In Memoriam John Mason
Librarian of Christ Church 1962-1987

John Mason (9 June 1920 – 31 October 2009) won a scholarship to Jesus College in 1937 and, after war service in India, took a first in history in 1948. From 1950 to 1957 he was a research lecturer at Christ Church, being principally concerned with the papers, then on deposit in the college library, of the Victorian Prime Minister Lord Salisbury. In 1957 he was elected official Student of Christ Church, and remained so until his retirement in 1987. In 1962, he became Librarian, a post which he held for the next quarter of a century. He presided over a period of great change in the Library. When he took over in 1962, the scaffolding around the exterior of the building was just being removed, to reveal a newly refaced and gleaming façade. The original Headington stone on the north, west and east sides of the building was replaced with Portland Shelly Whitbed stone, with Clipsham stone used for the capitals of the great columns and the infilling between the columns.

Lights, Scaffolding...Action
First Phase in the Restoration of the Library

Since the end of Trinity term, the Library has been the scene of frenetic activity. This may not be apparent now, because those who are familiar with it will be more aware of the absence of familiar objects than the presence of unfamiliar ones. Certainly, the new lights in the reading rooms are very conspicuous, but where are the portraits and where are the familiar busts of George II and grumpy Queen Victoria?

The explanation is simply that a great deal of work fundamental to the library’s wellbeing has been undertaken during the summer, but that the final tidying and repainting of the interior will not be completed until summer 2010. The vestiges of the scaffolding, still visible at the start of this term, were merely a hint of the scale of the work which has been carried out during the summer months.

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Detail of a French illuminated Book of Hours (use of Rome) dating from the fifteenth century (MS 100, fol. 101v – The angel appears to the shepherds. Note one of the earliest representations of a shepherdess. Otto Pächt’s addition in the Library’s copy of Kitchin’s catalogue of Christ Church manuscripts identifies the artist as E. of Bourdichon.)
It all began with alarm at the antiquity of the wiring and the regular failure of the heating in the Upper Library, occasionally made more dramatic by wisps of smoke emanating from the heaters beneath the windows! Surely a book collection of the stature of that at Christ Church could not be put at risk by the spectre of a fire caused by faulty wiring? Over the years, improvements to the safety of the wiring were made on an ad hoc basis, but it was inevitable that eventually floors would have to be taken up and holes made in walls in order to take it all out and renew it.

From these beginnings the Library repair project grew into a much greater entity, in which the exterior was to be repaired in addition, lighting improved and a great deal of clutter removed to display the interiors at their best. In January 2009 the College appointed Knowles & Son of Oxford as main contractor, but it was not until the project was well under way that we became aware that Knowles had purchased the stonemasonry firm of Townsend & Son in 1797 from the grandson of William Townsend who had built the library between 1717 and 1738!

Drawing by William Townsend (1676-1739), representing the north face of the library at Christ Church. The sketch shows an early design of the ground floor as an open loggia (Plans of Christ Church Library, 8/10).

It was clear that a great deal of work was planned for a comparatively short time, and that planning the resources would be critical. It was also clear that any interruptions or discoveries would have a disproportionate effect on such a tightly-planned programme. The early signs were good, and scaffolding began to be put up in Hilary term in order to ensure that everything was ready to go at the end of Trinity term. Some of the diagnostic work to the roof and to the stone facing the Deanery garden was undertaken in term and by the start of the long vacation the old roof slates had been removed, protected from the weather by the large temporary roof suspended above it.

The first challenge encountered was to be the scale of the stone renewal required. In these pages, previous reference has been made to the practice of “face bedding” blocks of stone, to give the illusion of their provenance being from a superior seam in the quarry than in reality. This was found to be widespread and required some very large panels of stone to be taken down and renewed completely. In addition to three tall rectangular panels facing south and west, the triangular tympanum of the pediment required to be taken down and re-faced. This was a logistical challenge because it had been planned to rely upon its stiffening function to allow continuity of support to the overhanging cornice of the pediment above, which also was to be taken down and renewed! Some reorganisation of the construction sequence was needed to ensure everything remained stable. It also posed a geometrical puzzle for the stonemasons, since the tympanum contains an oculus, effectively a cylinder of stone some 1200mm in diameter, made up of six segments which require to be placed so as to form a perfect horizontal cylinder with hairline joints, when each segment weighs in excess of 100kg!

Detail of the new triangular tympanum on the south face of the Library

Removal of the roof slates allowed the peripheral lead gutters to be inspected prior to re-slating commencing, but, since they had been laid in the early 1960s, it was not expected that much of the lead would require attention.

View of the slating and leadwork with the temporary roof removed.

After some surprise discoveries of unexplained corrosion on the hidden underside, a more extensive inspection was carried out to every sheet of lead — a
formidable undertaking. In the event, recurrent splitting due to impurities in the original lead used, was discovered in numerous cases, but passing through half or two-thirds of the lead thickness so as to be invisible from above. Fortunately, the early start of the roof work allowed all the lead to be renewed without causing disruption to the programme.

It was during the roof repairs that our attention was drawn to two large cavities that had appeared either side of the main staircase, but visible only from within the roof structure itself. When even a torch beam seemed to fade out without touching the bottom we realised that the twin circular openings, reminiscent of well shafts, were very deep. Townesend had set out the staircase as a massive masonry construction of rectangular plan form, with the lozenge shape of the stair itself hewn out of the solid. Since large volumes of stone remained at the corners, the two spiral stairs leading from the first floor chambers (south of the library) to the third floor chambers were further cut from the mass of masonry. What now appears to be the case is that two similar circular shafts were created on the south side in order to balance the stresses and lighten the load, but without staircases incorporated!

Rewiring the building required much of the Upper Library floor to be raised to accommodate the many new cables. The construction found beneath it had been the subject of speculation, since College records had referred to some fire-protection work undertaken in the 1920s. The assumption had been that a layer of “pugging”, made from a form of weak concrete, had been laid above the original floor structure to reduce sound transmission and improve fire separation.

We soon discovered that the latter solution had indeed been implemented and a very substantial quantity of steel was found, usually centred upon the plaster roses at the centre of the reading room ceilings below. In some cases this assisted the task of attaching the heavy light fittings to the ceiling, but in others it created difficulties by virtue of the relationship between the steel and the light position, rendered immutable by the position of the central plaster rose! It is also informative to realise that the ceilings of the reading rooms are 1920s copies of the originals.

Creating routes for the new wiring helped us understand many aspects of the construction which took place between 1717 and 1770, among them the reluctance to use plaster as a wall finish in any part of the building other than the entrance and staircase. Readers will be familiar with the slightly battered fabric which lines the upper part of the reading room
walls, and some speculation had surrounded why it was put there and what lay behind it. An area of the hessian lining needed to be removed in order to run a group of cables to a new position in each reading room, and beneath it was found a layer of panelling.

View of the West Library upper panelling removed for rewiring.

In other words, Townesend’s successor (for he died in 1739, thirty years before the open loggia that formed the ground floor was enclosed as the Picture Gallery), had been consistent in panelling the walls in preference to plastering them. It is hoped that in 2010, this panelling will be exposed once again to view, having been repaired.

In retrospect, two events will stand out as having had the potential to delay the summer’s work more than any other, but in each case some lateral thinking prevented the consequences becoming too critical. The first of these occurred very soon after Knowles & Son was given possession of the building, in early July. Critical to the progress was the renewal of the heating and wiring in the reading rooms, since they needed to be ready for use before any other part. Imagine the consternation when the space beneath the floors destined to receive the new pipes was found to contain asbestos. The legislation surrounding the discovery of this carcinogenic material is very rigid and procedures had to be followed, among them the two-week “notice period” to the Health & Safety Executive, which is required for the processing of the paperwork.

Thus it became apparent that seven weeks of our thirteen-week programme for the reading rooms was about to be lost. Efforts were made to find ways of compressing the tasks into a shorter period, once the asbestos had been removed, but the scope for this was limited since quality could not be compromised. Knowles’ contract manager calculated that if work was undertaken seven days per week, rather than five, the lost time could be recouped, with determination. This was quickly agreed as a constructive approach and within a month, the fruits of this creative solution became apparent. In the event work was completed within the intended time scale.

The library roof had been heavily repaired at least twice in its history, but one area of damage by deathwatch beetle seemed to have escaped earlier attention. The affected timber, regrettably, was an oak member on the south wall top above the Upper Library, carrying the weight of the most heavily loaded oak roof truss in the building! This second threat to the propensity to complete on time arose through the sheer difficulty of finding any practical and safe way of carrying the truss whilst its support was taken away and replaced. Conventional wisdom pointed to using substantial steel supports fixed to the wall below, but this was clearly too dangerous, since the only access available to fix them would require standing on the wafer-thin curved structure of the elaborate coved ceiling to the Upper Library!

