



The Queen's College Library

# Insight

Issue 1, Michaelmas Term 2011



Welcome to the first issue of *Insight*, the new Queen's College Library Newsletter. Our intention is to make this an annual publication highlighting some of the many treasures of the College Library, both collections and buildings. In this issue we include articles by some of our regular readers who have made abundant use of the varied materials in our historic collections to enrich their teaching and research over many years. One of our cataloguers has described some of her favourite finds while working on the collection and we begin a series of articles on the conservation of treasures from the collection by members of the conservation team at the Oxford Conservation Consortium. We also commence a series of articles on the fabric and decoration of the interior and exterior of the building.

It is our intention to circulate the Newsletter electronically to those who we believe might have an interest in both the College and the Library.

I am most grateful to all the contributors, and in particular to Lynette Dobson for typesetting and Veronika Vernier who sourced and commissioned the majority of the articles and who has taken most of the photographs.

If you have ideas for future articles or indeed would like to contribute, please contact me at [amanda.saville@queens.ox.ac.uk](mailto:amanda.saville@queens.ox.ac.uk)

Amanda Saville  
Librarian  
September 2011

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*How to travel to the physical and heavenly  
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*(Oxford, Queen's College, MS. 357)\**

Kathryn Rudy

University of St Andrews

**H**ave you ever walked into Daunt Books in London—probably the greatest independently owned travel bookstore in the world—and perused their shelves? All of the books are organized by region, such as Africa, Asia, and Europe, then by country within those regions. They do not just sell guidebooks such as the Lonely Planet or Frommer's, but also essays, short stories, novels, and memoirs featuring those places, and they display the various genres side-by-side. I sometimes stop in not because I am planning a voyage to Madagascar, but precisely because I cannot go to Madagascar however much I would like to. (I would like to write a scratch-n-sniff history of vanilla production, one that cannot be turned into an e-book. Please do not steal this idea!) The shop has a shelf full of illustrated guides, plus travel memoirs, essays about Madagascar, and accounts by the other writers who have written about the island's fascinating history of vanilla cultivation (theirs, albeit, without the olfactory panels). These books speak to my goals for traveling to Madagascar, which have earthly and more ethereal components (if you count the smell-a-rama as ethereal). Because I cannot get away just at the moment, I have to put off this trip into the indefinite future. But reading the Madagascar shelf at Daunt Books satisfies many of the urges for traveling there in the first place. I can plot and plan and prepare myself for this eventual trip and visualize it through the many photos in these books.

Virtual travel undertaken through the proxy of an illustrated book is not a new phenomenon, nor even one borne of the post-photography era. Western literature is full of early travel accounts that served such purposes. Of course people conducted travel in order to trade or wage war, but a large number of the surviving accounts were those of pilgrims such as Egeria, a nun who lived in the fourth century; they were the medieval predecessors of the great travel writers such as Patrick Leigh Fermor, who wrote *A Time of Gifts* about making his way on foot from Rotterdam to Constantinople. In so doing, he followed in the footsteps of 1600 years' worth of Western Europeans, including Egeria, who

were magnetized by the promise of the Middle East. That promise included the relics related to the Passion such as the True Cross, which Helen, the mother of Constantine, had unearthed. Pilgrims desired above all to go to Jerusalem in order to see with their own eyes the things and places Jesus had touched.

Some pilgrims wanted to record what they had seen. In the seventh century the pilgrim Arculf drew the holy places he had seen on wax tablets, including representations of the Holy Sepulchre and other buildings in the holy land. He brought these wax drawings back to the British Isles, where Adomnán of Iona (d. 704) copied them into his illustrated account of the holy places. It was illustrated for the benefit of those who would never have the chance to visit Jerusalem.

### Queen's College MS 357

By the fifteenth century numerous accounts of the holy places circulated in Western Europe, many of them in Latin, a few in various vernaculars such as French and Middle Dutch. Very few were written in English, and even fewer were illuminated. Queen's College MS 357 possesses both of these qualities. This manuscript contains two guides to pilgrimage to the Holy Land written some time in the last twenty years of the fifteenth century. Although both texts survive in other manuscript copies, what makes Queen's 357 stand out is its exuberant illumination. It has six full-page miniatures, one historiated initial, and painted borders.

The first guide (in English) is for a pilgrimage to Palestine that includes prayers to be said at the various chapels within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and at the site in Bethany where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. This section finishes with a discursive essay on other pilgrimage sites within the Holy Land and beyond it, in which the author names numerous other pilgrimage destinations, including the Church of St. Mary of Loreto in Italy, Mount Sinai, the Red Sea, Cairo, Cappadocia where St. George killed the dragon, various sites on Cyprus and Rhodes, and the pilgrimage church of St. Mary of Falerne on the Bay of Naples. (The Virgin of Falerne had saved an imprisoned Christian from his Turkish captors, and the rope that had been tied around the condemned man's neck was on view as a proof of the miracle.)<sup>1</sup>

The manuscript also contains six major illuminations. The scribe and the illuminator worked closely together on these images, using them to smoothen the seams between texts that are unified by a theme—Palestine—but whose language, structure and origin differ. They



also borrowed imagery from the Book of Hours (which would have been familiar to the book's recipient) and mapped some strange and unfamiliar texts upon those images. In this way, the scribe and the illuminator domesticated the foreign and made the strange more familiar. Most significantly, the scribe and the illuminator framed the contents of the manuscript with two images whose relationship to pilgrimage is not immediately apparent: the Incarnation (at the beginning of the manuscript) and Christ reigning for eternity (at its end). By turning these two images into the conceptual parentheses bracketing the rest of the book's contents, the manuscript's makers emphasized the importance of the pilgrim's activity for salvation.

### The images in Queen's College MS 357

The first miniature in the manuscript depicts the Annunciation (fol. 2v, Figure 1), the same subject that would normally introduce a Book of Hours. As the ubiquitous Christian image embodying the word become flesh, the Annunciation often inaugurates the Hours of the Virgin. This manuscript has borrowed that connotation of this image: one of annunciations and beginnings. The way the image appears, however, is strange. The artist sets the event in a deep landscape (rather than in a church or Mary's bedroom) on a hilltop overlooking a valley with a city rising in the hazy blue distance. By taking the event out of an interior setting and placing it in a field with the city of Jerusalem looming in the background, the illuminator invites the virtual pilgrim to imagine the object of his pilgrimage far in the distance.

The second full-page miniature presents no human action, only a frame that is filled to its full width with the ultimate earthly goal of Christian pilgrimage: Jerusalem (fol. 6v, Figure 2). Whereas the cityscape in the previous miniature was vague and distant, this one is close and specified. Here the space between the viewer and the city has diminished so that the city has moved from the blue zone of the faraway distance to a closer zone in the middle distance. This portrait of Jerusalem was made in all likelihood by someone who had never seen it in the flesh. The artist has labelled it 'Ciuitas sancta hierusalem' in a fluttering banner inscribed in silver just in case we fail to recognize the generalized architectural forms as Jerusalem.

A cityscape appears in five of the six miniatures in Queen's 357, giving these scenes a medieval urban skyline. Such a skyline appears even for the next full-page miniature in the manuscript, which is set indoors (fol. 43v, Figure 3, overleaf). The image depicts the



Fig. 1. MS 357, fol. 2v–3r; anonymous English illuminator: Annunciation (full-page miniature), facing a prayer to the Ave Maria.



Fig. 2. MS 357, fol. 6v–7r; anonymous English illuminator: Cityscape of Jerusalem (full-page miniature), facing the incipit of *The Ynformacion*.

Nativity but is framed in a highly unusual way. Whereas most late medieval images of the Nativity depict Mary, Joseph, and the new-born Jesus in a ramshackle stable, this image presents a much more complicated setting involving a multi-layered interior space. We are privy not to a stable, but to an ecclesiastical interior with a tiled floor and a Romanesque arch framing Mary. The first plane appears as a thin layer of brown—a cardboard-like stage set—on which a silhouette of a grey stone cityscape has been painted. Despite the artist's obvious difficulty in handling these multiple spatial layers, we have no trouble in reading these grey buildings as a layer of the background that includes the urban setting of Bethlehem. This layer has been cut away under a curved archway to reveal the human action of the Nativity. Layers of space open beyond the far wall to reveal a grassy landscape, where the ox and the ass are grazing. Thus once again we see a multi-





Fig. 3. MS 357, fol. 43v–44r; anonymous English illuminator: Nativity set in an ecclesiastical interior (full-page miniature), facing prayers to be said in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

layered landscape with a distant city profile, this time represented in grisaille.

The next full-page miniature, depicting the Crucifixion (fol. 67v, Figure 4), reverses the visual syntax of pilgrimage established in the previous miniatures, putting the viewer outside the walls of Jerusalem. In an indefinable spatial register at the top of the picture's frame—one that defies the fictional recession into depth—the artist has collaborated with the scribe to once again create a purple display panel for gilt letters. This time the display panel forms an extension of the purple and gold patterned background, as if Jerusalem itself were a precious text, the first letter of which were the enlarged *T* of the gilded crucifix.

The progression toward Jerusalem continues in the next miniature, which depicts the Holy Sepulchre (fol. 70, Figure 5). Now the single structure nearly fills the expanse of the frame, thereby positioning the viewer



Fig. 4. MS 357, fol. 67v–68r; anonymous English illuminator: Crucifixion with Jerusalem cityscape in the background (full-page



Fig. 5. MS 357, fol. 70v–71r; anonymous English illuminator: Holy Sepulchre with Christ as a Pilgrim (full-page miniature), facing prayers concerning the Resurrection.

very close by. Concomitantly, there are only two green folds in the landscape, indicating that we are only two hills away. In other words, we are nearing our goal: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, witness to Christ's Resurrection, a central tenet of Christianity. The resurrected Christ walks away from the building in the guise of a pilgrim, barefoot, carrying a pilgrim's staff, and making his way toward the viewer. The text below—to be read at that shrine—is inscribed in precious metals, with the text in gold and the initials and line filler in silver. Just as the most important texts in the manuscript are written in silver and gold, the artist has likewise represented Jesus himself in gold paint. His skin shimmers metallically. Furthermore, there is a rectangular area around Jesus that was formerly silver but has now tarnished to dark grey. In both the inscription of the texts and depiction of figures, the scribe and artist use colour fields and precious metals as a way to signify the sacred.

