A New Acquisition:
Christopherus Longolius’s copy of the 1511 Parisian edition of the Corpus Juris Civilis

New College has recently acquired an important early printed book once owned by the Renaissance humanist Christophe de Longueil (1488-1522), known in Latin as Christophorus Longolius. Many of Longolius’s printed books are in fact already in the college’s library, having arrived in the mid-sixteenth century through an intermediary bequest, that of Cardinal Reginald Pole, who died in 1558, and whose executor decided that New College was the appropriate resting-place for many of the cardinal’s books. This new volume, a copy of part of the foundational body of western law, the Corpus Juris Civilis of Justinian, now rejoins the books amongst which it was once ranged.¹ This is especially appropriate considering the college’s leading position in the study of the civil law in the medieval and early-modern periods.

Christophorus Longolius (1488-1522) was one of the more colourful of the humanists of the generation of Erasmus.² Born in Mechelen in the Duchy of Brabant, Longolius was sent into France at the age of nine, where he was educated at Paris, before serving in the military, and afterwards continuing his studies in law at Bologna and Poitiers. Appointed a professor of law in Poitiers at the age of nineteen, Longolius apparently had to fend off hostile auditors by clubbing them with three large folios he had to hand. But by 1514-15 he had moved to Paris, where he turned his attentions to literary study, and to Greek. He then went on to Rome with the intention of finding a Greek teacher, but there he fell under the spell of the prominent humanists Pietro Bembo and Jacopo Sadoleto, the foremost Ciceronians of their day. It was as their disciple that Longolius became embroiled in the running controversy over Latin style, adopting an extreme Ciceronianism that would bring him into conflict with the most famous of the northern humanists, Desiderius Erasmus himself. For in Rome Bembo had proposed that Longolius be honoured with the title of Roman citizen, to great antagonism. Longolius’s opponents opportunely unearthed an earlier speech by the Brabantine in praise of France at the expense of Italy, and in the resulting furore Longolius fled the city, leaving behind him two speeches in vindication, written in a pure Ciceronian style, and soon published by his friends. Such was the perceived importance of the matter that Longolius was tried in his absence before the Pope. He won: and the Pope created him a count palatine and apostolic protonotary.

Yet the argument about Ciceronianism, which had been rumbling on throughout the previous century, spread, and it eventually prompted the most celebrated intervention in that debate – the Ciceronianus (‘The Ciceronian’) of Erasmus. This is a dialogue ‘on the ideal Latin style’, as it is subtitled, in which an extreme Ciceronian named ‘Nosoponus’ (‘Work-mad’) is after long debate finally cured of his sickness, that is to say his refusal to use Latin words unless they were used by Cicero himself. Whether Nosoponus is a caricature of Longolius has been

¹ It has been acquired with the generous assistance of Dr. Mark Byford, former Salvesen Fellow of the college, to whom we are very grateful for this and for other kindnesses. The book was purchased from Phillip J. Pirages Fine Books, Portland, Oregon.
much debated, but Nosoponus certainly refers to the real man, who had recently died:

… the honour of this title [of ‘Ciceronian’] has never since the world began lighted upon any one living north of the Alps – the only exception being Christophe de Longueil, who lately departed this life.

The three interlocutors then discuss the untimely demise of the young humanist, regretting that he had not lived longer to develop his studies in Greek or even – just a little dig by Erasmus – turn his attentions to Christian authors. Later in the Ciceronianus the interlocutors return at length to Longolius, in the midst of a catalogue of contemporary writers which was to cause Erasmus a great deal of grief for what he had said and what he had not said about various illustrious contemporaries. His discussion of Cicero-maddened Longolius was long remembered, and Longolius was used as a cautionary tale for well over a century about not taking stylistic purity too far.

Erasmus was moved to his devastating attack on what he perceived as a confederacy of Italian Ciceronians by a number of factors relevant to the later fortune of Longolius’s books. Longolius and Erasmus were fellow countrymen, but did not really get on. Longolius had curried favour with the French by writing a letter comparing Erasmus with the great French scholar of Greek, Guillaume Bude, to the latter’s advantage. Erasmus defended himself with grace in a letter sent straight to the startled Longolius, and published the result. Subsequently he had to put up with a long visit from the younger man, on his way back from a trip to England, and seemingly puzzled by the cool reception he received in Louvain – for Erasmus, who certainly had no cause to welcome the young man with open arms, found his visitor to be touchy and ‘long-winded’. Longolius died a few years after this meeting, and Erasmus was generous to the memory of a scholar whom he regarded as a great talent unduly influenced by the Italians. Erasmus waited several years before finally producing the Ciceronianus, which was published in 1528. One prompt was almost certainly the edition of Longolius’s speeches and letters that had appeared in 1524; Erasmus was sent a copy the following year by the English scholar Thomas Lupset. This book was prefaced with a life by its editor of Longolius in which Longolius’s toil over Ciceronian vocabulary was recounted: Longolius spent five years reading nothing but Cicero, and vowed to use no word unwitnessed in the writings of the master.