Steel beam and straps supporting truss 12 while the load was taken off it.

The structural engineer devised a number of alternatives, but in the event the adopted method owed much to the practical problem-solving abilities of the site manager, Geoff Leitch. Shortage of space severely limited the possible sites which might carry the huge weight of the truss, so a Heath Robinson arrangement of straps was used to attach the truss to a steel beam, effectively extending its length further south. Once this had been done, a 40-ton capacity trolley jack (more usually seen during tyre-changing on 36-tonne trucks!) was placed beneath it to take the strain, until daylight could be seen beneath the truss and the decayed support timber
could be taken out and replaced by new oak. The operation was extremely delicate, since a slight over-compensation or under-compensation would have resulted in deflection affecting the complex plaster mouldings separating the central and eastern parts of the Upper Library ceiling, with devastating consequences. The relief when the operation had been completed without incident was palpable.

Rob Dunton
Donald Insall Associates

Continuity in Preserving the Past
Restoration Work

Fragments from Library Report 1964
by Dr John F. A. Mason (1920-2009)

Upper Library: Redecoration

During 1964 the Upper Library was redecorated. However, that brief statement conceals a long story: for 49 weeks, from February 1964 until January 1965, the room was shrouded in a variety of scaffolding, dust sheets, and polythene; but it must not be thought that painters and gilders were at work continuously for so long. The Librarian had innocently supposed that agreement on a scheme of decoration would be easy, but that the practical execution of a scheme would be difficult; he was quite wrong on both counts.

The contractors, Messrs. Clark and Fenn, were not only most skilled and swift in their work, but also most considerate throughout our hesitations, and their area supervisor, Mr Sandell, and the site foreman, Mr Byrne, became familiar figures in the Library. Various experiments with colour were found necessary, and our consultant, Mr John Fowler, finally put forward two schemes, one for a ‘warm stone grey’ and the other for an ‘Italian pink’ background to the white plaster enrichments of ceilings and walls; the former scheme represented the nearest approximation desirable to the original scheme as deduced from plaster ‘scrape’, the latter involved a colour in 18th century use. Some members of the Library Committee would have liked to test the possibilities of a scheme in white and off-white. The Librarian preferred the scheme in ‘Italian pink’. Eventually the Governing Body adopted it by a majority vote.

It is pleasant to record that in December 1922 when the Governing Body last enjoyed a debate on the decoration of this room, there was also a division (14-5) – though it is believed that on that occasion the minority doubted whether the room should be decorated at all. The Librarian can only express his personal opinion, which is that the overall result is, to say the least, acceptable, and not ‘disastrous’. The effect varies very much with the infinite variations of the light outside. The room is imposingly sombre on a dark day; on a bright one it is agreeably gay. The enrichments, notably the remarkable, even audacious ‘swags’ on the north wall are visible as never before. The columns and decoration at the great east and west windows form most elegant compositions. The lower ceilings have been much enhanced by Mr Fowler’s clever use of ‘pure white’ and three different shades of ‘broken white’ to bring out the rich luxuriant detail of the plasterwork. This has been particularly successful on the soffit of the two great transverse beams and above the window pilasters, while the use of white paint on the woodwork has added unexpected lightness to the whole. The decoration of the high central ceiling has gained in elegance and definition from extensive gilding, and each of the three main ceilings has been framed in a gilded cornice.

There are gaps in the past history of this room. The woodwork was made and installed by George Shakespeare and John Phillips; a few years after the plasterwork had been executed by the noted Oxford ‘stucco-man’ Thomas Roberts, in 1753. All internal work in the Library was carried out according to the ‘taste and direction’ of Dr David Gregory, Treasurer and later Dean. Roberts in his career of some 25 years also worked at four other Colleges (Magdalen, St John’s, All Souls and Queen’s), the Radcliffe Camera and Bodleian, and at least three local country houses (Rousham, Kirtlington and Heythrop). Our Upper Library may have been redecorated in 1824, when the entrance hall and staircase were ‘coloured afresh’. There was clearly a long interval in which nothing was done until 1890. When the ‘series of spandrels’ was ‘distempered [sic] anew, where the plaster had become both cracked and dirty’. In 1899 the woodwork was repaired. The next redecoration, in 1923, was done in a uniform shade of white, and in an oil-based paint. Apparently the plaster surfaces did not long retain their lustre. In 1964 a lead-based paint was used, and a measure of justice done, perhaps for the first time, to a notable artistic achievement.

Upper Library: Lighting

The Upper Library has not only been redecorated. It has also, for the first time, been properly lit. Several schemes were considered and rejected, notably one which would have required the installation along the whole length of the Orrery balustrade of 14 tall standards each surmounted by a powerful central lamp, directed upwards. Each such lamp would have been surrounded by six smaller lamps for direct lighting.

The Library Committee felt that this scheme would have generated too much heat (both controversial and thermal) and damaged the appearance of the room. Suggestions for a series of lights mounted on standards or furniture on the floor were also ruled out...
as likely to detract from the appearance of the room. Eventually it was decided to install banks of cold cathode lighting (13 kilowatts in all) above the entablatures of the east and west windows, above the bookcases on the north and south walls, and on the narrow ledge above the main central cornice.

This last and essential part of the lighting scheme was a considerable technical achievement in itself, and thanks are due to Mr Edward Playne for his assistance over it. In the event, this form of lighting gives a satisfactory rendering of the colour scheme adopted. The lighting plans were drawn by Messrs Tucker and Edgar (who had been responsible for a similar scheme at the Codrington Library), and the high tension side of the installation was carried out by their associates. The low tension side of the work was carried out by Messrs. Hill Upton, on whose behalf Mr Wells and Mr Pulker have been most helpful in a great variety of matters. The control cabinet is located at the top of the east stairs. The arrangement of switches is such that either a high or a low intensity of general illumination can be obtained. While, if desired, the stronger light can be obtained for individual sections of the bookcases only. At full power, the general level of illumination reaches 8-9 lumens. The present tubes should have a sound life of at least 10,000 hours, perhaps 25-30 years at the likely rate of use.

It is proposed to complete the lighting scheme by the installation of lights under the Orrery balcony. These would illuminate the Wake collection. Messrs. Hill Upton have also improved the lighting in the six rooms off the Upper Library, by means of more attractive pendants in the four lower rooms (where the oak panels and shelves have been cleaned and waxed), and fluorescent strips in Hyp. and Z. […]

**Ground Floor: Reorganisation**

If there have been delays in the work upstairs, some further progress, however incomplete, has been made in the improvement of the ground floor of the Library. The West Library, or former Picture Gallery, has at last been adequately lit by the installation of concealed hot cathode fluorescent lighting in the cavities of the walled-cases. The total power is approximately 2.5 kilowatts and the general level of illumination produced by this ranges up to 10 lumens. Here too local lighting is required, but some refurbishing on the ground floor must be effected first. However the general lighting of the East Library remains as gloomy and inadequate as ever. This is a situation which cannot be allowed to continue and (whatever the future of the 1869 Gallery) improvements must be considered as a matter of urgency.

All these improvements in electric lighting will necessitate an enlargement in the capacity of the electrical cable which feeds the Library. The expectation of a much increased quantity of electrical wiring in the Library was the main reason for the decision (noticed in the 1963 report) to install the Minerva fire alarm system. The actual installation was completed in February 1964 and the detectors have proved relatively unobtrusive. The alarm system is to be extended by a direct G.P.O. line to the Oxford Fire Station in George Street, but the existing remote alarm bell at Tom Gate is to be retained.

The redeployment of ‘working books’ on the ground floor is proceeding. A preliminary step was the removal of the Burton Collection from the west end of the West Library to a new island case in Arch. Supra made by J.W. Buck. […]

The West Library is much used by undergraduates. It still requires improvement, but has gained in attractiveness not only from the better lighting but also from the hanging on three of its walls of twelve appropriate portraits. Four subjects are former Librarians (Robert Burton, Edward Smallwell, Cyril Jackson and Phineas Pett), eight were connected with the Library as benefactors or in some other way. […]

It is hoped to redecorate this room (last painted in 1945. […]

The renovated heating system continues to be highly efficient (and also relatively cheap). The capacity of the oil tank has been increased to 1,000 gallons.

The ground floor no longer reverberates to the clanking of readers’ feet on the iron grilles, for these have been replaced by oak boards.

