Labyrinth Lost: From Ancient Maps to Filming for National Geographic

One of the privileges of studying at Christ Church is the access it provides to the largest collection in Oxford of ancient manuscripts and maps outside the Bodleian. It was with this in mind that in the spring of 2008, having just returned from the School of Geography field trip to Crete, I followed the ornate wrought-iron banister up the wide spiralling staircase to the library’s historic collections on the first floor.

While in Crete, I had unexpectedly come across a curious motif of the famous Labyrinth from the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur on some 16th century maps. The history of Crete has always reflected its geography having been colonised first by Neolithic peoples, Minoans, Mycenaean Greeks, Dorians, Romans, Arabs, Byzantines, Venetians and Ottomans. Over the years its various occupiers and liberators have produced maps of the island. These maps, while containing useful factual information that was no doubt helpful for Ottoman raiding parties or Venetian traders, are artworks in their own right.

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Authorship in a Hebrew Codex ... MS 199

I first came across Christ Church Ms.199 whilst trawling the catalogue of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem. I was looking for primary sources concerning the acceptance of converts by the nascent Jewish communities in Holland and England during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Hebrew catalogue entry read “תלמוד יהודא מראים " which translates as “An Halachic Treatise on the Laws of Gerim”. The Hebrew word גר - Gerim is the plural of גר - Ger, which can mean either a proselyte to Judaism or a stranger or sojourner, depending on the context in which it appears. Quoting from the treatise itself, the catalogue entry continues (in translation):

“It was written in consequence of a legal question. A man of the seed of Israel, one of the Anussim [Critianos Nuevos, Conversos or Marranos] in Portugal, profaned himself with a gentile woman who bore him a son; the man subsequently died…”

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Detail of 13th century French illumination representing God holding the world with King David praying (MS 98, fol.54v).
The lad remained with his mother until he grew up and learned wisdom, and ‘the spirit of the Lord began to stir in him’...And he chose well and did not follow the ways of her idolatry and went in search of the Lord. And he came to Holland...and became a Jew...And they appointed him to a position of authority and made him Charity Warden in the Rotterdam community... and he was later appointed a Parnass [warden] in the Amsterdam community...And it was on the day the leaders of the community were assembled...and they proposed to appoint him Parnass and head of the community or Gabai [treasurer] of the community chest for the redemption of prisoners, and [one of those present] objected...calling out “he is disqualified by the Torah [from holding the positions]”...but many stood up for him...and supported the righteous Ger."

The objection to his appointment was based on the Torah statute that “from amongst your brethren shall you set a king over you...You may not place a foreigner over you” (Deuteronomy 17:15). This rule had been taken subsequently to apply to all positions of authority in a Jewish community. Though this son of an Anuss and a Christian woman was now undoubtedly a Jew—he had undergone Giur, the formal procedure for becoming a Jew—was he a “brother” in the sense this rule required? Only his father had been a Jew; his mother had not. Faced with this dilemma, the Amsterdam community had sought the opinion of rabbinic scholars throughout the Jewish world. Ms.199 records three of the replies that were given.

Intrigued though I was by this story, I could not pursue it further at the time as parts of the microfilm turned out to be almost illegible. The opportunity for a closer examination of the manuscript only came this year when, with the aid of a digital copy kindly provided by Christ Church Library, I was able to examine and study it properly.

The manuscript has fifty five leaves. It was re-bound at some point in the past and is in a good state of preservation. Its Hebrew script is quite legible and is typical of central European Ashkenazi manuscripts of the middle and late seventeenth century. It is also clearly the product of a single scribe. The borders are decorated with line patterns that issue from the letters of the words at its edges. Many are also inscribed with corrections and additions, some in a hand similar to that of the main text, others in a cruder hand. The manuscript was evidently reviewed and annotated after its initial writing, perhaps because it was to serve as a legal precedent for reference or perhaps in preparation for printing.

The codex comprises three distinct, though related, works, each apparently the opus of a different author, which were collated and transcribed from earlier manuscripts. The first two, which occupy all but the last two pages of the codex, are prefaced by a cover page which gives their titles, the names of their authors and a short abstract of their contents and purpose.

The first opus is entitled ספר נשף הגיר - Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger (The Book of the Soul of the Ger) and its author is given as one כלל במריאת פנחס אל כלכל כלאל... – His Honour, our Teacher, Rabbi Phineas El Kanah.