The final full-page image in Queen's 357 represents the Ascension of Christ (fol. 89v–90r, Figure 6). Perhaps the artist, having learned from the failed experiment in the previous image when trying to represent Jesus in gold with a silver radiance, has this time represented him only with gold skin. Thus, Christ's exposed parts, his face, hands, and feet, appear as gold colour-fields, which defy fictive recession into depth. His garments also shimmer. He wears a robe of purplish brown with gold highlights over a silver tunic; however, a different kind of silver paint has been used here, one that has not oxidized to black. Thus, amidst festooning decorative scrolls and flanked by music-making angels and a horn-blower with cheeks puffed like a white, winged Dizzie Gillespie, Christ rises from the earth, clanging in his metallic radiance. In order to emphasize that he is levitating, the artist has shown his golden feet directly above two white footprints in the rock. The scribe has





Fig. 6 MS 357, fol. 89v-90r; anonymous English illuminator: Ascension of Christ, witnessed by Mary and the apostles (full-page miniature), facing a prayer concerning the Ascension written in gold on a purple background.

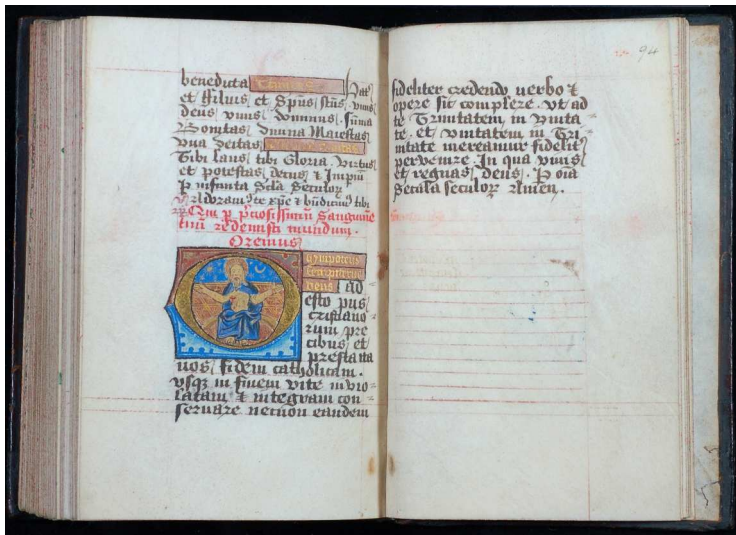


Fig. 7. MS 357, fol. 93v-94r; anonymous English illuminator: Christ seated on a rainbow, showing his wounds (historiated initial), facing prayers to the Trinity and to Christ.

taken advantage of the expanse of empty, ruled vellum on the facing verso and has placed a large purple field with golden writing there, rather than intrude on the space of the miniature.

The final image in the manuscript is not a full-page miniature, but rather, a historiated initial (fol. 93v-94r, Figure 7). Unlike the other images in the manuscript, this one does not evoke a particular location marking an event in sacred history. Instead, it looks ahead to a future event, one projected to take place at the end of time. It represents Christ seated on a rainbow, showing his wounds as he judges the dead. The display of wounds demonstrates that, because he was fully human, he fully suffered his ignominious death. His wounds are the seal of God's approval, stamped into Christ's very flesh, and a sign that he will judge the sins of the living and the dead. At this moment, some will be awarded everlasting life, and others perpetual torment and hell.

This is the culmination of the Christian narrative of salvation.

## Conclusion

While some of the images in Queen's 357 refer to the texts they face, the more important principle for organizing the images relates to the role of pilgrimage in salvation history. The events pictured and evoked through textual description and prayer in this manuscript begin and end with the two most important foci of the Christian tradition. They begin with the Incarnation, that is, the Annunciation of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, and they end with Christ Seated in Judgment. In that way, the overarching frame is chronological. These two events bracket all of the other texts and images found in Queen's 357. The images help to reshape the disparate textual material according to the demands of salvation history. The manuscript's contents are framed by the two miracles at the heart of the Christian belief system: first that God came to earth in the form of a human baby nurtured in the womb of a virgin, and second that all believers have a chance to experience everlasting life at the Last Judgment. All of the places where Jesus walked, suffered, and performed miracles only reinforce these two central framing concepts. This organization underscores a metaphor that informs and inspires Christian pilgrimage: that pilgrimage to the earthly Jerusalem and walking in Christ's physical footsteps will open the gates to the heavenly Jerusalem for the rest of time. A walk to the bookshelf is as effective as a long voyage to the sites in Palestine.

1. The second half of the manuscript, which is written in Latin (fol. 42r-83r), contains prayers to be said in the Church of the Nativity, the sites of the Last Supper and the Washing of the Apostles' Feet, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Assumption of the Virgin and other events on Mount Sion. It also provides prayers to be said when the pilgrim arrives, physically or virtually, at the Houses of Caiaphas and Annas; at the sepulchre of Lazarus; and at the house of Mary Magdalene. Just as the shelves at Daunt Books offer guides, essays, memoirs and fiction about each place, so too does this manuscript, which groups together texts related to Palestine irrespective of genre. Those of you who are interested in the pilgrims' texts copied into this manuscript can read published transcriptions from other sources. The English text, copied on fol. 7r-41v of Queen's 357, is called *The ynformacion* and exists in just one other copy, which has been laboriously transcribed in Josephine Brefeld, 'An account of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 101/2 (1985), 134-55. The second text is based on a different source text, a version of which has been transcribed and published by Régine Pernoud, *Un guide du pèlerin de terre sainte au XVe siècle*, Cahiers d'histoire et de bibliographie, 1 (Mantes 1940). Peter Kidd's full description of the manuscript is available on-line at <http://www.queens.ox.ac.uk/library/medieval-manuscripts/the-catalogue>.

\* I heartily thank Peter Kidd for bringing this manuscript to my attention and for sending me images of it; and I am grateful to

Amanda Saville, Librarian at The Queen's College, Oxford for her assistance, and to Julia Brungs, Mark Trowbridge, and Lisa Privette for helpful comments. This article is based on a longer academic article: Kathryn M. Rudy, 'An Illuminated English Guide to Pilgrimage in the Holy Land: Oxford, Queen's College, MS. 357', in *Imagining Jerusalem in the Medieval West*, ed. by Lucy Donkin and Hanna Vorholt (Oxford: published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2011).

*Kathryn M. Rudy is Lecturer in Art History at the University of St Andrews. She has written extensively about Northern European manuscripts and their functions. Her books and articles treat real and virtual pilgrimages, the word as image, and proverbs in medieval marginalia. Her most recent work discusses the relationships between images, rubrics, and indulgences.*

## *One very appreciative reader's experience*

Christopher Collard

The Queen's College

I have been a College Lecturer in the Classical languages for a decade or so. The Library provides well (as is to be expected) for texts and handbooks related to my teaching, but it has also greatly helped the range and I hope quality of my published work.

First, it is a fine place to think and write, especially amid the calm and age-scented ambience of the Upper Library (where this piece fittingly was drafted).

Second, and paradoxically, because the Library's holdings in modern Classical scholarship are necessarily smaller than those of the incomparable Bodleian and Sackler Libraries, their selectivity prevents my being distracted towards less important or specialised literature. Reflection for these paragraphs has brought this benefit home to me, when I remember working on the half-dozen or more books I have finished in the College. Singly or collaboratively these have been chiefly editions with translations and notes of Euripides' numerous fragmentary plays and of fragmentary Greek satyr-plays (both, the first comprehensive collections in English), and an annotated translation of Aeschylus.

Third, the Library has given me much help for some shorter or detailed studies upon various subjects; I have started or written here a few journal articles, and revised some earlier papers for republication. Like many Classicists I have a strong secondary interest; it is in the history of British Classical scholarship and scholars. In Queen's I have completed well over twenty such biographical and evaluative pieces. For this work the Library's rich holding of older books in many fields but particularly Classical editions (from the 16th Century onward) has been a wonderful surprise and convenience. My work upon one scholar, Joshua Barnes (1654-1712, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge), had more than proved the Library's riches to me some years ago, for it holds all four of his major books. For this appreciation, I hoped that one of these, a non-Classical work which Barnes published in 1688, might provide a link with the College. This is his huge biography of Edward III, whose Queen was the College's founder and patroness Philippa of Hainault. What I found astonished me, and is set out in the brief account which accompanies my appreciation: a transcription of Philippa's Latin epitaph, once displayed near her tomb in Westminster Abbey but long since lost, and apparently unrecorded within the College. Barnes cited six earlier printed records or transcriptions of the epitaph, between 1600 and 1683 - and in a further demonstration to me of its riches I discovered that the Library possesses all but the oldest (which is a very rare book indeed).

In all parts of the Library I have often noticed a non-Classical title close by my seat for the day and picked it up, and unexpectedly found something useful or suggestive to my work. Serendipity (Barnes and the epitaph!) is the least recognized advantage to be had from a really 'good' library, and gives as much enjoyment as that from 'good' second hand bookshops (alas, nowadays much diminished in numbers: distinguish shops from on-line booksellers!).

Lastly, it is a pleasure to write a praise which is less and less heard (literally) in a time of impersonal information technology. Since my undergraduate days I have appreciated the unfailingly generous help (and interest) of librarians, including the usually unseen cataloguers. I have hardly ever - in any country - had to endure what in the past I often heard said about librarians, that they view their chief duty as protecting their collections and minimizing their use. Furthermore, my experience of libraries has been unusually wide in a different way: I have enjoyed helping establish one new university library and chairing the advisory committee in another long-established one.

So, to the College librarians and their colleagues: thank



you, Amanda, Tessa, Lynette, Veronika, Helen, Paul and Rory (and in the past Michael and Rachel), for my decade as your very appreciative reader.