The potential aesthetic qualities of the Library have been much in our minds throughout 1964. However, whether a particular scheme is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, ‘disastrous’ or ‘dull’, whether gilding is ‘vulgar’, ‘fussy’ or ‘elegant’, and so on, are matters not susceptible of final objective proof. There comes a point where final action must be taken, and the joys of indecision forsworn. […]
This work took about two and a half years, from April 1960 to the end of September 1962. The next task was the refurbishment of the interior. The eastern half of the ground floor had become an undergraduate reading room in the nineteenth century, and the wooden gallery and iron staircase were added in 1869 in order to create much-needed additional shelving space. However, in Michaelmas 1962, the western half of the ground floor still contained the Picture Gallery. By mid-March 1963, the paintings had been moved out, after a sojourn of nearly 200 years in the Library, to be housed in the new Picture Gallery in Canterbury Quad in 1967. The former Picture Gallery (re-christened the “West Library”) was shelved to a uniform height with painted bookcases in soft wood, copied from the existing pattern by Symm and Co.

A new heating system was introduced, replacing a system which dated from 1866. In 1965 the ground floor reading rooms were redecorated, by covering in hessian the wall surfaces above the bookcases (previously panelled). The hessian was then painted, thus solving the problem of cracking panels which had previously marred the beauty of the rooms. The entrance hall had been redecorated in 1957 in burnt orange, with architectural features picked out in gold leaf, a scheme devised by the London firm of Sybil Colefax and John Fowler. The redecoration of the Upper Library (a major undertaking) fell during Dr. Mason’s tenure of the Librarianship, and is described in detail elsewhere in this newsletter.

Several important collections arrived to join the Library’s holdings during Dr. Mason’s time as Librarian, and several others departed. The papers of the politician Tom Driberg, Lord Bradwell, were given to the House by his executors in 1977, and in 1978 Mr. F.B. Brady of Pinner (1909) presented his collection of material relating to the Theatre. This includes printed books, albums showing actors, theatres and scenes from plays, posters, numerous ‘penny plain twopence coloured’ prints and about forty ‘tinsel portraits’. In 1982 Dr. Mason successfully negotiated the deposit of the ‘Alice’ collection of Mrs. M.J. St Clair, the granddaughter of Alice Liddell, who was the inspiration for *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (a collection subsequently sold at auction by the family in 2001).

Sadly, in 1978 the Evelyn Trustees sold their printed book collection (which had been on deposit at Christ Church, together with the Evelyn manuscripts, since 1949) in two sales at Christie's, despite valiant attempts by Dr. Mason to secure the collection for Christ Church. The Trustees later sold the
manuscripts as well, in 1995. In 1975 the Salisbury Papers were returned to Hatfield House at the request of the 6th Marquess.

Reading through the Librarian’s reports, it is clear that from the outset Dr. Mason was heavily involved in all aspects of the Library’s work. He reclassified large parts of the history sections of the library, and the current staff still struggle occasionally to decipher his elegant, but at times illegible, script in the history handlists.

Dr. Mason’s influence is still felt in the library furniture. The large library tables in the reading rooms were built to his specification, to suit a man of his not-inconsiderable height, at a time when Christ Church was an all-male preserve, and when readers sat reading books, not using lap-top computers.

His presence was maintained in the library, after his retirement in 1987, by “Dr. Mason’s table”, which sat in the first bay of the East Library, covered with papers. When the need for undergraduate reader seats led the Librarian to ask the college carpenters to make one final large oak table, the remaining piles of Masonica were transferred to spare shelves in the basement.

Dr. Mason’s knowledge of the House, its history and its inhabitants, was encyclopaedic, and made him the obvious first port of call for any question relating to Christ Church. As the annual report for 1987-88 states, “With [Dr.J.C. Harle] retired our two senior Modern Historians, Mr. C.H. Stuart and Dr. J.F.A. Mason, both devoted servants of the House, the one in defending, the other in chronicling, its history and traditions. Such constitutional and historical expertise is a product of slow growth, and will not be easy to supply”. With the death of Dr. Mason, we have lost a large part of the corporate memory of the college. He will be greatly missed.

Janet McMullin

The Cardinal’s Hat
at Yale Centre for British Art

Another obvious absence from the Library this term is the ‘Cardinal’s hat’. From 15 October 2009 to 3 January 2010 the rather spectacular and much admired hat will feature in a major international exhibition, Horace Walpole’s Strawberry Hill.

In spite of its importance, Walpole’s vast collection has never been the subject of a comprehensive critical study. This exhibition organized by the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University, the Yale Center for British Art and the Victoria and Albert Museum reassembles an astonishing variety of nearly three hundred objects once owned by Walpole, including rare books and manuscripts, antiquities, paintings, prints, drawings, furniture, ceramics, arms and armour. It is important to remember that Walpole was the first person in England to assemble systematically the visual evidence of English history.

In the catalogue of the Strawberry Hill sale (on 13 May 1842), the hat was described as ‘a most interesting and valuable relic […] found in the Great Wardrobe by Bishop Burnet, when Clerk of the Closet; from his son the Judge, it came to the Countess Dowager of Albemarle, who presented it to Horace Walpole’

1 W.G. Hiscock, A Christ Church Miscellany (Oxford University Press, 1946), 104.

Cristina Neagu
PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN THE ROMAN WORLD

As the Roman republic entered its death throes in the turbulent decade of the 30s BC, the old fabric of the state torn apart by fissiparous aristocratic infighting, a cultivated senator called Gaius Asinius Pollio (a friend of Virgil and Horace, among others) founded the city's first public library. This was not an eccentric gesture of escapism; quite apart from any intrinsic virtues of library provision, proficiency in the literary arts was becoming an important component of aristocratic self-presentation. The library's ostentatious location in a rebuilt Atrium Libertatis, a complex dedicated to the divine personification of Liberty and which held important public archives, reminded its audience of the various freedoms of expression and association imperilled by the civil wars. Pollio's public deployment of his enormous collection of books (and art) was in itself a calculated gesture in an age in which the vast accumulation of cultural treasures from Rome's provinces enriched many a senator but also left them open to public hostility and political revenge.

Pollio's library appealed in all these ways to the eventual winner of the civil wars, Augustus (ruled 31BC-AD14), who went on to found two public libraries of his own at Rome and more or less take control over Pollio's foundation. Accession to these new public libraries fairly swiftly became the goal of ambitious authors eager for the stamp of imperial approval, while exclusion was the fate of those who, like the racy poet Ovid, displeased the regime. Later emperors followed suit and built their own libraries. By the 2nd century AD the city's library system was large enough to employ a permanent administrative official, the Procurator bibliothecarum, presiding over a sizeable staff and drawing a considerable salary; the imperial biographer Suetonius was one of the holders of this post.

Rome came to contain 28 public libraries by the time of Constantine the Great at the start of the 4th century AD. Astute metropolitan patrons across the Roman empire, and especially in the urbane Greek-speaking east, followed the emperors' example and adopted the public library as one of the set of fashionable Roman-style philanthropic public projects that contributed so heavily to the homogenous look and feel of Roman towns around the Mediterranean. Just as the proliferation of similar-looking theatres or circuses suggest a commonality of leisure activities across the empire, the proliferation of similar-looking public library buildings suggests a shared civic engagement with the world of literary high culture.

In order to study the function, operation, and influence of these buildings the ancient historian can use a variety of different types of evidence. In several places the remains of the library buildings themselves survive. Remains of various library buildings survive at Rome but by far the best-known example is the second-century AD Celsus library at Ephesus in present-day Turkey, whose ebullient Greco-Roman baroque façade will be familiar to anyone who has visited the site. Remains such as this tell us a great deal about the physical layout of Roman libraries and allow us to see that, at least within the surviving range of examples, their builders tended to adopt a fairly standard design (which was part of the point, of course, as the each library was intended to evoke its counterparts at Rome and around the empire).

However, actual library buildings survive in only a minority of cases and any biodegradable fittings or contents – including, of course, the books – have long since vanished, so the student of these libraries must also consider literary and epigraphic (inscriptional) evidence. Literary accounts allow us to repopulate these buildings with communities of readers, authors, scholars, and pupils, and inscriptions tell us a great deal about the circumstances of the libraries' foundation and occasionally their operation: the most detailed examples include not only the name of the founder but also the particulars of endowments set up to pay staff salaries and buy books.

So what did these libraries look like? How did they function? The Roman book is a good place to start. In Roman libraries the great majority of the books were papyri (or sometimes parchment) scrolls, covered on one side in continuous uppercase script in parallel columns (usually without word breaks or punctuation) and usually capable of holding a book of a prose work by a writer like Thucydides orTacitus, or a single Greek tragedy. Estimates of the holdings of Rome's libraries vary, but about 20,000-60,000 volumes per library is possible. It isn't easy to tell how big ancient library books would have been, though papyri finds suggest an average length of 20-30cm. The titles of these books were often written on tags at the end of each scroll to identify the volume to a librarian or reader without having to take it off the shelf and unroll it. The Greek name for such a tag, identifying the contents of the scroll, was a syllabus – hence the modern word.