The second is entitled ספר בית הנפש – Sefer Batei Ha-Nefesh (The Book of the Houses of the Soul) and, according to the cover page, was composed by כלל במריאת כלכל – His Honour, our Teacher, Rabbi Calev, who we are told, was the son of Rabbi Calcal.

There is no mention of the third (a much shorter work) on this cover page.

The first opus, Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger, occupies the initial eighty eight pages (forty four leaves or 80%) of the codex. More that just a responsum (a rabbinical legal opinion), it is an halachic tour de force which goes far beyond the immediate question of the eligibility of the said son of an Anuss to the position of Parnass. Written in rabbinc Hebrew, it surveys the legal standing of Gerim over a whole range of matters, including their filial and levirate obligations, inheritance rights and kinships. It also emphasises the moral imperative of showing consideration towards Gerim and reviews the biblical and post-biblical precedents of Gerim occupying positions of authority. The colophon reads: “Written here in the city of iron [Eisenstadt], near the city of Vienna, in the state of Hungary, Wednesday 15th Menahem (5)411 [2 August, 1651].” It is not absolutely clear whether this date refers to the original source from which the present manuscript was copied or to the manuscript itself.

The second opus, Sefer Batei Ha-Nefesh, fills the next eighteen pages of the codex (45a-54a). In contrast to the other two works, it is not so much a
responsum as a polemic, in part a lyrical paean in praise of Gerim and in part a passionate outpouring against those who are unwelcoming of them. In a preamble written partly in rhyming Hebrew couplets and triplets, the author explains that he was driven to write by the grudging manner in which Gerim were often accepted by their host communities.

The body of the work comprises twenty-two paragraphs, composed and ordered such that their initial letters give the sequence of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, from Aleph through to Tav. In the first nine paragraphs, the author berates the Jewish burghers of Amsterdam for their attitude towards the Gerim amongst them; at one point even comparing their inhospitality to that of the biblical Sodomites. The next ten paragraphs are in the first person as the son of the Anuss tells his own story. He recounts how his father had been beguiled by a gentle woman (his mother) and had died shortly afterwards; how he himself had come to reject the religion of the land in which he had grown up (Portugal) and his decision to escape and make for Amsterdam; his feelings during the circumcision and ritual immersion he had undergone in becoming a Jew; and, finally, his dismay at the unfriendliness of his new coreligionists. Taking up the narrative again in the last three paragraphs, the narrator presents no decisive halachic opinion, though it is clear where his sympathies lie. He simply concludes with the call that “...[the welcoming of Gerim], this is charity; this is love, kinship, peace and friendship; this is the solicitude ordained by the Torah in the thirty six places the text refers to Gerim.”

The third component of the codex is a short responsum that occupies just its last two pages (54b-55a). It is not referred to at all on the cover page. Although undated, it bears the signature of a member of one of the most prominent Jewish families in Prague: ישועה מבית ברbara בנו של יודה肾脏 – Issachar called Ber, the son of Reb Yehuda Leib Jeiteless, Dayan (Jewish ecclesiastical judge). The author’s father, Yehuda Leib Jeiteles (d.1666), was a warden of the famous Altnenschul (the Old-New Synagogue) in Prague. The son, Issachar Ber (d.1685), was a prominent member of the Jewish community in Prague during the mid-seventeenth century.

As is usual in the writing of responsa, both Calcal and Issachar Ber begin by stating the question to which they were replying. However, in neither case are we told who the questioner actually was: Calcal just states that “[the question] was apparently written by a great man, one of the wise men of the Portuguese [Jews]”. Furthermore, whereas the question is formulated concisely and to the point in Issachar Ber’s responsum, as is his reply, in Calcal’s it takes up four full pages of the manuscript and goes into some detail about the background and circumstances of the Anussim and Jews of Amsterdam. Thus we learn (i) that unions between an Anuss and a gentle woman, such as that between the Ger’s father and mother, were rare “for it was not usual for Anussim to cohabit with gentle women ...and moreover, the gentiles distanced themselves from them ...for they are מונכים נשים - the seed of forced converts [to Christianity];” (ii) that the authority of the officers of the Jewish community over its members was limited by deference towards them (they were not to be publicly embarrassed), by the volatility of their financial circumstances (they were not to be pressed when behind in their dues) and by the restrictions imposed by civil law; (iii) that financial disputes between Jews were not brought before the Bet Din (the Jewish court of law) but before the civil courts; and (iv) that the Ger in question was held in high regard in the community by virtue of his great Torah learning, wealth and generosity.