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4 In England, Sir Henry Peacham advised his ‘Compleat Gentleman’ in 1622: ‘But to be sure your stile may passe for currant, as of the richest alloy, imitate the best Authors as well in Oratorie as Historie; beside the exercise of your owne Inuention, with much conference with those who can speak well: nor bee so foolish precise as a number are, who make it Religion to speake otherwise then this or that Author. As Longolius was laughed at by the learned, for his so apish and superstitious imitation of Tully, in so much as hee would have thought a whole Volume quite matred, if the word Possible had passed his pen; because it is not to be found in all Tullie: or euery Sentence had not sunke with, esse posse videatur, like a peale ending with a chime, or an Amen vpon the Organes in Paules.’ (Henry Peacham, The Compleat Gentleman (London, 1622), p. 44.)
5 For the initial letter, and Erasmus’s response, see Erasmus, Correspondence, vol. 6, pp. 226-30, 286-88.
6 Erasmus, Correspondence, vol. 12, pp. 192-95.
7 For Erasmus on Longolius, see e.g. Correspondence, vol. 9, p. 423; vol. 11, p. 240; vol. 14, p. 352.
8 Christophorus Longolius, Orationes ... eiusdem epistolarum libri quatuor ... (Paris: Badius Ascensius, 1526), ‘Vita’, sg. biv.
This biographer and editor was the Englishman Reginald Pole (1500-58).\(^9\) Pole was the son of Sir Richard Pole and Margaret, Countess of Shrewsbury. He would in time become a cardinal, and Archbishop of Canterbury. His legacy was a controversial one, and an eighteenth-century biography-cum-hagiography of him by Thomas Phillips prompted a controversy into which weighed a major New College figure of that age, Gloster Ridley (himself the descendant and biographer of the Protestant martyr Ridley), with his *Review of Mr. Phillips’s History of the Life of Reginald Pole* of 1766. But back to Pole as a young man and his friendship with Longolius. In 1521 the young Pole after an Oxford education journeyed to Padua, where Bembo himself introduced him to the most prominent scholars and churchmen of the day, notably Longolius, who in fact died in Pole’s household, bequeathing to his young friend his library, as he promised in his last letter to Pole: ‘…vt bibliotheca mea omnis tibi obueniret’.\(^10\) Pole’s first published work was his life and letters of Longolius. Erasmus himself wrote to Pole shortly after the death of Longolius,

I am sorry that premature death has taken Longueil from the world of learning; he was no great friend of mine, though I gave him no cause. … I would have preferred to see his commentaries in print, although stylistically they have less of Cicero about them. If you will see to this, believe me you will earn the gratitude of the whole scholarly world, its leaders and its rank and file.\(^11\)

Many years later, when Pole himself died, he left the control of his estate to his lifelong friend Alvise Priuli, member of a rich Venetian banking dynasty. Priuli decided that New College should benefit from Pole’s library, even though Pole had had no prior association with the college – Pole’s college, after all, had been Magdalen. Priuli’s motivation has not been recorded, but it may be that Priuli (rightly) suspected that the old religion remained strong in New College.\(^12\) Precisely which books arrived and when is a little murky, and the college Benefactors Book, which was only commenced in the earlier seventeenth century in the time of Warden Lake, gives off some contradictory signals. On the one hand, we find under the year 1550 a list of books ‘given’ by ‘Christophorus Langolius’; and then on the facing page, under 1557, there is a distinct set of books and manuscripts ‘given’ by Pole (pp. 34, 35). Obviously the librarian working up these lists two generations later had his facts skewed: for Longolius was dead in another country almost three decades before he apparently gave six books to the college; and Pole, who was only just alive in 1557, had little idea what Priuli in the event would do with his books. These must be garbled recollections of one specific donation by Priuli, whose name, however, nowhere appears in the college’s records. Longolius is said to have donated Latin translations of Themistius on Aristotle, Basil’s *Hexameron*, Euclid in Latin with associated texts, Tacitus, Livy, and Josephus. (The first five are nos. 6, 20/22, 3/9, 19, 15 in the list below, but no Josephus has been traced.) A London 1555 inventory of Pole’s books discussed by Alessandro Pastore in 1979 can help us out: it is evidently


\(10\) Longolius, *Orationes ... eiusdem epistolaram libri quatuor* ..., fp. 295v. This letter is dated to 23 August 1522 by Mayer in Pole, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, p. 46.