## Queen Philippa's epitaph

Christopher Collard

The Queen's College

In my appreciation elsewhere of the Library's splendid resources I describe how I came across Joshua Barnes's reproduction (1688) of a Latin epitaph which once hung on a tablet by Queen Philippa's tomb in Westminster Abbey but has long since disappeared. [The Upper Library's concise and illustrated pamphlet about her, *Consors Nostra Carissima. Queen Philippa (1314-1369)*, contains a photograph of her shoulders and striking face in the effigy upon her tomb.]

The epitaph was frequently transcribed and printed by antiquaries before Barnes and at least twice in the early 18th Century; all but Barnes printed also the English version (not a close translation) placed beneath the Latin on the tablet. Despite the presence of so many of these printed transcriptions in the Upper Library, some since publication, the epitaph appears to have been lost to memory within the College; even Provost Magrath in his exhaustive account of the College (1921) did not pick it up.

Philippa's tomb suffered bad damage at some time between 1683, when a copper engraving of it still undamaged was published by Sanford (Figure 1), and 1812 when a further one, published by Ackermann, showed its mutilated state (Figure 2). In neither of these engravings are the columns depicted between which the tomb lies, and therefore also not the tablet. A still later engraving of 1829, published by Skelton (the College owns a copy), does show the columns, but no tablet is visible. Probably it had long gone, removed either deliberately with others in the 18th Century or, more likely, because the wood and parchment of which such tablets were made had decayed.

The texts below are from what appear to be the earliest printed transcriptions, by the celebrated antiquary William Camden; they were in a small 'guide-book' to the monuments of kings, queens and worthies in the Abbey, published in 1600 (the only copy in Oxford is

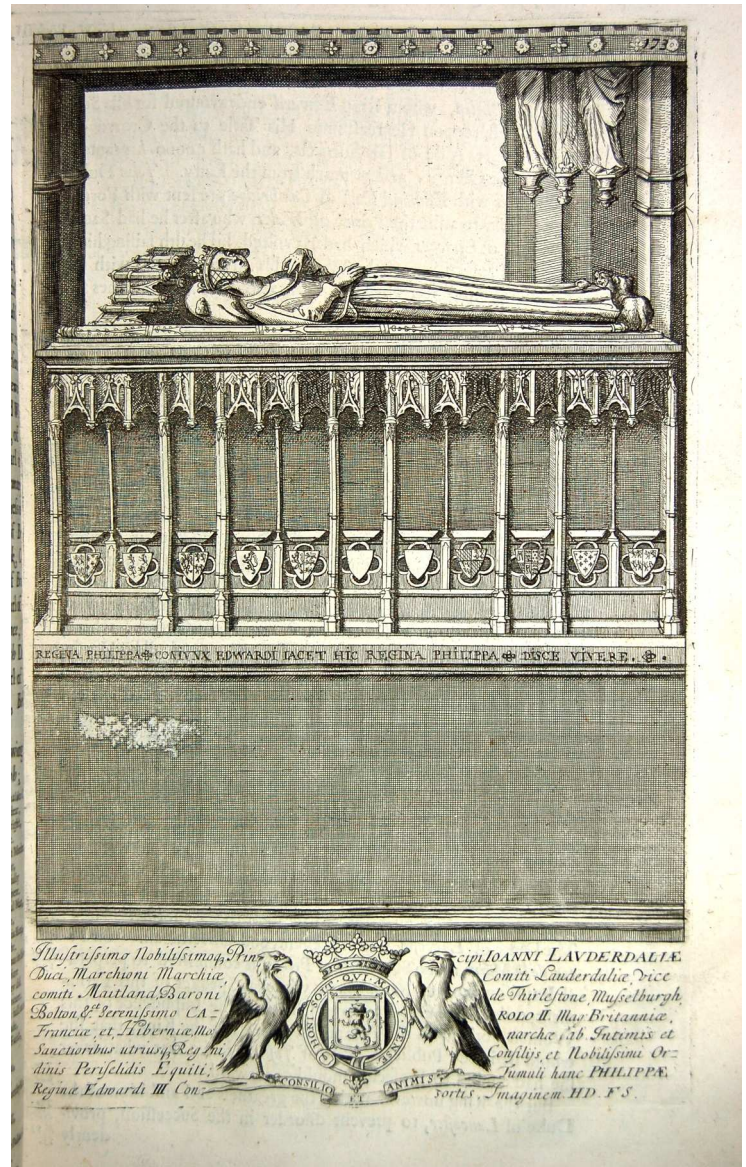


Fig. 1. Sanford's 1683 engraving of Philippa's still undamaged tomb



Fig. 2. Ackermann's 1812 engraving of Philippa's subsequently damaged tomb

in the Bodleian).

Guilielmi Hannonis soboles postrema Philippa,  
 Hic roseo quondam pulchra decore iacet.  
 Tertius Edwardus Rex ista coniuge laetus  
 Materno suasu nobiliumque fuit. 4  
 Frater Iohannes Comes Mavortius heros  
 Huic illam voluit consociare viro:  
 Haec iunxit Flandros conjunctio sanguinis Anglis  
 In Francos venit hinc Gallica dira lues. 8  
 Dotibus haec raris viguit Regina Philippa,  
 Forma praestanti, Relligione, fide.  
 Faecundae nata est proles numerosa parenti;  
 Insignes peperit magnanimosque duces. 12  
 Oxonii posuit studiosis optima nutrix 13  
 Regineas aedes, Palladiumque scholam. 14

(In line 5 Barnes was first to spot that *Comes* is unmetrical. In curing this fault with a possessive genitive *Comitis*, he introduced a factual error, for he wrote 'John was not a Count, but brother to a Count', i.e. *Frater ... Comitis*; but as brother to King Edward, John was indeed, as the epitaph states, a nobleman: John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall.)

Faire Philip William Hennaldes childe  
 And youngest daughter deere,  
 Of roseat hue, and beautie bright,  
 In toombe lies hilled heere. 2  
 Edward the third through mothers will,  
 And nobles good content,  
 Tooke her to wife, and joyfully  
 With her his time he spent. 4  
 His brother John a martiall man,  
 And eke a valiant knight,  
 Did lincke this woman to this king

In bonds of marriage right. 6  
 This match and mariage thus in blood,  
 Did binde the Flemings sure  
 To Englishmen, by which they did  
 The Frenchmens wracke procure. 8  
 This Philip flowrd in gifts full rare,  
 And treasures of the minde,  
 In beautie bright, Religion, faith,  
 To all and ech most kinde, 10  
 A fruitfull mother Philip was,  
 Full manie a sonne she bred,  
 And brought forth manie a woorthie knight,  
 Hardie, and full of dred. 12  
 A carefull nurse to Students all,  
 At Oxford she did found  
 Queenes Colledge she, dame Pallas schoole,  
 That did her fame resound.

(Note that Philippa appears as 'Philip', that the English spelling (or the printer's) is inconsistent, and that no apostrophes 's' are used. In line 2 'hilled' means 'covered from sight'.

In line 14, in one or two of the Latin transcriptions, -*que* 'and' is omitted (i.e. before 'dame Pallas schoole'). Even in Camden's and in some others' transcriptions, where it is not omitted, in their English versions an awkwardly repetitious 'she', followed by a comma, stands in place of the necessary 'and', preceded by a comma.)

My study of the Latin epitaph and of the English version has made me confident that they were not contemporary with the 14th Century tomb, but likely to post-date 1500. While most of the Latin words are common to the Classical, Medieval and Renaissance language, in line 14 the adjective *Palladius* in the sense 'intellectual' stands out as not certainly Classical - but its English equivalent 'Palladian' in this sense is first recorded for 1562, and as rare and quickly obsolescent. Who then may have been the author or the Latin or the English, or of both, and when?





Fig.3. The first record of the College's motto in the Queen's College Archives 2V26, a royal Letters Patent of 1626

It is recorded that royal epitaphs 'on tablets' for Henry VII and his mother Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, were composed at the Abbey in the first quarter of the 16th Century by John Skelton, self-styled 'Orator' to Henry VIII and 'laureated' poet in both Latin and English (to be distinguished from the 19th Century antiquary of the same name, mentioned above). Skelton's authorship was suggested for other 'doggerel epitaphs which hung over royal tombs' by Arthur Stanley the eminent 19th Century Dean of Westminster and learned commentator on the Abbey and its monuments. I can strengthen the case for Skelton. The English version renders 14 *Palladium ... scholam* with 'dame Pallas schoole': I happened to turn the pages of a recent edition of Skelton's English poems and in one of them my eye was caught by this very phrase 'dame Pallas'; I have since found from a Concordance to Skelton's poems that he employs this phrase upwards of ten times.

Members of the College will be struck by the closeness between lines 13-14 of the Latin epitaph and the College motto *Reginae erunt nutrices tuae* (Figure 3). I have pursued this similarity in writing up my researches into the epitaph. A longer version than here will be published in the Queen's College Record; and a fully documented one will be placed with the College Archivist.

For help of various kinds I am grateful to John Blair, Angus Bowie and Mike Riordan.

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## **Mathematical notation: some early examples in The Queen's College Library**

Jacqueline Stedall

The Queen's College

It often comes as a surprise to undergraduates learning about the history of mathematics to discover that the everyday notation we now take for granted was a relatively late innovation. Many of the books that illustrate the gradual development and assimilation of notation, from the Renaissance to the

Early Modern period, can be found in the extensive collection of early printed mathematical texts in The Queen's College library.

The earliest mathematical text at Queen's is a book entitled *Calculator: subtilissimi Ricardi Suiseth Anglici: calculationes nouiter emendate atque reuise* (1520), containing treatises by the fourteenth-century Merton 'calculator' Richard (or Raymond) Suiseth (or Swineshead). The treatises in the book are not concerned with calculations in any modern sense but attempt to quantify properties like density, light, or motion. Diagrams representing such quantification (see Figure 1) demonstrate to the reader that the subject matter is in some sense mathematical, but they are based on philosophical speculation and thought experiments rather than physical experiment or measurement. The text itself is closely written in heavily abbreviated Latin, with none of the symbolism we would now expect in a mathematical treatise. There are three copies of this edition in the Bodleian Library, but Queen's is the only Oxford college that owns a copy.