Both Calcal and Issachar Ber conclude that this Ger can be elevated to any position to which the Amsterdam Jewish community chooses to appoint him. The former posits that when he underwent Giur, his relationship with his gentle mother was dissolved, leaving only that with his Jewish father and he is therefore eligible for office. The latter comes to his conclusion through a novel argument driven by considerations of the rights of Gerim to their father’s inheritance and title. In addition to their legal reasoning, both scholars found support for their conclusions in biblical precedents such as that of Rehoboam, who succeeded his father King Solomon on the throne, even though his mother, Naamah, was not an Israelite but an Ammonite (1Kings 14:21).

When (or even if) the responsa of Calcal and Issachar Ber were ever received by the Amsterdam community is undocumented. However, on 6 November, 1651, three months after the date in the colophon of Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger, the son of an Anuss, a Ger by the name of Moseh Roiz da Costa, was declared by Menasseh ben Israel and David Prado “fit to be appointed to any post the congregation might give him...without exception.”

The text of the decree makes it clear that this was an exceptional case and would not become a precedent. This rider may have been added by reason of a dissenting opinion that had been received in Amsterdam from a third scholar, Jacob Sasportas (the first rabbi to officiate in London after the resettlement in 1656). Sasportas, who is known for his conservatism (he was one of the few rabbis who vigorously opposed the Sabbatean movement at the time) had been asked by the Amsterdam physician Samuel de Mercado: “Can a Ger whose mother is not an Israelite hold a position of authority

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over the community?" His reply was that the Ger could only be appointed to a position of trust, such as treasurer, but not to one of authority.2

A recurring motif in both Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger and Sefer Batei Ha-Nefesh is the moral imperative of נכה - showing consideration for the feelings of others, which the Talmud teaches can take preference over many otherwise binding religious ordinances. Neither of these works reads like a typical responsum. Instead of the detached tone one would expect of a legal opinion, the writing is passionate. The authors appear to have had a personal involvement with the issue. And reading the eighty odd pages of Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger, one cannot avoid the impression that its author, Calcal, deliberately chose to widen the scope of his reply in order to exhibit and prove his mastery of Jewish law and sources. The problem is that Calcal is not the name of any identifiable rabbinical personage. It is not even a recognized Hebrew name. So just who was he?

At this point in my investigations I turned to the Internet and entered a search, in Hebrew, for the two titles Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger and Sefer Batei Ha-Nefesh. To my complete surprise, they turned up in an annotated listing of Joseph Solomon Delmedigo’s published and unpublished writings contained in a nineteenth century commentary by one D. Toresh on the Introduction to Delmedigo’s opus Mazref la-Hokhmah.3

Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591-1655), also known as YaShaR of Candia (Heraklion)—an acronym of his Hebrew name, Yosef Shlomo Rofe—was a scion of a distinguished Ashkenazi family of rabbis and physicians that had settled in Crete during the fourteenth century. His father, Elijah Delmedigo, was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Candia having succeeded his father in the post. After receiving a thorough Jewish education at home, Joseph was sent at the age of fifteen to study medicine in Padua where one of his teachers was Galileo Galilei. Returning home seven years later, he had intended to practice medicine but soon found Candia too confining. Just into his twenties but already a polyglot and bibliophile, he had perhaps been over-stimulated by the new secular learning he had discovered in Padua. Leaving, never to return, he would spend the next dozen or so years visiting Jewish communities as far afield as Cairo, Constantinople, Romania, Poland and Germany, availing them of his rabbinical erudition as he added to his own wealth of knowledge and spread his scientific learning amongst them, finally reaching Amsterdam in 1627. Just thirty six years of age when he arrived in Holland, he had encountered much antagonism during his wanderings. “Whoever holds his soul dear must remove himself from these secular sciences,” he was told, “for they are contrary to the true Jewish nature.”

The Thirty Years War was raging and there was little more tolerance of difference amongst Jews than there was amongst Christians; and Joseph Solomon Delmedigo was very different.

