richard Haydocke’s *Oneirologia*: A Manuscript Treatise on Sleep and Dreams, including the “Arguments” of King James I’, *Erudition and the Republic of Letters* 2 (2017), 113–181.

³ J. R. Magrath, *The Queen’s College*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1921), vol. 1, pp. 239–40; the fullest discussion of his brasses is now in Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 215–24.

⁴ Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory*, p. 215.

⁵ Jennifer Thorp, ‘Thame School and New College’, *New College Notes* 1 (2012), no. 10; Williams’s sketch is in NCA 3251. See further Sarah Bendall, ‘Interpreting Maps of the Rural Landscape: An Example from Late Sixteenth-Century Buckinghamshire’, *Rural History* 4 (1993), pp. 107–121.

⁶ It was acquired by Beaupré Bell of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1729, and was his MS87; he then gave it as a present to Thomas Hearne in 1733 and from thence it came to Rawlinson. It is a quarto bound in limp vellum, a fair manuscript entirely in Latin and divided into two parts, covering 130 folios. Further investigation is required, but there are some obviously anti-papal numerological tables on fols. 88v–89r, essaying to equate the Antichrist with Rome, via the number 666.

have adopted for editing such entries from the Benefactors Register. All his books are grouped together in the register under 1605, following the inscriptions on several of the books. Consultation of Williams’s will, however, shows that several were in fact bequests, and so must only have been received after Williams’s death in 1608.⁷ Here is where we read of some of the more interesting donations to the library in the period. First there is ‘the harmonie of Thomas Aquinas vppon the fower Evanngelistes and the Actes of the Apostles’. Ironically this was then sold by the college as a duplicate and only purchased back by the college fellow and historian R. S. Rait in 1909, a nice twist of library history. Then Williams bequeathed ‘the notes of Arius Montannus’, still in the collection. Finally, Williams named specifically ‘Coopernicus his resolutions of Astronomie and two books of Astronomically calculations called Prutenicæ tabulæ’. This last book is Erasmus Reinhold’s *Prutenicæ tabulae coelestium motuum* (Tubingen, 1571), the standard astronomical tables of the time, and the former is of course Nicolaus Copernicus’s iconic *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, the foundational text of heliocentrism and often venerated as the spring of modern science, in its second edition of 1566. This is a very early appearance of Copernicus in a college library, and it is especially satisfying to be able to tie it so exactly to a testamentary instruction. And yet Williams also gave, probably in 1605 again, the standard contemporary Latin translation of the Qu’ran, along with several (hostile) texts on Islam. His earliest donation, however, was the major Hebrew dictionary in use in the academe at the time, Pagninus’s *Thesaurus linguae sanctae* in the edition of 1575, signed by Williams as a gift for his college in 1591. Williams was evidently an impressively learned man, with demonstrable interests in Hebrew, Greek, mathematical astronomy, architecture and architectural theory, and theology. This is an extremely suggestive set of books presented over time, and an early instance of a paired interest in technical astronomy and in oriental languages and cultures, one that would only flourish later in the seventeenth century as Oxford’s dominant scholarly asset.⁸

Haydocke probably made the surviving prints of the Tingewick monument himself, as it would be hard to take prints from the panel after it had been mounted upright on an internal church wall. There is a copy in the National Portrait Gallery (NPG D25974), and from time to time a very few others have been spotted for sale. Ours is a good clear print, albeit inevitably with all the symbols reversed. The iconography is of a priestly figure turning his back on the merely human arts of his education, and these are symbolised by a Corinthian column hung with the symbols of the liberal arts, including mathematical instruments, a globe, a lute with trumpets, and various books—Ptolemy, Livy, Pliny, Aristotle, Virgil, and Cicero. Williams is turned instead to a temple pillar, the design perhaps copied from an illustration of Solomon’s pillars of brass called Jachin and Boaz in the Geneva Bible.⁹ The pillars are surmounted by the moon (‘the Night is past’, for the Arts) and the sun (‘the Day is come’, for Theology), and connected by a rainbow, to signify God’s covenant with man (Genesis 9:13).