The symbols + and – first appeared in print in Johannes Widmann's *Behende und hupsche Rechenung auff allen Kauffmanschafft* in 1489 but did not become standard

until at least a century later. Many sixteenth century writers simply used 'p.' for 'plus' and 'm.' for minus. As late as 1557, in *The whetstone of witte*, the English writer Robert Recorde still felt it necessary to explain that:

*There be other 2 signes in often use of which the first is made thus + and betokeneth more: the other is thus made – and betokeneth lesse.*

*The whetstone of witte* was the most significant and indeed almost the only text on algebra to be published in England in the sixteenth century. Typically of Recorde, who revelled in the newly burgeoning power and poetry of the English language, there is some nice wordplay in the title: the Latin for 'whetstone' is *cos*, a reference to the common description of algebra as *regula cosa*, 'the rule of the unknown thing'. Unlike Recorde's earlier arithmetic text, *The grounde of artes* (1543), which ran to dozens of editions, *The whetstone of witte* is now rare; Queen's is one of only five Oxford colleges to own a copy, carefully preserved in the special collections room.

The *Whetstone* is now best known not for its + or – signs but for another symbol, Recorde's happy invention of the equals sign, = (Figure 2). Recorde's introduction of it is, like so much of his writing, homely and practical:

*I will sette as I doe often in woork use, a paire of paralleles, or Gemowe [twin] lines of one lengthe, thus: ===== because noe .2. thynges, can be moare equalle.*

Recorde put the sign to use immediately in some sample equations. The modern reader will have no difficulty in understanding the equals sign itself but may be baffled by some of the other symbols. This is because Recorde, like his contemporaries, used a form of the letter 'r' for his unknown quantity or 'thing' (*res*). Where we would now write  $r^2$  or  $r^3$  he used other symbols, which were forms of *z*, for 'square' (*zensus*) and *c*, for 'cube' (*cubus*). Further, he used a symbol rather like a Greek *phi* to show that a number was just a number, plain and simple. Thus the first equation in Figure 2 can be read as:  $1r + 15 = 71$ , and so on.

Once the idea of writing mathematics symbolically began to be established the practice rapidly gathered pace. New symbols were invented by a number of English writers in the early seventeenth century. One of the most prolific and imaginative was Thomas Harriot, writing around 1600. In his manuscripts he always added two short cross strokes inside Recorde's equals sign, and used it in a variety of lengths and orientations (Figure 3a). He also invented two new signs for ine-

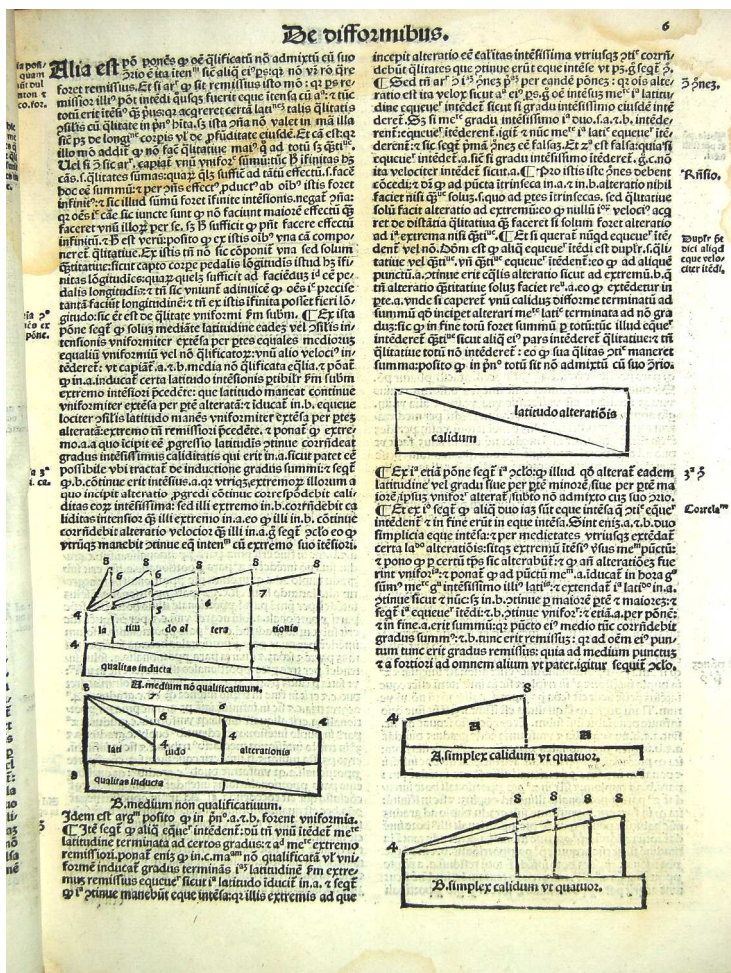


Fig. 1. A page from Suiseth's *Calculator* (MM.a,30)



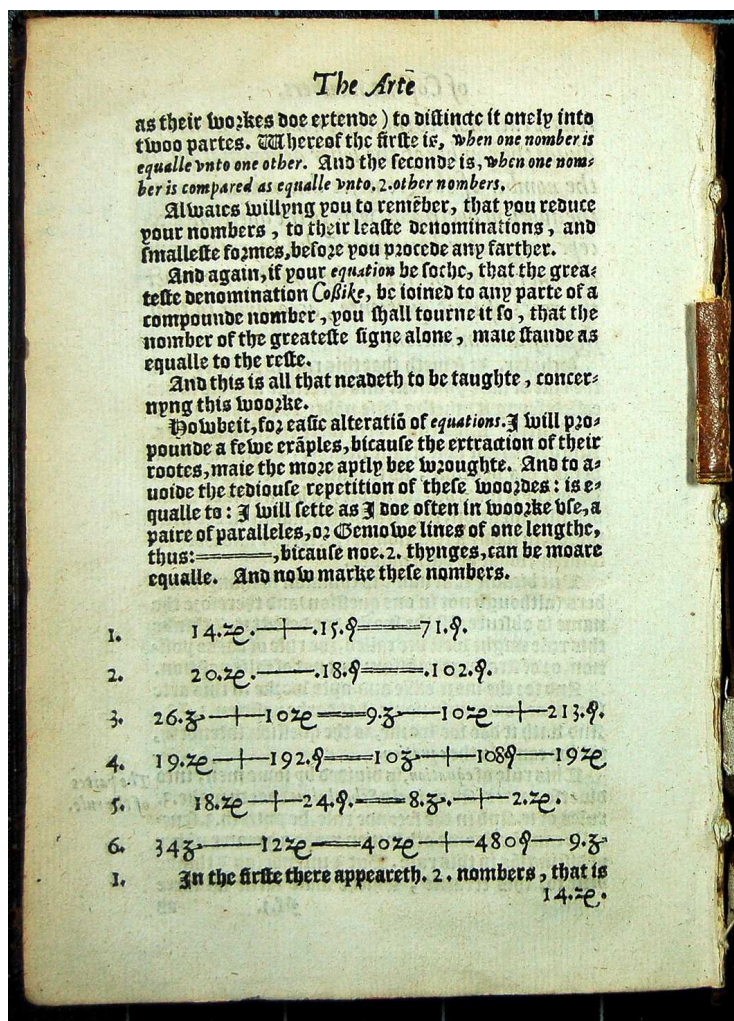


Fig. 2. The equals signs in Robert Recorde's *Whetstone of Witte*

quality, 'greater than' and 'less than', also written with two short cross strokes; these too he used freely, in different sizes and orientations (see Figure 3b). The constraints of printing, however, enforced linearity and uniformity. In Harriot's posthumous *Artis analyticae praxis* (1631), we see the more or less modern forms of the inequality signs as they appeared in print for the first time (Figure 4). The same page shows other notation used and popularized by Harriot, in particular the use of lower case letters, and the convention of writing  $ab$  for  $a$  times  $b$ . The Queen's College copy of the *Praxis* is another rare and important holding.

An almost exact contemporary of Harriot was William Oughtred, clergyman and teacher, whose *Clavis mathematicae* (1631) became one of the most popular introductory algebra texts of the seventeenth century. Oughtred was a firm believer in the value of good mathematical notation. When his book was translated into English as *The key of the mathematicks* (1648), he admitted that his way of writing 'with symbols or notes of things instead of words, seemed unto many very hard', but that such readers were 'scared by the newnesse of the delivery; and not any difficulty in the thing it selfe'. Indeed, the use of symbols, he argued, could

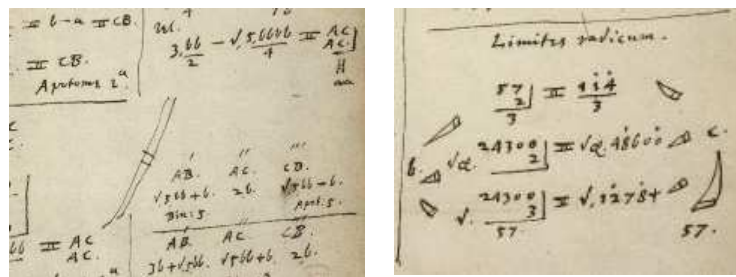


Fig. 3a, 3b. Harriot's equality and inequality signs from his manuscripts

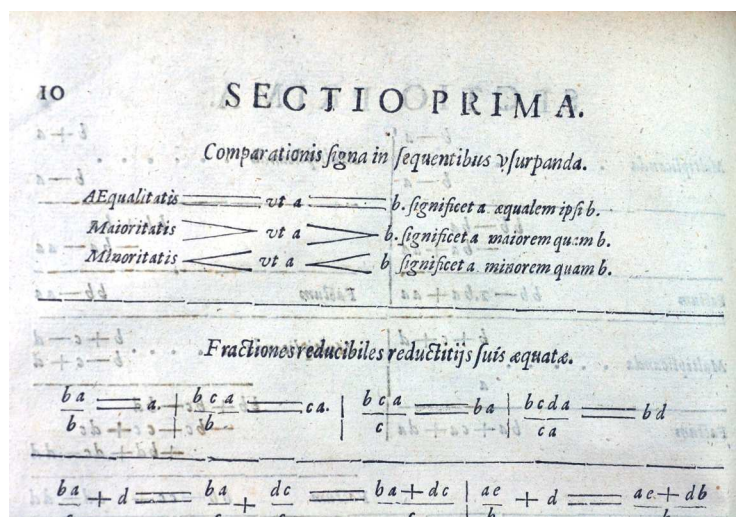


Fig. 4. The inequality signs in Harriot's *Artis analyticae praxis* 1631 (MM.a.41)

liberate the student:

*For this ... symbolically manner, neither racketh the memory with multiplicity of words, nor chargeth the phantasie with comparing and laying things together; but plainly presenteth to the eye the whole course and process of every operation and argumentation.*

Unfortunately, Oughtred's notation did not always do as much to unburden the memory of the reader as it might have done. He invented a number of new symbols, for instance, by adding tops and tails to the letters X and Z. Each variant has a special meaning, which the reader has to learn. Figure 5 (overleaf) shows a page written in Oughtred's notation. Those who remember how to solve quadratic equations might be interested to know that the correct formula appears just below the middle of the right hand page, though unless one gets to grips with Oughtred's Xs and Zs it is not easily recognisable. Here too the  $\pm$  sign appears for the first time. Yet another symbol invented by Oughtred was the  $\times$  sign for multiplication, though he rarely used it afterwards, preferring the convention of writing  $AB$  for  $A \times B$ .

Oughtred's *Clavis* outlived him for many years, being reprinted for the last time in 1703 in the reign of Queen



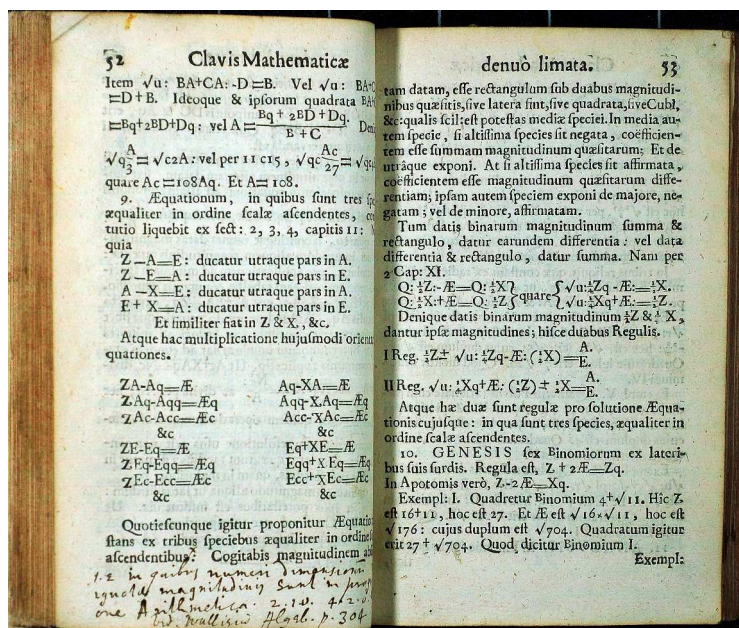


Fig. 5. Xs and Zs in William Oughtred's *Clavis maethematicae* 1652 (HS.a.29)

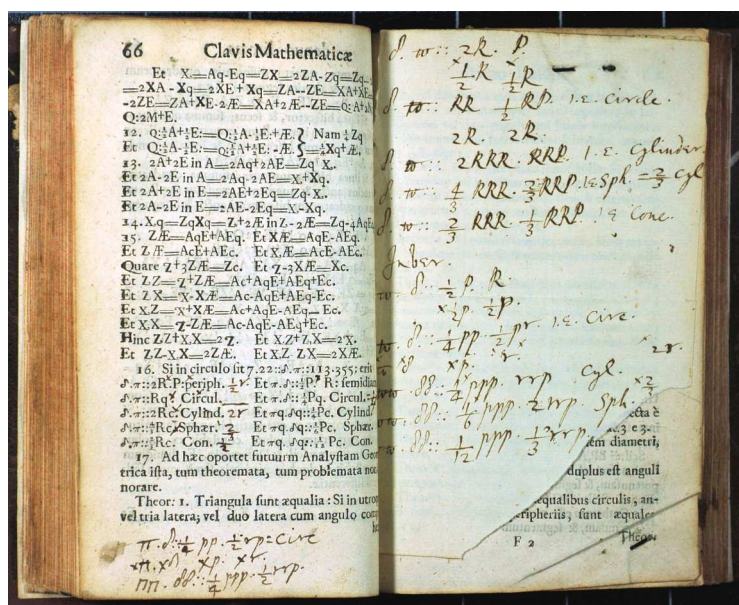


Fig. 6. A student's notes in the Queen's copy of Oughtred's *Clavis maethematicae* 1652 (HS.a.29)

Anne. By that time it had gone through five Latin and two English editions. Perhaps the most important edition was the one printed at Oxford in 1652 after the turbulent years of civil war, when the newly instated Savilian mathematical Professors Seth Ward and John Wallis took it upon themselves to introduce the *Clavis* to Oxford students. Its publication marked the beginning of a long tradition of mathematical printing at Oxford. Queen's owns a copy of that 1652 edition, one that always interests today's students because it contains pinned notes showing the efforts of one of their forerunners (Figure 6).

Six years after the publications of Harriot's *Praxis* and Oughtred's *Clavis*, René Descartes in his *Géométrie* (1637) published the notation that more than any other

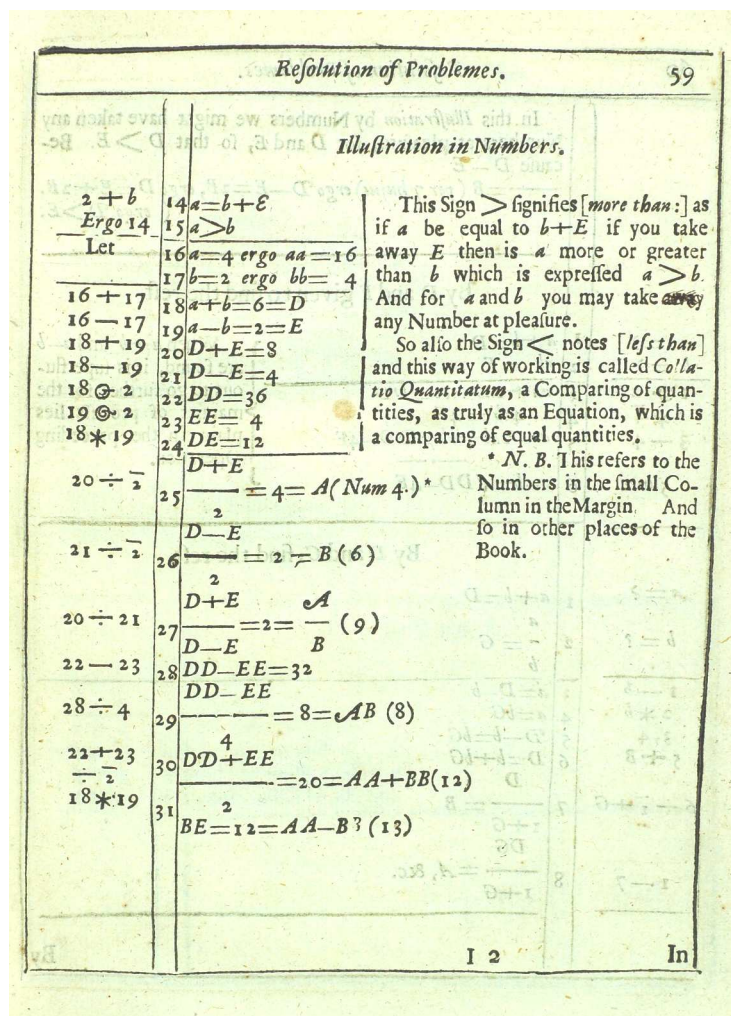


Fig. 7. The division sign in John Pell's *Introduction to algebra* 1668 (HS.a.94)

was to become standard: the use of letters like  $x$ ,  $y$ , and  $z$  from the end of the alphabet for unknown quantities, for example, and the convention of writing  $x^3$  for 'x-cubed'. Strangely, though, Descartes and many later writers, including Newton, retained Harriot's  $xx$  for 'x-squared'. Further, ignoring the English equals sign  $=$ , Descartes used a kind of sideways '8' for equality, which remained in use on the continent for many years but was never taken up in England. Queen's owns a copy of the 1659 Latin edition of the *Géométrie* by Francis van Schooten, one of the seminal texts of seventeenth-century mathematics.

One further sign for the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division, has not yet been mentioned, namely the division sign,  $\div$ . This was invented by another English writer, John Pell, whose *Introduction to algebra* (1668) is also to be found at Queen's. Pell devised an idiosyncratic three-column layout for mathematical problems (see Figure 7). The column on the left contain instructions, very much like a computer programme, and in order to write each instruction one line, Pell needed new symbols. In Figure 7, the instruction  $20 \div 21$ , for example, means 'divide line 20 by line 21'. Other symbols that can be



seen on the same page are Harriot's inequality signs, explained at the top right; an asterisk for multiplication (line 31); and an @-like symbol for 'squaring' (lines 22 and 23); the former has survived but the latter has not.

As we have now seen in several examples, by no means all invention of symbols was ultimately successful. Nevertheless, the foundations of modern mathematical notation were laid down in a surprisingly short time from the mid-sixteenth to the late-seventeenth century, a period for which Queen's owns a particularly fine collection of texts.