At once a rabbinical scholar, mystic and mathematical scientist who counted Karaite among his friends, a proponent of the Copernican heliocentric model and the first Jew to use logarithms, he could not be other than controversial. Like many such polymath geniuses before and after him, he would end his life a bitter and lonely person. Delmedigo had already composed thirty or more Hebrew books and essays (on astronomy, mathematics, medicine, logic, alchemy, astrology and the Kabbalah, not to mention Judaica) by the time he arrived in Amsterdam. All were still in manuscript and despite the appeals of his alter egos, Moses Metz and a certain Samuel Ashkenazi, he refused to have them printed claiming that they were still unfinished, though more likely for fear of denunciation. Notwithstanding, two compilations of his correspondence and essays on a range of scientific and mathematical topics, Sefer Elim and Sefer Ma’ayan Gannim, were published in Amsterdam by Menasseh ben Israel in 1629, evidently with his agreement.

By contrast, three further collections of his correspondence and writings on philosophy, theology and Kabbalah, Ta’alumot Hokhmah, Mazref la-Hokhmah and Novelot Hokhmah, were published in Basle, apparently against Delmedigo’s wishes, at the initiative of his pupil Samuel Ashkenazi in 1629 and 1631.4 The Introductions to the latter works are the main source of information about Delmedigo’s life between 1620 and 1630.

All his other writings remained in manuscript and with the single exception of a letter known as Iggeret (or Miktav) Ahuz5 sent to the Karaite scholar Zerah of Troki, all were presumed lost;6 which brings us to Ms.199 of the Christ Church Library collection.

The listing in the nineteenth-century commentary on Mazref la-Hokhmah was the first indication I had that Delmedigo may have been the author of the two works in question. Toresh stated that his source for

2 R. Jacob Sasportas, Sepher Ohei Yaacov, (Amsterdam 1737), Responsum No. 4
4 Barzilai, Isaac, Yosef Shlomo Delmedigo, E.J.Brill, Leiden (1974); Ch. 6
5 A critical edition of this missive, which is extant in several manuscripts, was published by Abraham Geiger in 1840 in his compendium Melo Chofnaim.
Depending on how the Hebrew word was understood, this can be translated either as “This is my name in eternity, Calcal El Kanah, son of His Honour, our Teacher, Rabbi Phineas of blessed memory” or “This is my disguised name, Calcal El Kanah …”

Although it is not a recognized Hebrew name, Calcal is a proper Hebrew word that has the meaning “provide.” It appears in the Midrash as an epithet of Joseph, the “provider” during the years of famine in Egypt. Likewise, Phineas, who with a single spear impaled the fornicating Zimri and princess of Moab (Numbers 25:7-8), is identified by the Midrash with the prophet Elijah, both of whom were “jealous for God,” a trait that the Bible ascribes to both Phineas and Elijah. All of which suggests that Calcal’s actual Hebrew name was יוסף בן אליהו – Yosef ben Eliyahu, the same as that of Joseph (Solomon) the son of Eliahu Delmedigo.

But what of the person named Calev, the reputed author of Sefer Batei Ha-Nefesh, who according to the cover page was the son of rabbi Calcal? Unlike Calcal, the name Calev does appear in the Bible. He was the son of David and Abigail, the erstwhile wife of Nabal the Carmelite whom David had killed (1Samuel 25:2ff). David subsequently married Abigail and according to the Midrash Tanhuma, wags had scoffed that the child she was later seen to be carrying was really Nabal’s and not David’s.

However, by God’s intervention, the child was born a spitting image of David, and everyone who saw him had to acknowledge that David was his father; he was ‘absolutely his father’, or in Hebrew כל ואב – Caleb. All of which suggests that Calcal’s actual Hebrew name was ‘El Kanah’, which means ‘jealous for ∙∙∙’ and so he was given the name Caleb – Caleb. Once again, in case we don’t take the hint, the Hebrew name Caleb on the cover page is directly followed by the words כל ואב as they appear in the said Midrash.10

Whilst there is good evidence that Delmedigo had at least one daughter, the existence of any sons is doubtful. Indeed in a letter to Samuel Ashkenazi written around 1629 he states “I am unfortunate as far as sons and other possessions are concerned.” His choice of Calev for the pseudonym of the author of Sefer Batei Ha-Nefesh may have been Delmedigo’s way of compensating himself for this. Though it was he who had actually written the piece, he attributed it to a son he never had.

Delmedigo’s inclination for assumed names has been noticed by previous researchers.11 It has even been suggested that his disciple Samuel Ashkenazi never actually existed but was a fiction invented by Delmedigo as a cover for his radical views.12

Those were not easy times. His erstwhile teacher, Galileo, had been forced to recant; the returning Anuss, Uriel da Costa, had been excommunicated and humiliated by the Amsterdam community and Delmedigo did not have the courage to express his ideas openly. Above all, he was himself also a Ger, not in the same sense as the son of the Anuss—he was not a proselyte—but certainly in the sense of a sojourner or stranger; he had spent most of his adult life on the move.