It is clear from many authors, including Catullus, Ovid, Petronius, Lucian, and Martial that library-standard deluxe books had several decorative and functional embellishments such as slipcases, smoothed and oiled surfaces, illuminated titles, coloured inks, and winding bosses of ivory or even gold. Ovid in particular suggests that imperial library copies were the acme of the bookmaker's art, a level of bibliophile craftsmanship that many authors aspired to with longing. Library copies were both
prestigious and, presumably, made strong enough to survive the rigours of library life. This made them expensive items, and it is not surprising that public library buildings, while trying to accommodate large numbers of visitors, also incorporated a number of features designed to protect their holdings from the various enemies of the book – damp, fire, worms, and, above all, damage or theft by readers. The fact that we can detect this tension between enabling access to books and controlling that access in the design of Roman libraries suggests that they were intended to be functional, accessible buildings.

No public library survives with its books or wooden fittings, but we do have a few clues as to how these books and documents were housed. A relief carving from Neumagen in Roman Gaul, now sadly lost, shows a library or archive room with books on a shelf. Note the syllabus or titulus tickets and the vertical dividers on the horizontal shelves. Perhaps we see a library catalogue in the lower right corner – we do have some slight evidence for the existence of this kind of document, though we do not know whether they could have functioned as shelf-lists. Fixtures like this shelf probably housed and organised books in Roman libraries, and their existence is an important first step in making these libraries into practical resources rather than simply luxurious store-rooms for books.

Another important step would have been the organising of storage of books by genre, subject, or alphabetical order, and there is evidence that librarians had these methods at their disposal from the time of the great library at Alexandria onwards. Rome’s libraries seem not to have been specialised by subject, though some acquired particular reputations for excellence in poetical, medical, or grammatical books; rather, they seem to have filled up with books every couple of decades (as the limited capacity of their designs made inevitable), so that they acted – probably by design – as testament to the creativity of each generation and in particular to the reigns of their founding emperors.

To take a good look at the architecture of one of these imperial libraries we can consider the twin library buildings of Trajan’s Forum in Rome, the enormous complex that completes the suite of imperial fora to the northeast of the Forum Romanum. It was built ex manubis (‘from the spoils of war’) as a result of the emperor Trajan’s victories in Dacia (modern Romania) from c. AD 106, and was dedicated at least in part by AD 112-113. The Forum consists of an enormous open central square flanked by porticos, across one end of which is a transverse apsidal Basilica, the Basilica Ulpia; our pair of library buildings sit facing each other behind this Basilica, and in the small courtyard between them rises the famous Column of Trajan with its helical relief carvings of the victorious Dacian campaigns. The libraries, then, sat at the heart of a large complex devoted to the commemoration of its patron emperor (whose ashes it contains, at the base of the Column) and the power of the Roman empire in the world – a heady mix of imperial and military symbolism. With their ability to communicate between generations, libraries played an interesting part in this symbolism, appealing to the judgement of future ages. The libraries were linked to the adjacent Basilica where important legal activities were located, and acted as a sort of literary counterpart to the Column’s visual record of Trajan’s achievement – indeed, it has even been suggested that the Column’s spiral frieze is a visual echo of the unrolling of a scroll. The location was an impressive and significant one, then, and we know from literary sources that these libraries were among the city’s most important, maintaining their high standing for several centuries after their foundation. The two identical buildings commonly identified as the Forum’s libraries were cleared by Mussolini’s excavators in the early 1930’s (recent excavations are beginning to suggest that we might have to reconsider our understanding of the area north of Trajan’s Column, but for now at least the identification of these ruins as the Forum’s libraries seems secure). Each consisted of a large, rectangular, brick-built hall, faced with expensive marble veneers. These two buildings are commonly referred to as the ‘Latin’ and ‘Greek’ libraries, though there is no evidence for this division of the holdings and little practical sense behind it.

The feature which most readily identifies these buildings as libraries is the presence of a row of large rectangular niches, originally seven in number and latterly reduced to six, along the buildings’ long side walls. These are usually thought of as housing for now-vanished wooden bookshelves and are a common feature in Roman library buildings across the empire. The excavation of the libraries, combined with the marble plan of Rome on which one of these buildings appears, allow us to make a good guess at what the buildings would have looked like - something like this cutaway reconstruction of the west library.

A number of salient features are visible here, typifying Roman library buildings of around this date. A gallery level with more bookshelves was reached...
by a staircase behind the main library room. Although the building doesn’t survive up to this height, sixteenth and seventeenth century drawings of its ruins appear to show the now-vanished first floor level, also accommodating niches. This library was a building intended for display, as we can see from the expensive and impressive materials used to decorate its plain brick and concrete structure. It has internal appointments of some magnificence, including marble revetment and colonnades in exotic stones such as pavonazzetto, giallo antico, and granite. There are representations of famous authors in statues and probably in paintings – lots of authors talk about this high honour. We don’t have any evidence for furniture in libraries, though it is possible to make informed guesses about what sorts of chairs or tables might have been there; some are included in the picture here.

The design creates a controlled interior space, under the gaze of the emperor (in statue form in the centre of the rear wall) set among ranks of books and author-portraits, and often in provincial libraries of the donor and his family: the aim was to create an interior which used architectural, architectonic, decorative, and sculptural elements to impress the visitor, complementing the displays of the emperor’s military and political accomplishments elsewhere in the Forum with a testament to his role as literary patron and figurehead.

It is immediately evident that with the books thus relegated to the perimeter walls and open floor spaces capable of accommodating scores or hundreds of people at once, Trajan’s libraries were terribly inefficient buildings if their purpose was simply to store books. The internal floor area of each library hall was 542.7m², of which at most only 5.75% (31.25m² over two storeys) was given over to book storage in the niches.

Naturally floor space was also needed for readers to circulate and read, but comparisons with modern libraries suggest that there was still an overprovision of floor area relative to the capacity of the library: the new British Library, for example, devotes about 25% of its floor area to permanent “pure” book storage. The answer is that the large area of floor space freed up by moving books into wall niches must have been intended for visitors to meet, sit, read, and debate; that is, the library buildings were designed to be large enough for public meetings or recitations, rather than just individual readers.

Bringing that many people into the libraries compromised the safety of the precious books, so it is not surprising that the building incorporates security features too. Valuable books, as we have seen, were held in cupboards fitted in wall niches. A continuous podium ran in front of these cupboards to enable readers to reach them, but that was only necessary because the books had been removed from floor level in the first place – the building’s architect was concerned to protect them from rising damp and from damage or theft by readers and visitors. The niches are deep enough for the cupboards to have been fitted with shutting doors. The front wall of each library consisted of a colonnade admitting light and air, but it is probable that bronze screens between the columns controlled access, providing a degree of weatherproofing and securing the library at night. We also know that the libraries had staffs to keep an eye on visitors.

Speaking of security and the value of the books brings us to the question of whether Roman public libraries lent their books or kept them confined within their splendid buildings. There is mixed evidence for borrowing from libraries but on the whole it seems that it was usually forbidden.

Here, for instance, is an inscription that lists the rules for the library of Pantainos in Athens, contemporary with the Trajanic libraries at Rome that we’ve just seen. The stone says: ‘the library is open from the first to the sixth hour; no book may be taken out–we have sworn to it’.
One question that arises from the study of these libraries is, naturally enough, how ‘public’ they really were. This is not an easy question to answer. We have no solid evidence for anything like an entry policy or library membership, let alone anything like readers’ tickets, so we have to rely on inference and anecdote, and an awareness of the way the wider Roman world worked.

Benefactions in Roman cities were rarely motivated by the same sorts of ethical philanthropy that characterised, say, the men who founded Victorian public libraries, and the Romans’ attitude to education was different too. There was no aspiration to universal education, and literacy levels were low, at least by modern standards, so we should beware of anachronistic assumptions as to what a library ‘ought’ to be for. It is quite possible to view these splendid library buildings as the creation of a small, self-interested urban elite who saw the pursuit and celebration of intellectual life as a status symbol or badge of belonging reserved for themselves – the education necessary to appreciate literary texts was, after all, not available to a high proportion of the population.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the new public library buildings were intended to appeal to a rather large audience, if not a large readership. We have epitaphs of staff members designated as ‘bailiffs’ (*vilici*) who might have had a role to play in monitoring visitors and who would not have been needed to police small numbers of well-known readers.

The opening hours detailed in the Pantainos inscription, and indeed its overall tone, suggest a rather institutional, public sort of building whose rules needed explicit statement to newcomers. We have seen that many libraries seem to have incorporated at the design stage measures to accommodate large numbers of visitors and to protect their books from them, like the wall-mounted cupboards and podiums mentioned above. Moreover, public libraries often accommodated or were associated with facilities for discussions and lectures; we know that these events could attract large audiences and therefore broaden the constituency for such buildings.