This brass is probably Haydocke’s most personal work as an engraver. Although, as his verse shows, the brass was commissioned and paid for by Williams’s widow, the design reflects the intertwined educational experience of the two men, and Haydocke, unusually, engraved his own name prominently after the couplet on ‘his scholar and his friend’, not just in the more discreet field at the bottom of the monument. The intellectual world rejected by the dying Williams is the one he shared with, and indeed

⁷ The National Archives, PRO, PROB 11/111, fols. 328v-29r, delivered 28 March, proved 7 May.

⁸ William Poole, ‘Early Oxford Hebraism and the King James Translators (1586-1617): The View from New College’, *The King James Bible: Scholarly Contexts*, ed. by Mordechai Feingold (Leiden, 2017, forthcoming); Gerald J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The study of Arabic in seventeenth-century England* (Oxford, 1996).

⁹ As suggested by Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 312-16.

taught, his engraver and elegist. The design and its accompanying verse, in short, encapsulate a pious worry we often find articulated in the period.¹⁰ Learning the arts and sciences (i.e. the undergraduate degrees) was all very good, but such things were in the last analysis only preparations for the higher (graduate and vocational) life of theology and the ministry. Obviously the most interesting and intricate part of the engraving is the Corinthian pillar with its books and instruments, and its statue-filled niche (‘Remember Lot’s wife’) in the pedestal. And yet Haydocke engraves what he knows he too ought finally to reject.

William Poole
Fellow Librarian

Appendix 1: Haydocke’s verses on Williams

This dooth Erasmus Williams represent,
Whome liuing all did loue, deade all lament.
His humane Artes behind his backe attende,
Whereon spare howers he wisely chose to spend.
And from Corinthiane Columne deck’t with Artes,
Now to the Temples Pillar him conuert.
Vnder the Rainebowes arche of Promise, where
Of hoped blisse noe deluge he neede feare.
He of this Church did a firme Pillar liue,
T’whom deade his Wiues loue dooth these Pillars giue,
Continued by his Schollar and his frende. *R. Haydocke*
Whoe wisht their loue’s and liue’s had made one end.
Erasmus Mores encomion sett forth;
Wee want a More to praise Erasmus worth.

¹⁰ Most prominently in the Rejection of Learning in John Milton’s *Paradise Regained* (4.236-364).

Appendix 2: Entry for Erasmus Williams from the Library Benefactors Book

ANNO MDCV

ERASMUS WILLIAMS Artium Mag:^r et huius Coll: Socius donavit libros qui sequuntur

Donor: ERASMUS WILLIAMS, MA 1578, rector of Tingewick, Bucks, 1589 (Foster). He assisted Richard Haydocke with the latter’s celebrated translation of Lomazzo.

Benedicti Ariæ Montani Elucidationes in 4.^{or} Evangelia

Montanus, Benedictus Arias. *Elucidationes in quatuor Evangelia, Matthæi, Marci, Lucae & Iohannis ... quibus accedunt eiusdem elucidationes in Acta Apostolorum*. Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1575. 4^o. BT3.107.11. Aleph System Number: 012270100. ‘Liber Collegij btæ Mariæ ex legato Mⁿ Erasmi Williams huius Collegij olim socij. 1608.’ A previous inscription has been cut out. Original boards with blind tooling and centrepiece, centrepiece flanked by the initials ‘A’ and ‘S’ on both boards.

Arrianus de Epicteti dissertationibus.

Arrian. Ed. Jacobus Scheggus. *De Epicteti philosophi, præceptoris sui, dissertationibus libri IIII*. Basel: Joannes Oporinus, 1554. 4^o. BT1.66.11. Aleph System Number: 013447373. ‘Ex dono Erasmi Williams. 1605.’ ‘Erasmus Williams.’ With the possible scratching out of a previous signature at the foot of the title-page, likewise for an elegiac couplet at the top of sg. a2r. A few notes in Latin in final end-papers. Original boards, repaired at head and foot of spine, blind tooling and centrepiece. Printer’s waste from a parallel New Testament with glosses, from Colossians.

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Machumetis, eiusque successorum vitæ, doctrina, ipseque Alchoran.

Item Ricardi ex ordine Fratrum Prædicatorum confutatio Alchorani

Item Historia Turcarum Phil: Melanct.