And so it was that in 1632, after serving the Amsterdam community as a part-time rabbi for a short time, Delmedigo left to take up the position of physician in the Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt-on-Main; not the post he would have aspired to when he first arrived in Amsterdam. Little is known of his life during the next twenty years except that at some time or other he must have moved on to Prague, for it is there that he was buried in 1655. It was also where Issachar Ber Jeiteles lived and is not far from the city of Eisenstadt, where, as the colophon states, Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger was written.

All this makes Ms.199 a manuscript that possibly contains two of Delmedigo’s last and hitherto lost works.

7 Midrash Rabbah on Leviticus 1:9
8 Midrash Ha-Gadol on Numbers 28:22
9 Numbers 25:11 and 1Kings 19:14

10 Midrash Tanhuma, Parashat Toldot, 6
12 Barzilai, Isaac, Yosef Shlomo Delmedigo, E.J.Brill, Leiden (1974): Ch. 7
In the last paragraph of *Sefer Nefesh Ha-Ger*, Delmedigo turns from the legal arguments and historical precedents that had occupied him up to that point, to his own miserable circumstances. "Today I am frail and my heart spins. Oh that I could go out and move myself as I once did, but my strength has left me. I fret like the evildoers, for the Lord has departed from me. I am exiled from my city, from my palace …The light of my eyes, my books, they too are not with me …And I dwell in a foreign land with the children of the Diaspora, and there is neither food nor fine clothes in my home …For I have killed a man with my book,13 as with a sharp threshing-sledge…and my wound should silence every foul-speaking mouth."

The man he had killed was himself, for he had spoken of things that were perhaps best left unsaid. Ostracised since leaving Amsterdam some twenty years earlier, he had been unable to obtain a rabbinical appointment anywhere.

The irony of this could not have escaped him. He had just completed a *responsum* which showed that the son of an Anuss, a Ger, could be appointed to any position a Jewish community chose, whilst he himself still remained an outsider.

Furthermore, there is a hint in the next few lines that he actually knew the identity of the son of the Anuss whose eligibility for the post of head of the Amsterdam community he had established, for he writes: “And the man Moses is also great …and all Israel shall know, for he is faithful to the house of the Lord…” The letters of the Hebrew name 'משה - Moses' are writ large in the manuscript with an asterisk above the word. Quite possibly, Delmedigo knew that the person in question was the said Moseh Roiz da Costa.

Delmedigo concludes his treatise with a defiant cry:

“And if this treatise of mine should appear before one of the elite, the brilliant jewels who sit in the first row with royalty, I will not be touched even if a whole host, a hundred thousand ignoramuses—dumb animals, creepy crawlies and beasts of the earth, may black darkness envelop them—condemn it; even should these mud hut dwellers, whose very lowest foundations are dust, mock me and declare that I remain an outcast and have exerted myself for nothing, for I have still not even become a shepherd.”

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LIBRARIES AND SCALIGER’S LEGACY OF LEARNING

The *Scaligerana*, or table talks, published and edited by Pierre des Maizeau in 1740, is a rich source for understanding Scaliger himself and the scholarly world of his time. When we look at the entries related to Oxford and England we read the following:

‘Oxoniensi Academiae quidam Eques. Donavit Bibliothecam, quae constitt 120 mil escus, quarante mil livres sterlins; une livre sterlin fait trois escus: oportet divitem fuisse; accepi catalogum, sunt serrè libri communes. […] Vidi Catalogum Oxoniensis Bibliothecae; habet vulgares. Sunt Londini, Oxonii, Cantabrigiae, praestantisimae Bibliothecae, ut & Parisiis; Angli nunquam excuderunt bonis libros veteres, tantum vulgares. […] Il y a trente ans que les Anglois estoient encore barbares.’

The quotations above were written down by two of Scaliger’s former students, the brothers Jean and Nicolas de Vasan. They lived in the same house in Leiden as Scaliger during the last years of his life. The comments are typical of the French humanist scholar Josephus Justus Scaliger (1540-1609): more than once contradictory, sometimes flattering and full of praise, more often however, insulting.