\(11\) Erasmus, *Correspondence*, vol. 12, pp. 75-76, letter of 8 March 1526.

\(12\) For the library, see Alessandro Pastore, ‘Due biblioteche umanistiche del Cinquecento (i libri del cardinal Pole e di Marcantonio Flaminio)’, *Rinascimento* 19 (1979), pp. 269-90, esp. pp. 269-72, 278-88, including a transcript with commentary of the inventory of Pole’s books made by George Lily in London in 1555.
incomplete, but Pole’s copy of Basil’s *Hexameron* in Latin is very likely Longolius’s copy, as is his copy of Cicero’s familiar letters, his *Opera agricolationum*, his Blemmidas, his Nigrus, his Livy, his Tacitus, his Diodorus, his Procopius, his scholia on the *Iliad*, his Philostratus, his Themistius, his Pliny, his Greek epigrams, and his Appian; and it is specifically stated in the inventory that the copy of Cicero’s rhetorical works in Pole’s library had been annotated by Longolius. Mention in the 1555 list is made of a Josephus too, as in the New College Benefactors Book, which suggests that such a Longolius book was indeed once in the college’s possession, although it has long been lost.

The number of ‘Langolius’ books in the college Benefactors Book was woefully incomplete, and may well have been generated simply from the signatures spotted on the copies themselves. The college actually holds (depending on how one counts imprints) 25 of Longolius’s books – now, with the new volume, 26. Pole himself is recorded mainly as a donor of manuscripts, and only a handful of printed books. The Longolius books received by the college were evidently not the sum of books surviving in Pole’s hands at his death. There are two more Longolius books in Corpus Christi College, Oxford, today, one being a collection of astronomical texts, the other of medical texts, this latter volume having been in the possession of the seventeenth-century Oxford archivist and antiquary Brian Twyne. There is also in the Bodleian among the books of the twentieth-century collector Brian Lawn a further volume of humanist commentary with Longolius’s signature. Furthermore, the celebrated Vettius Valens astrological manuscript in the Selden collection in the Bodleian Library (Arch. Seld. B 19) came from Longolius to John Dee, and is in fact a copy in Longolius’s own hand. And although I have not searched extensively, in the early nineteenth century the leading bookseller Thomas Thorpe advertised at least two books bearing Longolius provenances. One of these is obviously the astronomical collection now in Corpus Christi College; the other, a 1503 Xenophon and Herodian, I have not traced.

What of the Longolius books in New College? A list of these was compiled by A. B. Emden and printed as one of the many appendices to the great twentieth-century edition of Erasmus’s complete correspondence. I have re-edited and updated this list and present it as an appendix below. It is not obvious how Emden knew of all these books, as the Benefactors Book could only have got him a third of the way, and Emden did not know of the 1555 Pole inventory. But for now we can make a few

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13 Lawn d. 29: *Annotationes doctorum virorum in Grammaticos, Oratores, Poetas, Theologos, et Leges* (Paris: Petit and Ascensius, 1511), with Longolius’s signature and a price of 16sch. The volume once belonged to Samuel Parr, the editor of Archbishop Ussher. Lawn wrote to New College to enquire about the Longolius books, as his letter of 29 January 1992 is preserved with this book, as is the reply of 6 February from the library. As the reply notes, Lawn’s book and three of the New College volumes bear similar early shelf-marks, all starting with K. It seems possible that these stem from Pole’s library, as Lawn’s volume shows no sign of having ever been owned by the college.