We do not know how or when these books were first acquired by Queen's. Suiseth's *Calculationes* and Harriot's *Praxis* are now classified with MM (Mathematics) shelfmarks, suggesting that they were already seen as part of the mathematical collection when the shelfmark system was devised. Oughtred's *Clavis* and Pell's *Introduction*, on the other hand, have been given HS (History of Science) shelfmarks, suggesting that they were bought or donated later for their historical interest. Meanwhile, Recorde's *Whetstone* is kept separately, along with a first edition of Newton's *Principia*, in the special collections room. This means that the older mathematical texts are divided between three different locations. It is my hope that the library will one day have the space and facilities to bring them together as a single collection in its own right.

*Jacqueline Stedall is a Senior Research Fellow in History of Mathematics, specialising in English mathematics of the Early Modern period.*

## Cataloguer's favourites

Lynette Dobson

Technical Services Librarian, The Queen's College

Lynette Dobson, Technical Services Librarian, picks out some of the Library's most interesting new additions of the last year.

***Nudes at breakfast : Steyning Grammar School during the Second World War* by George Barker. Warmington: George Barker, 2009**

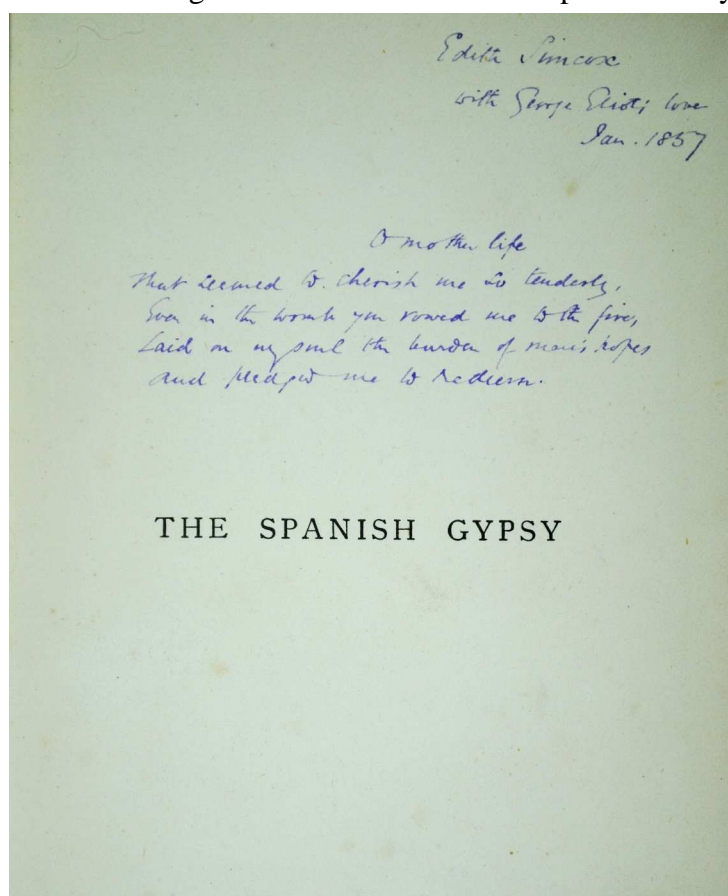
This donation from author and Old Member George

Barker naturally caught our eye. The intriguing title refers to thick slices of bread, usually known as *slogs*, which were served at breakfast in Barker's alma mater. When the butter allocation ran out for the week, they were served butterless, or *nude*. A second book Barker has authored on his time at Steyning is called *The slog smugglers*.

***The Spanish gypsy* by George Eliot. Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1875**

Not strictly a new addition to the Library but new to the online catalogue. While retrospectively cataloguing some of our 19<sup>th</sup> century English collections onto OLIS, our Library Assistant Rory McCluckie came across a copy of the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of George Eliot's *The Spanish Gypsy* which is inscribed from Eliot to her friend Edith Simcox.

The book was bequeathed to the Library by George Simcox, fellow in Classics elected 1863 and brother of Edith. Edith Simcox is best known for being a political activist and feminist - along with Emma Paterson she was the first female delegate at the Trades Union Congress. She was also a friend of George Eliot, first meeting her in 1872. How they became acquainted is not clear but it appears Edith, already an admirer of Eliot's, wrote to the author and requested a meeting. Their close relationship is well documented, especially through Edith's private journal, *Autobiography of a shirt maker*. She was devoted to Eliot and although her intense feelings for the author were unreciprocated they



remained good friends. She called Eliot 'the one great joy and blessing' in her life.

The inscription in the Queen's copy of *The Spanish Gypsy* (above) reads,

*Edith Simcox*

*with George Eliot's love*

*Jan. 1857*

*O mother life*

*that seemed to cherish me so tenderly,*

*even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,*

*laid on my soul the burden of men's hopes*

*and pledged me to redeem.*

The body of the inscription is a quote from the text of *The Spanish gypsy*, although two words of vocabulary are different from the published version – *cherish* instead of *nourish*, and *laid* instead of *hung*. The date is also curious, but is presumably just an accidental transposition of the year of publication, 1875.

The Library also has a copy of *Edith Simcox and George Eliot* (1961) by K. A. McKenzie, an Old Member, from which the biographical information above is gleaned.

***Factual fictions : the origins of the English novel by Lennard J. Davis. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996***

The college has just appointed its first English Fellow for over one hundred years, and the Library's collections are subsequently being updated. We've added over one hundred items to the English collection in the last twelve months with the same number expected in the next year.

*Factual fictions* is one of several new additions on the beginnings of the novel as a genre of literature. It places the origins of novel writing in defence against censorship and authority and shows how it evolved out of journalism and history writing.

***The ghost in the fog : XXV : the corrections 12/04 - 03/05 by Barrie Tullett . Lincoln: Caserom, 2008***

*The ghost in the fog* is an intriguing book which was acquired for our 2010 exhibition *Mark My Words* on the use and history of marginalia. It is an interesting item because its main text has been removed, with only peripheral additions remaining – specifically publishing

corrections. It is based on the 2005 book *How to address the fog: XV Finnish poems 1978-2002* and contains only the proof-reader's marks, corrected text and marginal notes. The publisher refers to it as "the ghost of a book" and the empty pages certainly have an eerie quality.

***When silk was gold: Central Asian and Chinese textiles by James C.Y. Watt and Anne .E. Wardwell. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997***

Old Member James C. Y. Watt recently gifted us number of beautiful books on Chinese art which he has authored or co-authored over the years. All the titles were published by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, where he has worked for the last 25 years, most recently as Chairman of the Department of Asian Art. The titles donated include *When silk was gold: Central Asian and Chinese textiles* and *The world of Khubilai Khan: Chinese art in the Yuan dynasty*.

*When silk was gold* is an accompanying catalogue for the 1998 Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition of the same name. The 64 items include embroideries, brocades and tapestries from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Animal and dragon motifs feature prominently alongside beautiful geometric and floral patterns.

## ***The orrery in the Upper Library***

Tessa Shaw

Reader Services Librarian, The Queen's College

**T**he orrery in the Upper Library was given to The Queen's College by a Group of Gentleman Commoners of the College in the late 18th century. An entry in the Benefactors' Book and an inscription within the lunar calendar scale records their names and gift (Figure 1).

As an aside, this type of instrument was christened an orrery by John Rowley, who built one for his patron the fourth Earl of Orrery, Charles Boyle, in about 1712. It appears the name stuck.

The Queen's orrery is made of brass, steel and wood, with some painted surfaces, housed in a wooden case with gilt feet and ornaments. The whole instrument



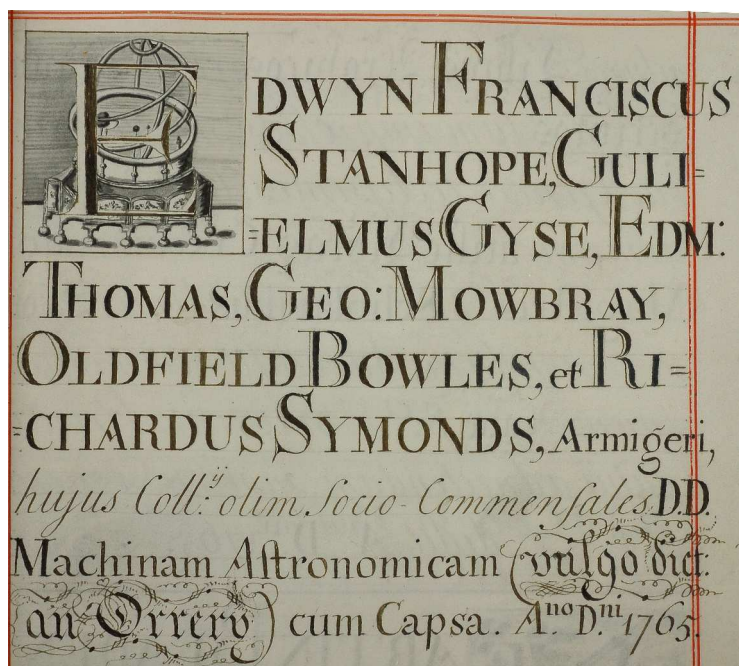


Fig. 1. Entry concerning the orrery in the Benefactors' Book (BB)



Fig. 2. The orrery in the Upper Library

rests on a mahogany stand with a glazed cover (Figure 2). An engraved plaque on the face reveals it was "Made by B. Cole and Son, at the Orrery, Fleet Street, London".

The paper pieces that cover the globe (Figure 3), known as gores, were printed from an engraved plate and coloured by hand at the same workshop as the larger Senex globes which are also to be found in the Upper Library.



Fig. 3 John Senex's miniature globe within the orrery

It is hand driven and reproduces the diurnal and annual movements of the earth, and the movements of the Moon, Mercury and Venus. Orreries have an associated clock movement and are designed to run constantly by being 'wound up'.

The orrery at Queen's is turned by hand using a crank handle when required. College tradition dictates that only two people can set ours in motion. One is the Patroness of the College, a position most recently occupied by The Queen Mother, and the other the Sedleian Professor of Natural Philosophy, currently Professor Sir John Ball, who is a Fellow of Queen's.