Above all, Roman public libraries tended to occupy prime city-centre sites and to attract attention to themselves with elaborate, expensive decorative architecture and materials. While much of the business of elite literary life - recitations, discussions, circulation of texts - could be conducted (and often was) at private gatherings in rich houses, such as the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum, the public libraries endowed by such men therefore took a rather different approach, blazoning confident celebration of the values of literature into the streets and squares of the towns they adorned.

The Celsus library at Ephesus is the best-preserved example. Its entire programme of façade decoration can be reconstructed as pictured: it contained a bravura display of architecture framing numerous statues of the library’s patron Celsus, members of his family, and for good measure four female personifications of his intellectual virtues (Wisdom, Goodness, Knowledge, and Understanding) flanking the three doors into the library room. It acted like a gigantic and elaborate billboard for the man and his family, capping one end of the town’s busiest street as it turned the corner towards the agora (marketplace) and theatre and raised to eye level by its broad staircase. As well as the actual readership, then, we need to consider the larger potential audience for such a library, made up of visitors and even passers-by (just as many large libraries now augment their visitor numbers with cafés, temporary exhibitions, and gift shops).

The majority of such visitors are, in historical terms, voiceless; we cannot know very much about their experience of the libraries. We are on firmer ground when we consider the way that these public libraries became important resources for Roman authors and scholars, who have left accounts of how they used them to find and read rare reference texts or old (and therefore, they hoped, accurate) copies of literary classics. Public libraries also appealed to authors as a place to deposit their own works: they offered the apparent guarantee of preservation in high-status copies within high-status buildings, in the company of great authors of the past and with the added lustre of imperial approval.

The Greco-Roman medical writer Galen, for example, doctor to the Antonine emperors in the late second century AD and a man perennially anxious to establish and defend his own prolific output from plagiarists or imitators, states that some of his work was written specifically for deposition in the imperial library of the Templum Pacis, with no other copies put into circulation. This suggests that a leading
practitioner of an intellectual discipline living and writing in Rome to high acclaim and under imperial patronage, could write single copies specifically for immediate deposition in a public library: that is, the libraries had acquired sufficient prestige to act almost like literary patrons, a vital link in the chain of circulation between author and reader. Galen also wrote, in a recently rediscovered text, that another of his preferred methods of publication was to send copies to provincial public libraries (almost certainly including that at Ephesus), so readers could go there to be sure that the works circulating under his name were genuinely by him.

Comments made by and about the Jewish historian Josephus, to take one other example, suggest that the support offered to him by the Flavian emperors a little over a century earlier included the acceptance of his books into the same library and the placing there of his statue, a sure-fire sign that an author had really made it. The near-contemporary poet Martial appealed for similar treatment with a rather oily sycophancy, petitioning the director of the Palatine library under the tyrannical emperor Domitian to include his own works alongside those of established poetic masterworks and thus to seal his acceptance into the canon of Roman poets:

Sextus, eloquent votary of Palatine Minerva,  
You who enjoy more near the genius of the god –  
For you are permitted to learn our lord’s cares as they are born, and to know our leader’s secret heart –  
Let there, I pray, be found also for my little books a place  
Where Pedo, where Marsus, and where Catullus shall be set.

Martial Ep. 5.5

Imperial influence over patterns of reading and writing at Rome could be exercised through public libraries in various ways. These varied from direct patronage of the sorts outlined here to simple interest, as when Tiberius placed busts of his own rather eclectic choice of favourite poets (Euphorion, Rhianius and Parthenius) in the libraries at Rome.

This action by Tiberius immediately stimulated the writing of several commentaries on the poets, a neat indication that emperor’s use of their libraries was indeed a prime influence on the activities of scholars in Rome.

As late as the fifth century AD Claudian and Sidonius regarded the presence of their effigies in the Forum of Trajan as a source of great pride. In Claudian’s case the inscribed statue base survives: it states that the statue was erected at the behest of the emperors Arcadius and Honorius because of their confidence in their own judgement of the poet’s worth.

Conversely, imperial displeasure could also be exercised through libraries. Attested episodes range from the cold (Ovid’s exclusion under Augustus, when the exiled poet portrayed his book journeying through the city from library to library and being denied admission to them all) to the sinister (Tiberius’ exclusion of the condemned historian Cremutius Cordus, whose books he burned) to the simply mad, as when Gaius Caligula, in a moment of characteristic caprice, tried to ban classic works by Livy and Homer from Rome’s public libraries.

What the emperor did in Rome, however eccentric, was noticed and often imitated throughout the empire. Rome’s rule was expressed through, and to an extent consisted in, the spread of a Roman ideal of civic living across her territorial dominions, so that you could have a very similar urban experience throughout the empire – the same sorts of baths, theatres, fora, basilicas from Hadrian’s wall to the Nile Delta, from Spain to the Euphrates.

The smallish corpus of surviving library buildings, quite tightly clustered in time at the end of the first and start of the second century AD (a high-point of prosperity and urban self-confidence), provides a good opportunity to chart this process. The libraries can illuminate questions like the interaction of metropolitan and provincial tastes, or allow us to see emperors acting as leaders of philanthropic taste: we can use the library to document how fashions of civic euergetism spread from the centre - imperial Rome - to the provinces of the empire.

Provincial libraries often seem to have followed the Roman design we’ve seen in Trajan’s libraries, incorporating many of the same features and apparently embodying similar aims and priorities. This emulation in the provinces happened at around the same date as the great Trajanic and Hadrianic library imperial library projects at Rome, suggesting a connection to the capital and a desire to follow what was going on there.

If we return to the library at Ephesus in Turkey, we can see that its interior, with a large central floor space, and books in wall niches above a podium, with a balconied upper level, is very reminiscent of Trajan’s library at Rome, finished a decade or so earlier.

This is not surprising when we consider that the founder of the library, Celsus, was a local who had made his way to the top of the Roman imperial government, serving as consul in Rome and prefect of public works under the library-building Flavian emperors.

When he returned to Ephesus in prosperous retirement he chose this fashionable form of benefaction to adorn his city, signalling his own and
the town’s connection to the centre of the empire, and reflecting both his own intellectual virtues and Ephesus’ proud cultural heritage.

The decorative scheme of Celsus’ building at Ephesus reflects this dual identity of local origins and Roman political connections.

Though the library’s façade at first glance looks entirely typical of Roman-era buildings in the Greek east, with its elaborate projecting and receding screen of columns, framing the three doors of the library are relief panels showing the consular fasces, the rods and axes that symbolised Celsus’ imperial magistracy.

The building’s many inscriptions detail Celsus’ successful career in both Greek and Latin, aiming at as wide a range of readers as possible. The principal dedicatory inscription shows that the provisions Celsus made for funding his library also ensured that there would be an annual public feast on his birthday, and that all his statues would be crowned with garlands, so that his townsmen remembered him (we might compare another public library benefactor in Dyrrachium who made provision for a gladiatorial combat at the opening of his library), and we have seen how he used the building to advertise his personal qualities to the town.

In fact, Celsus was even buried in his library – the chamber under the building held his sarcophagus. This connection between libraries and burial is not uncommon in the Roman world, and says something about the commemorative power of the library to transmit ideas to future generations; the encyclopaedist Pliny the Elder wrote that the presence of author portraits in libraries allowed one to imagine the ‘immortal spirits’ of the writers whose books were housed there, and it is as if Celsus, like Trajan, hoped to hitch a lift to posterity in the company of the immortal works of literature he had collected together and given to his town.

Matthew Nicholls
University of Reading

Homo Semper Idem

Notes on ancient documents and the subject of papyrology

After duly admiring the beauty and perfection of an ancient statue, such as the one of Aphrodite and Eros housed in the Upper library at Christ Church, one often wonders where it stood, what it was used for, why it was commissioned and for whom it was made. For these reasons it becomes an object of interest not only for the art historian but also for those who deal with political, social and religious history, who consider a statue not only as an artistic object (a piece of material culture) but most importantly a direct source for the study of antiquity.

This direct material is not very numerous. Nevertheless, some disciplines are more fortunate than others: like the history of art, for instance, documentary papyrology can count on a bountiful source of first-hand information – but with at least one difference from the works of art: often the documents on papyri were never meant to be seen by any person other than the owner and they therefore offer an invaluable insight into ancient private life.

The documents studied by documentary papyrologists come from Egypt and are mainly written in Greek on sheets of papyrus from the time of Alexander the Great (4th century BC) to the Arab conquest of the country (7th century AD) or little thereafter. They were preserved thanks to the dryness of the sands of the desert: in fact, what we have is usually what was no longer considered useful to the owners and therefore discarded, thrown in rubbish-dumps or left behind in abandoned houses. The sand covered everything and preserved it, sometimes in an astonishing way.