15 Thomas Thorpe, *Catalogue of an Extensive Collection of Books* (London, 1830), no. 4847; Thorpe, *Bibliotheca Selecta* (London, 1836), no. 767, the latter being a copy of ‘Xenophonis omissa’ and Herodian, an Aldine edition of 1503, with the signature of Longolius and then of ‘Richard Morysine’. This is Sir Richard Morison (c.1510-56), the translator of Frontinus the military strategist, who could even have acquired this book in Padua, where he studied in the 1530s. There are six copies in Oxford today (New College, Queen’s, Corpus, the remainder in the Bodleian), and given the other provenances traced here, one of these may be the copy sought.

basic observations. Longolius signed all of his books known to us – this is presumably how they were recognised in the first place – with an elegant signature followed by a calligraphic sign manual. He signed in Latin, but repeated in or shifted to Greek when signing a Greek text. He usually recorded the price he paid for each book. He often annotated his texts, and on a few occasions he did so very heavily indeed. Given his attitude to Cicero, it is unsurprising that the most densely annotated book of his in the collection is certainly his edition of Cicero, and this copy would certainly repay further attention. Some of Longolius’s other titles have a bearing on his Ciceronianism, notably his copy of Castellesi’s De Sermone latino et modis latine loquendi. Interestingly, one of the New College Longolius books evidently did not come from directly from Priuli, as it is signed by John Pryme, and this man was an Elizabethan fellow of the college, who indeed donated the book among nine other titles from his collection in 1596, as entered in the Benefactors Book (p. 42). Pryme, who had been born in Holywell parish in Oxford, and so very close to the college, ‘became a noted puritanical preacher in the city of his nativity’, as Wood states, and published a handful of theological treatises and sermons in the 1580s. We may wonder whether Pryme himself when he donated this book knew that it was, even at that point, going to rejoin some old friends.

The new volume:
New College’s recently acquired Longolius book is a section of Justinian’s Corpus Juris Civilis, being the Complementum, or Volumen peculiari vocabulo dictum totius legalis sapientie, usually known as the Volumen Parvum, and containing the Novels (in the text known as the Authenticum), the three last books of the Codex (the tres libri, on Byzantine law), the books De feudis (actually a twelfth-century Lombardic compilation), and the tract on the Peace of Constantine. The edition was published in Paris by Jean Bonhomme, Jean Petit, and Thielman Kerver, completed 10 September 1511, and features Kerver’s elaborate device on the title-page, as well as a fine woodcut illustration of Victor Magnanimus distributing the law to his nobles and bishops. The printer and editor was the jurist André Bocard, a frequent printer of law texts, and the preface, addressed to Bocard, is by the scholar-printer Josse Badius (Jodocus Badius Ascensius). The book is complete in itself, and is not an odd volume of a larger edition, although Bocard was in this period producing a run of the central components of the Justinianic corpus. It is printed in red and black, and in the manner of such editions it presents the text surrounded on all sides by commentary, an effect which is typographically pleasing to the modern eye, but which enraged the legal humanists of the time, who wished such ‘cancerous’, ‘giant creeper’ growths to be cut away. There is no other copy in Oxford, and only two others are recorded in

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17 Wood, Athenae Oxonienses, vol. 1, cols. 652-53; given that Pryme died in 1596, these books may really have been a bequest.
18 The Corpus Juris Civilis (which only acquired this collective title in the late sixteenth century) was recovered and published piece-meal in medieval and early-modern Europe in a complex fashion: for the composition of the fifth book or volumen parvum see Peter Stein, Roman Law in European History (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp. 44, 61.
20 Stein, Roman Law in European History, p. 76.
Britain, in the British Library and in Jesus College, Cambridge. Our copy is bound in modern Italian quarter vellum over marbled boards. Longolius has as ever signed his name. Indeed, he signs the page a number of different times, in Latin, Greek, and, unusually, in Hebrew lettering:

This is in fact the only known Hebrew signature of Longolius. His first signature, with his elegant calligraph, is accompanied by Longolius’s customary mark of price, here 30½ sch, probably for ‘schillings’, a vernacular generalization of solidi, for whichever modern currency Longolius paid, presumably in Paris (i.e. livres, sols and deniers). Longolius then wrote his name in Greek, as ‘Christophoros Löggolious’. He then wrote his name in Hebrew characters, and with accurate vowel-pointing, suggesting that he indeed gained some basic competence in this language. This is then followed by a calligraph seemingly spelling out ‘Carlos’, and followed by similar Greek and Hebrew signatures for ‘Antônios karolos’. These are all in Longolius’s hand too, but I am unsure who this Antonius Carolus was. Given that all these inscriptions are in Longolius’s hand, and given that this particular book quite likely left the company of Longolius’s other books before Pole inherited them, I suspect that the secondary signatures are presentation marks entered by Longolius for a friend.