### *Refurbishment of medieval manuscripts for Henry VIII : Part one, Queen's College MS 323*

Jane Eagan

Head Conservator, Oxford Conservation Consortium

**T**he library at Queen's College contains seven medieval manuscripts believed to have been re-covered in red and black velvet textiles on entry into the royal collection after the dissolution of the monasteries. It is not known how or when this group of manuscripts came to Queen's; they were recorded at the college in the mid-seventeenth century by Gerard Langbaine, Provost from 1646 to his death, and also Keeper of the University Archives.

Two generous grants from the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust have enabled the Oxford Conserva-



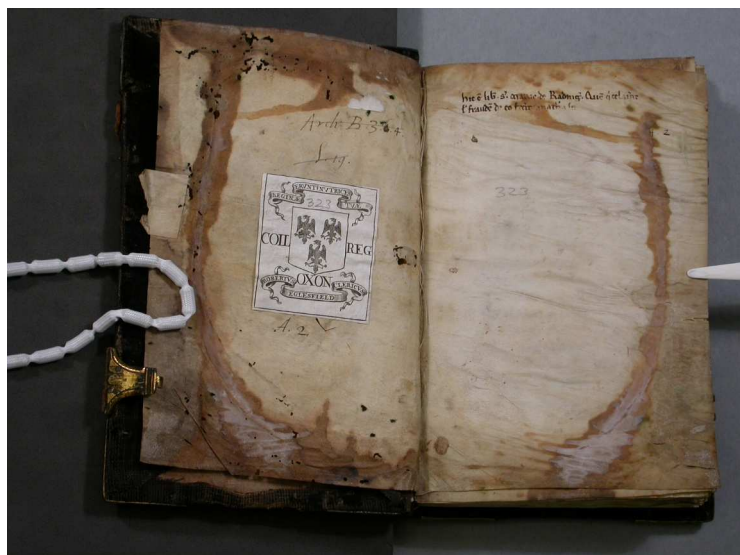


Fig. 1. MS 323, upper pastedown and flyleaf with Reading Abbey *ex libris*.

tion Consortium to carry out complex conservation treatments on some of these volumes in collaboration with a textile conservator, as well as to undertake some analysis of the textile covering. Digitisation of several of the manuscripts has also been part of the grant-funded projects and they have been catalogued online (<http://www.queens.ox.ac.uk/library/medieval-manuscripts/the-catalogue>).

The group of seven manuscripts is of particular interest as they have not been repaired (apart from one manuscript resewn in the 1980s) and show how manuscripts from monastic collections were refurbished by Henry VIII's binders in the first half of the sixteenth century. My interest in this group of manuscripts began in 1999 when I carried out conservation work on Queen's MS 323. Studies of the books in the royal library have focussed on textual evidence, ownership, and history of collections. My perspective is that of a practising book conservator, with an interest in determining how this group of bindings has been altered based on the physical evidence that can be observed. In this and future issues of the Queen's Library Newsletter, I will give a brief description of each of the seven manuscripts, outline the physical evidence showing how it was refurbished for Henry VIII, and also briefly describe how it has been conserved to safeguard it for the future.

I began my study of the Queen's Henrician manuscript group by looking for evidence of original binding structures. Of the seven manuscripts examined, five retain their underlying medieval structure, that is the sewing pattern, thread, supports, boards and board attachment were all unchanged at the time of recovering c. 1520-40. These five manuscripts have been sewn on two, three, or four slit alum-tawed thongs, laced into oak boards, some of which have been carefully shaped.



Fig. 2. Upper board showing extensive losses of velvet covering material and exposed spine (before treatment).

Two manuscripts of the Queen's seven, MSS 323 and 320, appear to have been dismantled, resewn, and laced into new wooden boards, presumably at the time of recovering in velvet.

MS 323 is a twelfth-century manuscript of the Gospel of St Luke with the *Glossa ordinaria*, most likely written in England. It is possible that it was written at Reading Abbey, and certainly was at the abbey in the first half of the thirteenth century when it was recorded in the library catalogue as either number 142 or 184. The Reading Abbey *ex libris* (Fig. 1) in a thirteenth-century hand can be found on the upper flyleaf, as well as various early Queen's library shelfmarks on the endleaves.

This manuscript was in very poor condition and could not be safely produced for readers. The parchment leaves had been severely damaged by water, and were



blocked together and torn in places. In addition, both wooden boards were nearly detached and the inflexible sewing supports had broken with losses in several places, adding to the potential for further serious damage if handled (Fig. 2).

On examination while working up a treatment proposal, it became clear that the binding was not contemporary with the writing of the manuscript. The text-block had been sewn with a thin thread (used doubled on the needle) on three single tanned-leather supports, crudely laced into the wooden boards. There were redundant sewing holes from an earlier binding and impressions from an earlier thread visible in the spinefolds of the quires. An earlier 'primary' endband had left thread impressions in the quire centres as well; this endband was no longer present and a fragment of a non-functional decorative endband worked in blue and pink over a tanned core was found at the tail. Tannin staining on the pastedowns showed that the previous binding had included a tanned skin covering material, with neatly mitred corners where the material was turned inside the boards. It appeared likely that the earlier, medieval binding for MS 323 had been removed and replaced with a different structure and using less durable materials. In the case of MS 323, I believe this was done when the manuscript entered the royal library and, at the same time, a rich-looking black velvet covering was added to fit within Henry VIII's new library.

MS 323 is covered in a black cut-pile velvet, now faded to a brownish black and shedding short woollen fibres. The velvet is a 'union' cloth, that is, a combination of wool and linen fibres, suggesting that it is what would have been known as 'fustian' in the sixteenth century. Fustians were hard wearing and relatively inexpensive when compared to silk velvets, and were consequently sometimes used as a substitute for silk within the royal household. This cheaper and more robust material would still have had a rich appearance, though, and many of Henry VIII's books were covered in this way. The textile covering seemed to have been put on the book quickly with a disregard for a high standard of finish; it had been slightly shaped at the corners, with the fore-edge of the velvet turned in over the head and tail turn ins. Decorative bosses and edge/corner-pieces in copper alloy had been nailed to the wooden boards, along with two clasps provided to keep the binding closed.

The ground weave of the textile was a tabby, with two main warps, then a supplementary warp and then two more main warps. The thread count over a 10mm sample area of the velvet showed a count of 14 main warp threads with 8 supplementary warp threads, and 22 weft

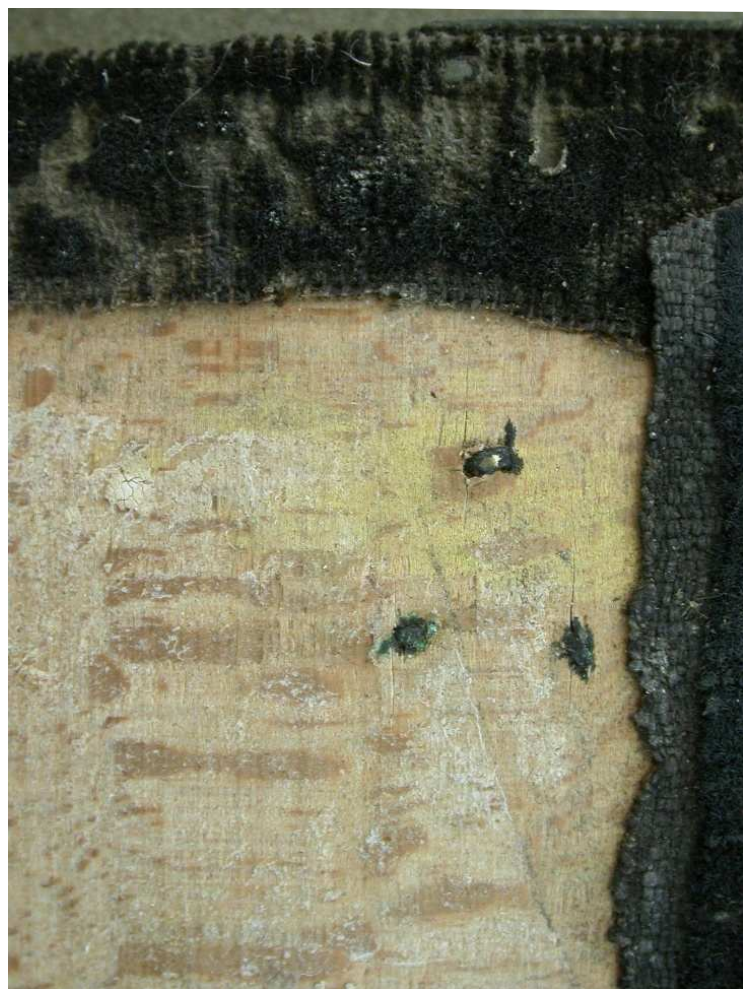


Fig. 3. Upper inside corner of lower board, showing the selvage and weave structure, as well as the rivets attaching the boss to the outer face of the board.