It is then the business of the papyrologist to decipher the writing and read the documents, never studied per se: rather they are the means by which one might unfold many different issues of ancient history.
and ancient life. Through them one can see how the fiscal, judicial and administrative systems worked, and they can shed some light on the daily life of ancient people: contracts, financial transactions, leases, arrangements for weddings and marital life, feasts and banquets, accidents of various types.

In this respect letters and petitions are particularly precious, and sometimes shed light on situations which one would have never expected to happen centuries ago. This may be the case for what can be reconstructed from a petition of 194 AD (P. Ryl. II 116).

Saprion Hermaeus is a well respected and reasonably important man of the county town of a district in the middle of Egypt. He belongs to the upper middle-class of the town, a privileged class which enjoys partial exemption from the payment of the poll-tax. He has served his community by taking responsibility for the organisation of the games of the youth and as chief of the Greek civic leisure and cultural centre of the gymnasium (a sort of Hellenic State-version of a gentlemen’s club); he has therefore disbursed a considerable amount of money, certainly acquiring esteem and prestige in his community.

One day, he is chatting to his mother Eudaemonis. His father is not long dead and therefore the conversation concerns the legacy. As it is often the case when money is involved, the gentle conversation turns into a full-blown argument: Saprion Hermaeus, while talking about the properties he has obtained in the will, allows himself to utter some unfilial accusations towards his mother. According to him, she has appropriated furniture, food, household items and a good deal besides.

Eudaemonis, a strong woman to boot, far from being overwhelmed by the audacity of her son, does not remain silent but responds quite vigorously to the accusations: the tone goes up and perhaps a couple of slaps also follow. This fact does not go unnoticed in the house and Eudaimonis’ brother-in-law (Saprion Hermaeus’ uncle) joins them in the woman’s support: a practical application of the old saying ‘strength in numbers’.

Abuse, insults and tearing of clothes are complementary to this domestic row. Seeing that he is not going to get anything good out of this situation, Saprion Hermaeus decides on a strategic retreat. But the man intends to do everything in his power to make those people pay: he immediately petitions the strategos (a sort of mayor of the town) and complains about what happened. He wants to make sure that all the evidence against his aggressors is safely filed: it will become handy when the time for the process comes – because he will certainly launch proceedings against them in court, in spite of familial bonds.

We know no more about Saprion Hermaeus, Eudaemonis and their private dispute: did they actually end up in court or was the petition just a way to scare Eudaemonis and teach her a lesson? We cannot say. As often happens, we only have fragments of the picture. Nonetheless, a general lesson can be drawn: human nature has improved little over the centuries.

Mario C.D. Paganini
Christ Church
Renaissance Devotions
The Breviary of Abbot Marmaduke Huby

One of the treasures of Christ Church Library is the Breviary of Marmaduke Huby,¹ abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Fountains from 1495 – 1526. The Breviary was presented to Christ Church in c.1940 by the Rev. Arnold Whitaker Oxford, alumnus of the college and author of a well-respected guide to Fountains Abbey.²

Although printed, the Breviary is embellished with early sixteenth-century northern French illuminations of the highest quality.

The illuminations consist of borders surrounding four pages and numerous gold-painted initials. The four illuminated borders each introduce the principal sections of the Breviary: the Psalter (fol. 19r) (Fig. 1), the Offices for Cistercian use (fol. 98r) (Fig. 2), the sanctorale - the special offices for the saints (fol. 292r) (Fig. 3), and the commune sanctorum – the general offices of the saints (fol. 389v) (Fig. 4).

Three of the borders are essentially similar and show the influence of the ‘antique’ Italian style, their ornament consisting of pairs of stylised beasts in the base and candelabra in the side margins.

The use of such motifs is typical of Italian-influenced northern French illuminations of the early sixteenth-century.³ The Breviary’s fourth border is decorated with a floral design inhabited with insects. Similar borders can be found in contemporary French manuscript Books of Hours.⁴ Both ‘antique’ and floral woodcut borders are also present in contemporary Parisian printed Books of Hours.⁵ Paint loss from the

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¹ e.8.29. I am grateful to the assistance that Dr Cristina Neagu of Christ Church Library provided during the research of this article.
³ For comparable borders see Musée Condé, Chantilly, MS 316 (XIV E20) fol. 26r, illustrated in L’Art du Manuscrit de la Renaissance en France, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Musée Condé, 26 September 2001-7 January 2002 (Paris, 2001), fig. 26, p. 29.
⁵ For contemporary examples of ‘antique’ style borders see the Book of Hours printed by Simon de Colines in 1525. Printed floral borders similar to those in Huby’s Breviary appear in the Book of Hours printed in 1527 by Simon du Bois. For illustrations see R. Mortlier, Harvard College Library Department of Printing and Graphic Arts: Catalogue of Books and
borders in Huby’s Breviary, however, clearly demonstrates that they were not painted over printed outlines.

The Breviary was printed by Jean Kaerbriand (Kerbraind), alias Huguelin in association with Jean Adam and François Regnault. Kerbriand was a Parisian printer who was active between 1516 and 1550. His output largely consisted of liturgical books for the provincial and foreign market. He printed a number of books for the Cistercians, including editions of the Breviary in 1517, 1519, and 1521. Huby’s Breviary does not belong to one of these editions and has escaped the notice of scholars of printing. Huby’s is the only Cistercian Breviary printed by Kerbriand that has illuminations.

He printed a number of books for the Cistercians, including editions of the Breviary in 1517, 1519, and 1521. Huby’s Breviary does not belong to one of these editions and has escaped the notice of scholars of printing. Huby’s is the only Cistercian Breviary printed by Kerbriand that has illuminations. The luxurious decoration of Huby’s Breviary befitted his status as abbot of the richest Cistercian monastery in England. It is especially worthy of note that Regnault had well-established connections with the English book trade, and it is possible that Huby’s is the only known copy of an edition of the Cistercian Breviary printed for the Order’s monasteries in England.

Huby has long been the focus of scholarly attention, not least because he left significant documentary and physical evidence demonstrating his reforming zeal, dedication to the Cistercian Order and personal piety. A number of annotations to the calendar provide interesting evidence of Huby’s personal devotions.

The Cistercians honoured fewer saints in their calendar than other orders. Indeed, in the early years of its existence the Order was even reluctant to adopt the feast days of some of its founders. In the later Middle Ages, they were still attempting to restrict the number of saints provided with a feast day.

Despite his strongly Cistercian identity, Huby inserted the feast days of several English saints into the calendar of his Breviary. These include those of St Oswald on 5 August (fig. 5) and St Wilfrid on 12 October (fig. 6). Huby’s devotion to these two saints is also attested to in other sources. Taken together, this evidence provides a corpus of material with which to consider the abbot’s religious identity and personal piety.

Huby was immensely proud of his northern origins, especially the region’s strong monastic traditions. In a letter to the abbot of Cîteaux written in 1517 he stated that in northern England “religion and the observations of the Order are particularly preserved.” The region had a long monastic tradition dating back to the establishment of Benedictine monasticism in the eighth century. The Cistercians regarded themselves as the heirs to the great Anglo-Saxon monastic saints of the north, believing that their traditions were mediated to them via St Ailred of Rievaulx (1110 – 67), the son of an Anglo-Saxon priest who was born in Hexham and educated at Durham, some of whose relics Fountains possessed.

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9. The other saints are: St John of Beverley, 8 May; St Augustine of Canterbury, 26 May; St William of York, 8 June; and St Edmund 20 November.
One of the region’s greatest Anglo-Saxon saints was St Oswald. As David Rollason noted in his paper on the cult of St Oswald in post-Conquest England, Huby and the community at Fountains had a special devotion to this saint. Oswald was a king of Northumbria who did much to promote Christianity in his kingdom before his death in battle in 642. Fountains possessed a relic of this saint and in 1496 Huby obtained official permission from the Cistercian general chapter to celebrate St Oswald’s feast at Fountains. A year later he sought authorisation for the observation of the feast at the daughter houses of Fountains and all Cistercian monasteries in the province of York. In the early fifteenth century, the abbey was even using the saint’s fictional arms (a cross between four lions rampant) as its seal.

There is further documentary and epigraphic evidence testifying to Huby’s devotion to St Oswald. The abbot was a prolific builder. The chapel at Winklesley grange was dedicated to St Oswald, and in February 1503 Huby obtained an indulgence from Archbishop Thomas Savage of York for its reconstruction. As with his other building projects, Huby’s motto, Soli Deo Honorem et Gloria (Only to God honour and glory, taken from 1 Timothy, 1:17) is inscribed upon the chapel in a Gothic black letter script. Significantly, the inscription continues In Honore Dei et Sanctii Cuthbertii et Oswaldi (In honour of God and saints Cuthbert and Oswald), an expression of devotion to St Oswald and St Cuthbert, another great Durham Anglo-Saxon (and monastic) saint, whose cult enjoyed a revival in Yorkshire in the late Middle Ages.