It should not surprise us therefore that Scaliger is not full of praise about the old books and manuscripts that he came across in England. He was disappointed, for instance, to find what were, in his opinion, only few Greek manuscripts of importance. Not even those in the ‘vulgar tongue’ were considered to be of much merit. In contrast to his opinion of the quality of the selection of books, he was deeply impressed by the large sums of money bequeathed on the Bodleian Library (he even translated the sum into the French currency of the period).

Although controversial, Scaliger’s thoughts on Oxford show a passionate interest for books, manuscripts and libraries. On the topic of the latter, he was visibly impressed by the role of Bodley as financier and founder of the Bodleian Library.

Closer to home, there was another model library he had much admiration for.

A library born from the Dutch Revolt

On 5 of February 1575 a sumptuous pageant was held to celebrate the inauguration of Leiden University in the Dutch town of Leiden. It was Prince William of Orange’s special gift to the town that withstood Spain and was liberated on 3 October 1574.

13 The Hebrew, הבן באתר: ימי גבערי, is a play on a phrase from Genesis 4:23.
At the inauguration Prince William donated the first book to the University: the Polyglot Bible printed by Christophe Plantin in Antwerp. Beside some other small donations we cannot really speak of a Library during the first years of the University. A modest collection of books would be more appropriate. It was only after Johannes Holmannus Secundus in 1586 and Bonaventura Vulcanius in 1587 donated and sold parts of their private libraries to the university that everything changed. In 1595, its collections substantially increased, the Library was moved from one of the rooms in the Academy building the first floor of the Chapel of the Failed Beguineage. Petrus Bertius, the Librarian, compiled the original catalogue of holdings, the Nomenclator, that same year. This is the first known catalogue of a library in the world and is a subject-based inventory of the books in order in which they were stored on the shelves. In 1595 the library had a total of 442 titles in some 525 volumes.

On Scaliger, Libraries and Leiden University

In 1591, Justus Lipsius, one of the most illustrious professors, suddenly left Leiden for Leuven. It was Janus Dousa, one of the Curators of the University, who suggested the French humanist Josephus Justus Scaliger as his successor. Letters were exchanged by Louise the Coligny, the wife of William of Orange and Henry IV to get Scaliger in a favorable mood. He was offered a huge salary with no obligations to teach¹ and was granted the privilege to wear his red gown, showing that he was a descendant of the Princes Della Scala of Verona (which, in fact, he was not). One of the additional reasons that made Scaliger agree to move to Leiden must have been the presence of the branch office of the famous Antwerp printer Plantin. This publishing house was run by Plantin’s son in law, Franciscus Raphelengius, a brilliant scholar in Arabic, Persian and Hebrew. The printing house of Raphelengius excelled in Oriental printing and that was just what Scaliger needed for his own work.

It is striking that the last portraits of Scaliger that were painted during his lifetime² depict the scholar while engaged in writing or reading Arabic, a fact indicative of his commitment to this language during the latter days of his life. We see him working on an Arabic manuscript, probably a Koranic text and holding a scroll with the text ‘رساله إلى يوسيف سالفاغير’ that is: ‘to Joseph Scaliger’), while writing another letter to his friend Isaac Casaubon (right). The scroll is quite possibly the Arabic letter that Scaliger received in the autumn of 1608 from an Egyptian Copt, Yūsuf ibn Abī Daqn or Abudacnus.

1 Although Scaliger was not obliged to teach, he had a gift to spot real talent. His choice of students was excellent. Among those he selected were Hugo Grotius and Daniel Heinsius.
2 Scaliger was never to leave Leiden and indeed he died in this city in January 1609.
originating from the library of the most avid collector of annotati, Nicolaas Heinsius, the son of Daniel Heinsius.

To start with, Scaliger himself had bequeathed a part of his library to the University by testament. Alas, the catalogue of the initial collection no longer exists, but we do have another early catalogue of the books and manuscripts in the library of Scaliger drawn up by his colleague Bonaventura Vulcanius. This list however seems to have been compiled from memory, because are great part of the collection is not recorded.

Until Scaliger arrived on the scene, except from a few Hebrew manuscripts and printed books of the theological plutaei, up until 1609 Leiden University Library only had a few Oriental works. The Scaliger legacy changed this over night.

Heinsius shelved the bequest separately from the other books and manuscripts in the so called Arca Scaligerana. He also produced a catalogue of the collection, which was published in 1612. The descriptions are classified by language: Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Ethiopian, Russian and Latin, but the titles remain in Latin. Many titles are incomplete or inaccurate, but visitors to the library had one big advantage: the books and manuscripts were shelved separately in a cupboard.