Fig. 4. Board reattachment through a new spine lining and braids sewn over the original sewing supports. After repair to the binding, textile conservator Maria Hayward begins infilling losses.

threads. This count confirms the visual appearance of the cloth, a coarse hand-woven textile with subtle differences in weaving tension. Dye analysis showed that the velvet had been dyed black with a tannin-based dye (commonly extracted from oak galls or alder bark) and an iron mordant; this acidic dye process may explain



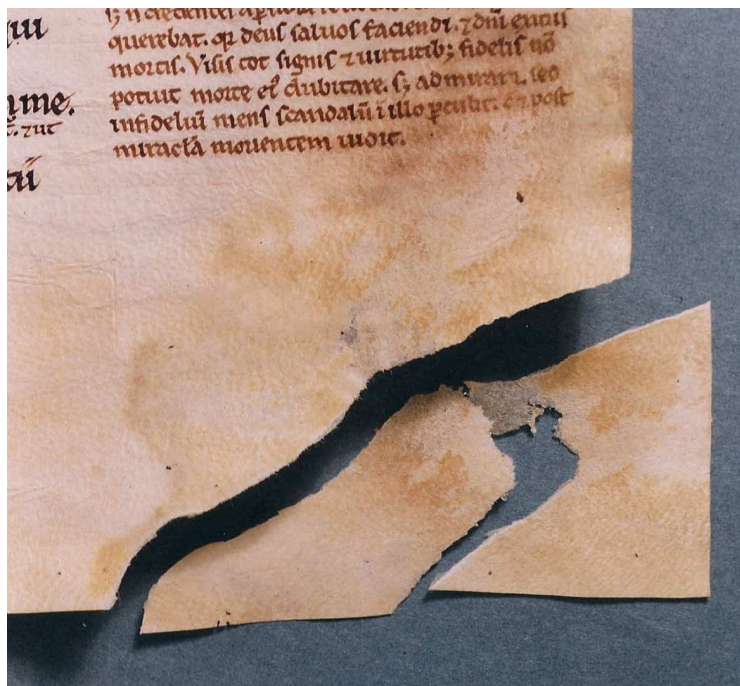


Fig. 5. Blocked corner removed and ready for reattachment with Japanese tissue repair strips.

why the black textile was in relatively poor condition and shedding fibres. (Figure 3, previous page)

The treatment aim for MS 323 was to stabilise the binding structure without obscuring the physical evidence that it had been re sewn in the sixteenth century. To do this, the binding was not dismantled, but it was possible to re sew the text-block with a new thread around new linen braids laid over the existing sewing supports, which had the effect of consolidating the structure without removing any evidence. A spine lining of aerolinen was pasted to the spine and the extensions of the lining pasted onto the outer faces of the wooden boards, reattaching the boards to the text-block without altering the lacing of the original tanned supports. (Fig. 4, previous page.)

The damaged and fragile areas of the text leaves were separated either mechanically with a spatula or by locally applying by brush an alcohol/water solution then gently separating them. A lightweight Japanese tissue



Fig. 6. MS 323 after treatment



was used to repair this damage, as it was felt that traditional repair with new repair parchment and warm gelatine might be too heavy or damaging in itself. (Fig. 5)

The small fragment of endband remaining at the tail end of the spine was secured in place with thread hitches tied into the cross-over stitches of the main sewing.

It was decided that a support fabric was needed to fill the significant losses in the covering which left the underlying binding structure exposed and vulnerable, particularly the spine. These infills would also protect the raw, unravelling edges of the velvet and were secured in place using stitches worked in very fine silk thread. A combination of dyed cotton voile and silk crepe line was used for infills, and this material was keyed into the aerolinen spine lining with a few stitches in order to limit the movement of the large infill on opening the volume.

MS 323 can now be consulted without causing further damage to the fragile binding structure. It has been re-boxed and a microfilm copy is available for readers to limit use of the object itself. Its interest as one of two manuscripts of the Queen's group of seven Henrician bindings rebound on entry to the royal library in the sixteenth century has not been obscured by conservation treatment, and it is still possible to see the thread and other materials used in its second, post-medieval binding. This manuscript offers a clear contrast between the qualities of the original medieval binding and the more quick, workaday structure put on for Henry VIII. (Fig. 6)

In future issues of the newsletter, I will look at the other Queen's manuscripts in Henrician bindings with a view to answering the questions: How exactly did binders go about recovering medieval manuscripts to suit the royal taste? What conclusions can be drawn about their aims or their instructions from the material evidence?

#### *The Queen's College Library Insight*

Published by The Library, The Queen's College, Oxford, OX1 4AW

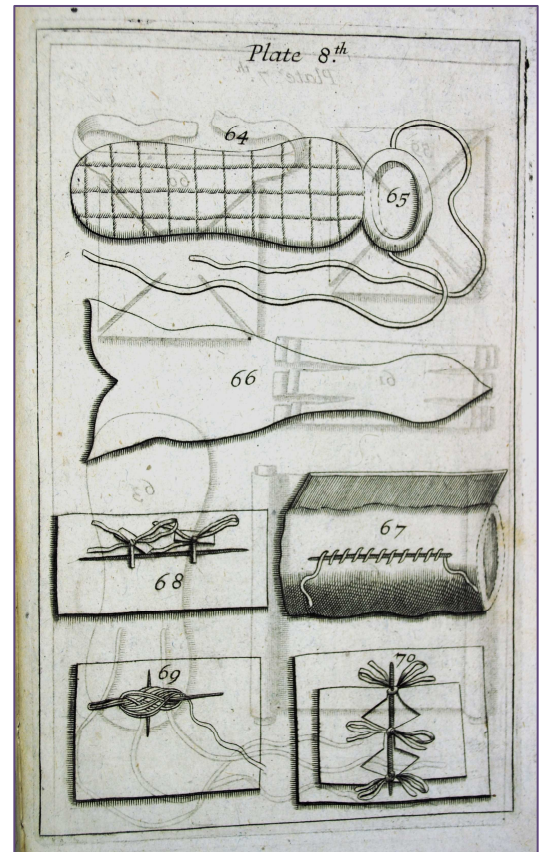
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## ***Medicine: continuity and change***

A new exhibition in the Upper Library

Summer 2011— Spring 2012



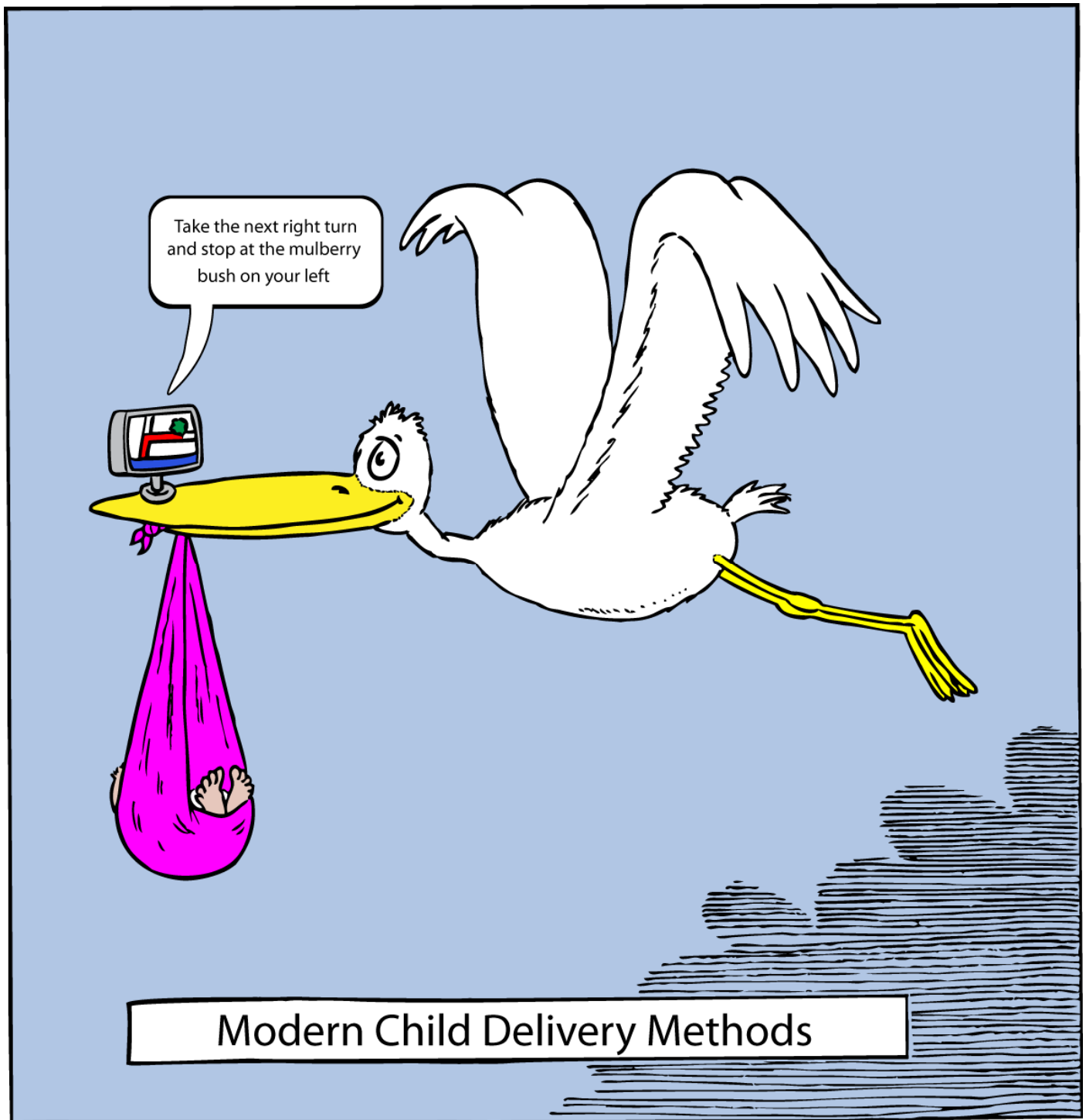
The antiquarian medical collection at The Queen's College was principally created in the eighteenth century through the generous benefactions of two physicians: Sir John Floyer (1649-1734) and Theophilus Metcalfe (1690-1757). Floyer's library, of one-hundred and fifty books, could best be described as that of a working doctor. Metcalfe's medical library, of over one thousand books, reflects his strong intellectual interests in science and medicine and his bibliophilic tendencies. Combined, these medical libraries give a wonderful insight into medical knowledge and practice over a period of two hundred years.

An exhibition of some of these items and more will be on display in the Upper Library until Summer 2012. The exhibition is curated by our Rare Books Cataloguer, Paul Ivanovic.

If you are not a current member of the College, please email [library@queens.ox.ac.uk](mailto:library@queens.ox.ac.uk) to arrange to view the exhibition.

# Medicine: Continuity and Change

An exhibition of books from the antiquarian medical  
collection at The Queen's College, Oxford



The Queen's College Upper Library  
Summer 2011 – Spring 2012

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