It is interesting to note that in his letter to Cîteaux requesting permission to celebrate St Oswald’s feast at Fountains, Huby writes that the response for the day will be “with honour and glory”, therefore echoing his personal motto.

St Wilfrid (c.633 – 709) was responsible for the introduction of Benedictine monasticism into northern England and established a monastery close to Fountains at Ripon. He was therefore a highly appropriate saint for a reforming abbot of Fountains to honour.

There is no evidence that Huby requested the permission of Cîteaux to celebrate St Wilfrid’s feast at Fountains. However, other evidence exists of the abbot’s devotion to this saint and of an attempt to incorporate his cult into the devotions of the Order. In c.1538 the antiquary John Leland noted in his itinerary that St Wilfrid’s abbey “stode wher now is a Chapelle of Our Lady...one Marmaduke, Abbate of Fountaines...obtained this chapelle...and made a cell of white monks.” Leland added that upon a wall built by Huby was preserved an inscription relating to several Saxon saints.

Fig. 4 e.8.29, fols.291v-292r

The illuminations in Huby’s Breviary are the most significant example of Renaissance ornament to survive from a Cistercian monastery in Yorkshire.

Huby’s religious and artistic tastes were generally conservative, and the annotations demonstrate that the ancient Christian and monastic foundations of northern England were of great importance to him.

Moreover, when considered with other evidence they show that the abbot’s devotions to St Oswald and St Wilfrid had a distinctly Cistercian flavour.

Michael Carter
Courtauld Institute of Art, London

19 J. Hughes, Pastors and Visionaries: Religion and Secular Life in Late Medieval Yorkshire (Woodbridge, 1988), pp.344-60.
20 Talbot, Letters, p.181.
21 Quoted in Memorials, i, p.152.
William Wake’s Byzantine Manuscripts
Notes on Provenance

When surveying the priceless collection of manuscripts bequeathed by Archbishop William Wake to the Christ Church Library, one wonders what was the primary impulse that led to their assemblage. As Irmgard Hutter pointed out, it can hardly be considered a humanistic collection, for “es gibt keinen einzigen klassischen Autor in seiner Kollection!” But is it more accurate to consider the collecting activities of William Wake as those of an early eighteenth century “antiquarian” or “scholar”? The volumes of letters addressed to William Wake collected at the Christ Church Library contain correspondence that would seem to indicate both.\(^2\)

The frequent missives from Sir Francis Head leave the impression of a young man sent with a blank cheque book and vague instructions to travel through southern Europe on carriage rides through stunning Italian scenery and procure medals and manuscripts that spark his interest.\(^3\) Thus, regarding the Duke of Parma’s palace, from Rome on December 14\(^{th}\), 1723, he wrote: “... the Library is a large room well-filled with books, and adjoining to it is another Room fill'd with MSS some very curious ones ... .” More to that view, a letter from Gilbert Knowles leaves one with the distasteful sense of scavenging ancient libraries as if they were antique shops.

“This country abounds with Monastereis, & they with books, which few or none look into, & I believe books of a great value may be had at an easy price. If y'r grace wants any such, I shall with a great deal of pleasure look into 'em and give y'r Grace an account of what I find in 'em.”\(^4\)

On the other hand, the great weight of evidence supports the idea of William Wake, the scholar. There is, firstly, his own scholarly career: his education at Christ Church, as discussed in Norman Sykes’s 1957 biography, and his work, \textit{The state of the Church and clergy of England in their councils, convocations, synods, conventions, and other publick assemblies, historically deduced, from the conversion of the Saxons to the present times} published in 1703.

When his ecclesiastical responsibilities kept him from continuing such endeavors directly, Archbishop Wake adapted by sponsoring other scholars. This second category of evidence centers around the lives and work of David Wilkins and John Walker. Wilkins was employed for decades as Wake’s librarian at Lambeth Palace, with the task of completing the project envisioned in the book just cited. With William Wake’s support, the librarian completed the 17\(^{th}\) century scholarship of Henry Spelman by publishing the \textit{Leges Anglo-Saxonicae Ecclesiasticae & Civiles} in 1721. Wilkins then added his own monumental \textit{Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae} in 1737, published just after his longtime patron’s death. He was himself a scholar at heart, writing to the Archbishop that: “My zeal must be moderated here with prudence, for peace is not to be had but by living so retired as I do amongst the dead in the Bodleian.”\(^5\)

The work of John Walker under William Wake’s patronage reflects the expanding scholarly interests of the Archbishop. Walker, trained as a classical scholar, was more often employed on tasks of textual criticism. This is nowhere more concisely exemplified than in the 1620 Geneva edition of the New Testament housed in the Christ Church Library as MSS Wake Greek 35. In 1732, John Walker utilized eight New Testament manuscripts in the Archbishop’s collection at that time to add in-line collation to this 1620 edition.

Walker then wrote out brief catalogue entries for each of these manuscripts on the fly leaves before and after the New Testament text, primarily noting when and from whence they came \textit{in angliam}. These are categorized today as MSS Wake Greek Manuscripts 12, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, and 38. Incidentally, these notes by John Walker also serve as the earliest (though perhaps only partial) catalogue of William Wake’s Greek manuscripts.

\(^2\) Only the rare draft of a reply letter from the Archbishop is preserved in his own files.
\(^3\) Wake Letters, v.31.10 and following.
\(^4\) Wake Letters, v.30.181. March 14, 1725
\(^5\) Wake Letters, v.38.9
This interest in the textual history of the New Testament was not a whimsy, but represents more than a decade of Walker's international research while patronized by William Wake. In Wake Letters v.30, no. 25, John Walker wrote to the Archbishop from Lille on July 22, 1722 that:

“I have met with an old Greek MS of the whole New Testament except the apocalypse. It has been made use of formerly by Erasmus, who has wrote his name, and some Remarks in it in several places. I have collated it, and find it a very (p. 2) good One, and shall be very glad if my stay in Flanders may contribute anything to make the Edition of the New Testament, which I hope is by this time ready for the Press, more exact and compleat”.

This New Testament project was certainly driven to a large degree by William Wake's own desires.

But, while engaged on his patron's project, John Walker did not hesitate to attempt to expand the Archbishop's interests, and thus the breadth of the collection. On November 24th, 1721, he wrote rather excitedly from Brussels:

“I have bought lately 15 or 16 MS, most of them old ones ... the greatest curiosity that I have met with in this was is a very old MS of Arnobius and Minucius Felix; of which Authors, especially of the latter, learned men have always thought that there was only one MS in the world, which is lodg'd in the Library of the King of France ... .”

From this evidence it could be postulated that by the 1720s, the Archbishop's role as a patron of scholars and scholarly projects may have begun to leave a stamp upon the contents of his library independent of the mark made by his own not insignificant intellectual gifts.

Is it more accurate to view the collection that bears William Wake's name today as the sum of these parts, orchestrated and endorsed by William Wake, rather than exclusively the product of his single mind, however endowed with material resources and inspired by a diversity of interests? For instance, the Archbishop's relationship with the Swiss émigré John Henry Ott led to his pursuit of medal and coin collecting—the results of which are now housed at the Fitzwilliam Museum—and which presumably motivated the above-cited journey of Sir Francis Head. Which of the three men was most responsible for the character of the extant collection?

William Wake's sponsorship of independent scholars, his own scholarly interests, public position, and accessibility each played a role in the collection that we have today. An example of these last two can be found in a series of letters from August of 1723 to March of 1724 from one Robert D'Oyly who wished the Archbishop to review his work On the Origins of Evil, eventually published in 1728. In the midst of this correspondence D'Oyly stated his wish to bequeath to the Archbishop's care a manuscript on New Testament errors. He believed it had been composed by the well-known seventeenth century rabbi Manesseh Ben Israel, and wanted to hand it over simply because he did not think anyone else could be trusted with such a volatile text.

It thus seems plausible to suggest that the collection of William Wake be studied as a result of the scholarly projects and circles of his correspondents. The scholars whom the Archbishop engaged were themselves involved in academic networks with their own dynamics and interests, which would in turn exert influence back upon William Wake. This would affect what antiquities he collected and how he acquired them. It is accepted that during William Wake's chaplaincy to the Ambassador Lord Richard Graham Preston he made friendships on the continent—such as with Charles Delarue, the Parisian Benedictine scholar—which facilitated his collecting activities. If these contacts influenced Wake, would not the interests of Walker, Wilkins, and their associates do the same?