The 1674 catalogue lists 114 volumes from the Scaliger legacy (32 in folio, 54 in quarto and 28 in octavo).

The collection was described once more and this time more accurately in the catalogue of 1716. In this catalogue a total of 113 titles are recorded in 100 volumes. For the greater part the books are in Hebrew type or on Hebrew subject matter. A smaller part is in Arabic and Ethiopian and there is one book in Japanese (an edition by the Jesuit Luis de Granada, from 1582) and one in Russian (Diurnum Moscovitatum). In the 1716 catalogue the books were separated from the manuscripts and up to this date the manuscripts are kept separately in a strong room of the library.

In 1910 P.C. Molhuysen compiled a catalogue containing descriptions of all the manuscripts. Some 60 years later Albert van der Heide produced a new catalogue, Hebrew Manuscripts of Leiden University Library, containing extensive descriptions of the manuscripts in Hebrew.

In 1741 the librarian David van Royen decided to paste a strip of paper with the inscription “Ex Legato illustri Viri Josephi Scaligeri” in all the books and manuscripts then incorporated them all in the normal shelving system. Unfortunately and unexpectedly, this has created a great deal of confusion. As Alaister Hamilton has pointed out in several articles, there seem to be several manuscripts labeled as Legato Scaligeri, which are in fact not from his library but out of the library of Franciscus Raphelengius. The reason why this happened is simple. Scaliger often borrowed manuscripts from other scholars for his projects. Some of these manuscripts never found their way back to their owners and were mistakenly considered part of the Scaliger Library by Van Royen. No one has ever looked at the bequest of printed books owned by Scaliger before. We know there are 114 volumes listed in the 1674 catalogue and 113 in the 1716 catalogue, but how many titles are there actually and are they all from the library of Scaliger?

Towards a bibliography

Nowadays the books once owned by Scaliger are not separately shelved any longer and are dispersed amongst the shelves of the present library. Successive reorganizations of the Library during more than 400 years make it difficult to trace some of the original Scaliger copies among 3.5 million other books. Most of the titles though can be found with help of the descriptions in the 1674 and 1716 catalogues. It is however impossible to pinpoint every edition or title this way. Despite this, all is not lost. In determining whether volumes were owned by Scaliger there are several distinguishing marks to look at.

Firstly, the bindings: Scaliger preferred to bind his books in limp vellum bindings. These plain bindings had some advantages, such as that the books could easily be opened and remained open on a working surface. The vellum bindings also could be written upon with ink, which Scaliger sometimes did. About 90 % of the books from the library of Scaliger are bound in vellum. But as Scaliger also bought or was given books by other scholars or collectors, there is also a small amount of leather bindings, which are sometimes richly decorated. Additional information can sometimes be drawn from the old shelf mark indications on the back of the binding. The numbers on the backs are a reference to the classification in Fol., Quarto and in Octavo of the 1674 catalogue. Unfortunately, not all of the books have this numbering on the back.

Secondly, handwritten annotations by Scaliger may offer further clues: Scaliger’s handwriting is neat, legible and easily distinctive from other handwriting. Most of Scaliger’s books are annotated, sometimes on the flyleaves and sometimes on the margin of the...

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3 […] tous mes livres de langues estrangeres, hebraics, Syriens, Arabics, Aethiopians, lesquels livres sont contenus dans le Catalogue que l’ay adiousté a la copie latine de ce mien testament […].

4 For instance De emendatione temporum and the Thesaurus temporum.
pages. In some cases Scaliger has put his name in the books.

Thirdly, there is the strip of “Ex Legato Scaligeri”: Most of the books have this strip of paper pasted on the bottom part of the title page, but also mounted vertically on the outer margin of the title. However, as we have seen, Van Royen pasted every book and manuscript that was inside the Scaliger cupboard. He did not examine them closely and this led to mistakes of attribution. In the 1716 catalogue for instance there are two volumes, the *Biblia Hebraica sine punctis* from 1639 and the *Novum Testamentum Graecum* printed in London in 1633. They could not have been owned by Scaliger, as they were published after the death of the humanist.

Finally, there are the modern shelf marks: The books donated by Scaliger are sometimes grouped together on the shelves of the modern library: you can find two or three books close together.