Item Joannis Cantacuzeni contra fidem Mahometicam Christiana assertio

Bibliander, Theodorus, ed. and tr. *Machumetis Saracenorum principis, eiusque successorum vitæ, doctrina, ac ipse Alchoran*. Basel: Joannes Oporinus, 1550. 4^o. The *Confutationes legis Mahumeticæ, quam vocant Alchoranum* (by several authors, of whom Richard is only one) and the *Historiæ de Saracenorum sive Turcarum origine, moribus, nequitia, religione, rebus gestis* (again by several authors, including Melancthon) should be considered part of the same publication, albeit with separate title-pages and signatures. The *Confutationes* is imperfect, lacking the final two leaves and ending on sg. P4v. The second item is John VI Cantacuzenus. *Contra Mahometicam Christiana & orthodoxa assertio*. Basel: Joannes Oporinus, 1543. 4^o.

BT3.250.3 (1-2). Aleph System Numbers: 012276289 and 013641459. ‘Ex dono Erasmi Williams – 1605.’ Also ‘Ja: Longland’ on either side of ‘Alchoran’ on the title page; Longland was evidently a prior owner. Relatively extensive annotations in ink and in red crayon, especially to Bibliander’s preface. Original boards, but rebacked and with later end-papers.

The college has a second copy of the first work in its three parts: BT3.250.1. It has no inscription of donation, but there are extensive notes on the verso of the final endpaper, and several annotations in the volume, including the following on sg. a1v, under the list of contents: ‘Thatt which hath been published by Bibliander for a Latin Version of *the* Alchoran, is only an Absurd Epitome of it, Composed by Robertus Retinensis neer 600 years ago, whereby *the* sense of *the* Original is so ill represented, thatt no one can by *the* one scarce any where understand whatt is truly meant by *the* Other: vid: D^r Prideaux’s Account of Books quoted in his Life of Mahomett. p. 182.’ (‘Robertus Retinensis’, thus in the printed contents too, is Robert of Ketton; Humphrey Prideaux’s book was first published in 1697.) The copy in St John’s College came from William Paddy in 1602.

Tabulæ Prutenicæ

Reinhold, Erasmus. *Prutenicæ tabulæ coelestium motuum*. Tubingen: Oswaldus & Georgius Gruppenbachius, 1571. 4^o.

BT3.181.1. Aleph System Number: 015958793. ‘Liber Collegij btæ Mariæ ex legato M^{ri} Erasmi Williams huius collegij olim socij. Año Dñi 1608.’ Original boards, but rebacked; centrepiece stamp of a lion rampant. A fragment of musical MS has been used to strengthen the binding, from the ‘Christum venerantes deum’ for the Feast of St Cecilia.

Nicolaus Copernicus de revolutionibus orbium cælestium.

Copernicus, Nicolaus. *De revolutionibus orbium caelestium, libri VI*. Basel: ex officina Henricpetrina, 1566. 2^o.

BT1.36.11(1). Aleph System Number: 013128872. ‘Liber Collegij btæ Mariæ ex legato M Erasmi Williams huius collegij olim socij Año Dñi 1608.’ Page of a MS Latin-English glossary as final end-paper. Original boards, rebacked, blind tooling in three frames with centrepiece. The second item in this book is Joseph Scaliger, *Cyclometrica elementa duo* (Leiden: Plantin/Raphelengius, 1594); this is not marked as a gift of Williams nor treated as such here, and the two items may therefore have been bound together later.

Thesaurus linguæ sanctæ authore Sancte Pagnino.

BT1.126.1. (This volume is currently being conserved, as its binding has completely disintegrated, and the paper block is also extensively damaged.)

Th: Aquinatis Catena aurea in 4:^{or} Evangelia. fol.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Enarrationes . . . in quatuor Evangelia*. Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1578. 2^o.

BT3.143.4. Aleph System Number: 016255435. ‘Liber collegii Ex legato M^{ri} Erasmi Williams in artibus m^{ri} huius collegij quondam socij ./ anno dōij 1608.’ Also price of 10s in 1586. Original boards, rebacked, blind tooling with centrepiece. This book was subsequently sold as a duplicate, owned by one ‘R B Sankey’ in 1867, purchased back by the college librarian and historian Robert Rait in 1909, and represented to the college (following typed card). This representation is itself noted in the Benefactors Book, p. 221.