Due to the very short duration of my own time in the Christ Church Library, I have been unable to trace down the majority of names mentioned in the circles of David Wilkins and John Walker, but I offer my scant findings here in hopes that they may be a useful starting point for understanding the concentric rings of intellectual activity around the Archbishop. At Cambridge, a Dr. Davies, and a Dr. Needham are vaguely mentioned by John Walker. He more

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7 Wake Letters, v.22.81.
8 There is also a fascinating series of letters from J. H. Ott to William Wake from late spring to early summer of 1726 which mention his repeatedly frustrated attempts to get an edition of John Chrysostom across the Channel to the Archbishop. See Wake Letters, v.30.259, v.31.208-209 and 211.
9 Wake Letters, v.22.
specifically mentions Dr. Richard Bentley, sometime Master of Trinity College, whom Walker cites as being willing to help with the New Testament project as soon as his own work on Terence is completed.\textsuperscript{10} The scholar and antiquarian Thomas Baker of St. John’s College, Cambridge is also cited as a possible aid in the procurement of rare books, and Samuel Drake is mentioned for his association with the Matthew Parker and Robert Cotton collections. Finally, there is brief mention of a Mr. Tanner, a Mr. Gibson, and a Mr. Nicolson whose associations and accomplishments I have as yet been unable to trace.

Finally, William Wake’s long occupation of the Archbishopric put him in a position to receive diplomatic gifts which would lend their own unique flavour to the collection. It is my hope that this final point will also provoke some discussion of the related puzzle that is the provenance of William Wake’s Greek manuscripts. To this end, I wish to draw attention to a letter cited in Irmgard Hutter’s catalogue of the illustrated Greek manuscripts at Christ Church Library in the Corpus der byzantinischen Miniaturenhandschriften.

This letter, from Marco Nomico, dated to July 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 1725 provides the earliest concrete evidence for books travelling internationally as diplomatic gifts into the hands of William Wake.\textsuperscript{11} The letter reads as follows:

“May it Please y’r Grace: I had the hon’r of bringing to y’r Grace at two different times three books; an humbly present from the holy Patriarch of Jerusalem this next week I am to return to my own Country and think it my duty to Attend y’r Grace, wch. I now do, in all humility in order to know what Commands y’r Grace may have for the Pious Patriarch. I live in hopes, at my returne to bring y’r Grace some Manuscripts of moment. I am with infinite duty, and the most profound submission. May it Please y’r Grace, Y’r Grace’s Most Obedient, Humble Servant, Marco Nomico, Servt. To the Patriarch”.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem in question here is Chrysanthos Notaras (1707-1731), who held his see in absentia from Jerusalem. The two clerics were engaged in an international ecclesiastical issue that was also the occasion for a manuscript to be sent from another of the figures involved, Nicholas Maurochordatus, prince of Wallachia, in 1724.

This codex was the first of the Greek manuscripts in John Walker’s 1732 catalogue of New Testament codices to arrive in England.\textsuperscript{12}

\textsuperscript{10} This edition was indeed published in 1726. Further on Bentley’s influence on Wake, see I. Hutter, Corpus. p. xxxii.
\textsuperscript{12} For further details see I. Hutter, Corpus. pp. xxix and following, citing especially George Williams. The Orthodox Church of the East in the Eighteenth Century. (1868).
With everything now back to normal and with little evidence of the major building works that closed the library for an entire summer, it is no longer easy to recall the details of this ‘first phase’ in the restoration of Christ Church Library.

From the perspective of the library staff, it was one ‘long, hot summer’. The priceless manuscripts had to be carried off-site. Hundreds of boxes of books packed and sent to storage together with all furniture. As for the rest (and there was a lot of it), we had to find room in the library stacks housed in the basement of Peckwater Quad.

One huge gain from all this frenzy was that, in order to make better use of the basement, we had to thoroughly clean it, get the environmental conditions within acceptable levels and finally introduce ethernet points so that we could work there. This large area, previously employed for storage only, is completely transformed and currently being reorganised to gain shelf space for new books in the main library.

We are now back in the old building and the first term is at an end. Even for us who witnessed it all from our temporary offices in Kilkcanon 1A or the newly revamped basement, a lot of what happened in the main library seems a distant memory. I am sure however that, had the people involved in this project not delivered, the past would have felt painfully close.

One of the most uplifting things to see during an otherwise difficult summer was the enthusiasm and professionalism of those who worked for the library. They gave us back a much improved building. And they did this with time to spare, despite serious unforeseen problems.

Paradoxical as it may seem, very little of their effort is visible. All is now neatly tucked away beneath floorboards, behind walls, inside desks, in the loft or up in the roof. In an effort to reclaim what this hard work meant to the experts engaged in the project hands-on, I asked Geoff Leitch, the site manager, a few questions. To start with, I was curious whether they came across anything unexpected:

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**Stamp on the back of piece of woodwork in the East Library mentioning the date of a previous restoration.**

The first floor is modern, in that it was all re-done in the 1920s. It has gone from what would have been a traditional oak beam floor to a steel and concrete floor. Which means that all ceilings in the lower library date from the same period.

The book shelving in the gallery and everything in the Upper Library would have been stripped out when they installed the lighting. While in the East Library there were provisions for pendants, in the West Library and in the Upper Library it appears...
there were none. The lighting on the top of the bookcases was a 1960s development.

I knew everything has been difficult and time-consuming and I also knew there were no shortcuts or jobs half-done. So, I asked Geoff what, from his perspective, were the main difficulties encountered.

There was a lot of work in the roof. Particularly the repairs to the truss. All the slates have been off, then reinstated. All the lead gutters have been renewed. We now have a new lightning-conducting system.

Under the lead gutters a lot of the timber was rotten. The entire stone pediment to the south side has been re-done.

I remember the excitement of our group visit to the roof with Geoff on 16 September. All was finished and gleaming in the sun. The scaffolders had started to dismantle the temporary structure protecting the library. The sheer beauty of what I saw struck me. The roof looked like a work of art.

All the lead is new. Geoff said. And there’s about 20 tons of it up there.

The windows were another challenge. The bottom half of the main window overlooking the staircase was rotten. We replaced that. One of the windows in your office we replaced as well.

We did the same with the bottom half of one of the windows in the music room. Apart from this, there were a lot of other repairs to be done. Salvaging the original 18th century glass was an extremely difficult job. Apart from being terribly thin and fragile, there is a lot of rippling and curvature in it.

Following this there was the ‘French polishing’, Geoff explained. The new window frames, and the doors of the manuscript room, plus the floorboards that we replaced were toned down to match the surrounding timber.

Over the summer we had over 150 people working here. We have been very lucky in that 99.9% of the guys really wanted to do a great job. It is difficult not to mention everybody. But since you asked me, let me just pick out a few names: Neil Johnson, Sam Pancott, Charlie Boyd, Dan Price, Tom O’Connor, Dean Scott, Steve Burgess, Dan Paddock. That has been our little nucleus, with the apprentices moving in and out.

This was an exciting project for them. The carpenters have been key to it as they have got a great
appreciation of what other tradesmen had to do. Once we got the asbestos out of the way, the electricians really had to come on board with us.

The re-wiring was another difficult job, Tony Whyle, (Knowles’ contract manager) remembered. The problem started when we opened the floor. Electrical services were contained within the structure of the floor. This meant that all had to be trenched out and fitted. Luckily, we got in early enough. If there is any success in what has been done, I think this has been our ability and experience to react to situations.

This ability had, at times, translated into extended shifts. I asked Geoff when, as a rule, did his working day start. I usually get on site at 6:45. The other guys start at 7:30. Some people work until 4 pm. Others until 4:30. After we regained access to the library once the asbestos was cleared (in the second half of July), we have been working until 6 pm. On Saturdays we worked from 7:30 to 4. We have been on-site some Sundays as well.

For us in the library the workmen involved in this first phase of the restoration work of the library have been a model of professionalism. Choosing them as contractors to carry out the work was an inspired decision. Geoff agreed. The guys that have been working with me were the best. It was a complete team effort. The carpenters I mentioned, the roofers (Monarch), the lead workers (Norman Lea & Son) have been absolutely brilliant. The stone masons (Davidson Masonry) and the scaffolders as well.

I was curious to know what, from Geoff’s point of view, was the best thing about this project.

Giving you the library back on time! Cristina Neagu

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For submissions and queries regarding the Newsletter, please contact the Editor - Cristina Neagu (01865 276 265) (cristina.neagu@chch.ox.ac.uk).

Postal address: Christ Church Library
Oxford
OX1 1DP

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Aquilina Technologies Ltd. Tel: 01689 825 161
Email: enquiries@aquilinagroup.co.uk
Web: www.aquilinagroup.co.uk