The text itself bears marginal annotation in two different hands, one certainly and the other possibly that of Longolius. I hope to provide a fuller description of these marginalia in a subsequent note, but for starters here is what the seller of the present volume provided in the catalogue description:

The present item may have been one of the earlier books Longolius bought for
his library, as the date of publication coincides with the period of his legal studies – the only moment in his life this book would have been of interest to him – and with the time he was living in Paris. At the same time, the marginalia by Longolius suggest a mind more interested in linguistic and antiquarian matters than technicalities of the law. On folio 20 recto, for example, a note corrects the spelling and discusses the unusual word “Brephotrophiorum,” and on folio 213 verso there are notes to a law that prohibits “pantomimes” and “histrionics” [actually ‘histriones’, actors] in public porticos where the emperor’s image is displayed.

William Poole
Fellow Librarian
Appendix:
Books from the Library of Christophorus Longolius in the Library of New College, Oxford

1. **Columella, Varro, Cato and Palladius. Opera Agricolationum.** Bologna: Benedictus Hector, 1 October 1494. Fol. BT1.27.2. Reversed calf.
   Signature on the title-page of Longolius in Latin and Greek, with a chronograph (?), and price of 36sts.

2. **Aurelius Cornelius Celsus. Medicina.** Venice: Philippus Pincius, 6 May 1497. Fol. BT1.34.4(2).
   Annotated by Longolius, perhaps at two different times.
   Bound with nos. 6 and 13.

3. **Nicephorus Blemmidas. Logica** with many other works by or attributed to **Euclid, Hypsicles, Proclus, Aristarchus, Timeus, Cleonides et al. Tr. Georgius Valla.**
   Signature of Longolius on the title-page, with price of 22sch.
   Contains marginal notes in his handwriting.

   Signature of Longolius on the title-page, with price of 18sch.
   Three early cross-references to Pliny in Longolius’s hand.
   Bound with no. 7.

   Signature of Longolius on the title-page, very faded ‘emi’ inscription.
   Contains notes in his handwriting.

   Signature of Longolius in Latin on title-page, with price of 40sch.
   Annotated chiefly by Longolius, perhaps at two different times.
   Bound with nos. 2 and 13.

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21 This is a rewritten version of the list prepared by Emden and published in 1947, as explained earlier. Here we might comment too that the patterns of printed waste follow those of other New College books bound and rebound in the second quarter of the seventeenth century: nos. 1, 2, 3, 11 all have the same waste and are bound in reverse calf; likewise 12, 18, 24 all have waste from the same Aristotelian commentary, as witnessed in dozens of other books. See the note on Thomas Martin’s books for more on this topic.

8. **Florilegium Diversorum Epigrammatum**. Venice: Aldus Manutius, November 1503. 8°. BT1.127.7. C17/18 calf. Signature of Longolius in Greek on the title-page, with the price, also in Greek, very faded. Contains Greek notes in Longolius’s hand.


10. **Diodorus Siculus. Opera**, ed. Poggio Bracciolini. Paris: Jehan Petit, [1501-22]. 4o. It is possible that the second item in this volume, although the binding is later, came from Longolius: it is **Macer Floridus, De viribus herbarum** (s.l.: s.n., n.d.); there is some underlining and an annotation to sg. [Cviii]r. BT1.128.2(1). C17 calf, rebacked; English printed waste. Signature of Longolius on title-page, price of 8sch. Notes by Longolius, including an additional entry in the index on frogs from the clouds.


Bound with nos. 11 and 23. Attached to the last page of the previous work is an old title-tab, ‘Procopius de Bello Persico’.


   BT1.130.13(2).
   Bound with nos. 11 and 14.

   BT1.45.2. Reversed calf.
   Signature of Longolius on title-page, with ripped price inscription of ‘x …’
   A few notes, with some Greek.

25. Scholia of **Chalcenterus Didymus** on **Homer.** Rome: Augustus Kollotius, 7 September 1517. Fol.
   BT1.35.3(2). C17/18 calf.
   Signature on Greek on title-page, with purchase inscription also in Greek for 11 (iota-alpha); also ‘Liber Collegei teste Johannes Pryme’. This was indeed one of nine titles entered in the Benefactors Book (p. 42) as donated by John Pryme in 1596. Contains a few notes in Longolius’s hand.