But even then there are several difficulties, namely: a).there is the ‘Legato’ strip, but the book cannot clearly originate from the Scaliger legacy; b).there is no strip, but the book has annotations by Scaliger; c).there is no strip, but the book is mentioned in one of the catalogues as being from the library of Scaliger; d).there is a dedication to Scaliger in the book, but no ‘Legato’ strip; e).there are books bought by Leiden University in the auction of Scaliger’s ‘western’ books, but are, in fact, not in a ‘western’ language. Should we consider these as part of the bequest or not?

**A case study: Hurault de Boistaillé**

Among the books and manuscripts at Leiden University Library, is one special group, undoubtedly part of the Scaliger bequest. This was once in the possession of a French nobleman, Jean Hurault de Boistaillé. This group is very distinctive because of the autograph signature of the first owner on the flyleaves and titles: ‘Ex Bibliotheca Jo. Huralti Boistalerii’. These volumes are very special indeed, as among them we can find some valuable and rare examples of Hebrew printing and important manuscripts for the study of the development of oriental scholarship.

Having played an important role in getting military support from the Ottoman Empire in the French-Spanish war, Hurault was in direct contact with the Sultan Suleyman I (1494-1566) and his court. Undoubtedly, he used some of his connections to trace and acquire books and manuscripts. Although he was especially keen on collecting Greek manuscripts, he also collected a reasonable amount of Arabic and Hebrew as well. Among these, for instance, is a famous thirteenth-century Koran and a *Horologion melkite* or *Kitab al-sawa’i*.

As many collectors, Hurault made use of several agents working under his instructions. The volumes in the Scaliger collection were for the greater part bought by Hurault in Venice, some from the Antwerp printer Daniel Bomberg (or Bombergen) who had a printing house in Venice. The Jerusalem Talmud (*Talmud Hierosolymitamum* - UBL Or. 4720) and a convolute with a dictionary of the Talmud (*Arukh* - UBL Or. 4722), of which Bombergen printed an edition in 1531, are just two of the most famous examples. Other volumes were bought by Hurault from a certain rabbi Zalman; also from the Bibliotheca Marciana and the library of the saints Giovanni and Paolo. When Hurault died in 1572, his library came into the possession of his sons Jean and André. For how long, is not known. Later on, the library can be traced down to Philippe Hurault de Cheverny, Abbé de Pontlevoy, éveque de Chartres (d.1620). He must have inherited the library from his father, Philippe Hurault de Boistaillé, Comte de Cheverny, Chancellor of France (1528-1599), a nephew of Jean Hurault de Boistaillé. After the death his father in 1599, it appears that he joined the two libraries (that of his father Philippe and that of Jean), thus totaling 12,000 books and 1255 manuscripts. Philippe died in 1620 and a year later his heirs sold (for 12,000 Francs) a part of the collection (including 409 manuscripts) to King Louis XII for the Royal Library. These treasures are still part of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The families of Hurault and De Thou are connected through marriage (Anne De Thou, a sister of Jacques-Auguste, married Philippe Hurault, Comte de Cheverny). De Thou and Scaliger were lifelong
friends and knew each other through Jacques Cujas (or Cujacius). Between 1582 and 1585, Scaliger and De Thou were involved in an intense correspondence, with Scaliger more than once asking De Thou to find and deliver Hebrew books. In a letter from Aix en Provence (24 February 1583) Scaliger mentions he would like to acquire the *Sepher ben hammelec venhanazir*. De Thou must have found it, for the Scaliger Library does indeed contain a copy of the *Sefer ben ha-melekh wehanazir* (Mantua 1557).


It was not unusual for Scaliger to ask many of his friends to trace and buy books for him. Another means of procuring Arabic and Hebrew books must have been via Raphelengius and the printing shop of Plantin in Leiden. We do know, as was said before, that some manuscripts from the library of Raphelengius turned up in the Scaliger collection and were wrongly attributed to the library of Scaliger himself. So why should not this be the case for some of the early printed books as well? We do not know whether Scaliger bought, was given or had the books from the library of Hurault on loan. We even do not know if he already was in the possession of the books in France before 1593.

Given the importance of this collection, we aim to produce a complete and annotated list of titles which were bequeathed to Leiden University Library in 1609. Additional information will be given on bindings, provenance and printers. The list will be a starting point for further research by specialist in the field (Arabists, Hebraists, etc.). So far, my own research has revealed 125 confirmed titles already. The second phase will be to gather all the books and try to reconstruct the order in which they could have been arranged in the *Arca Scaligerana*. As previously mentioned, the order of the books in the university library was by subject. Could this have been the same in the *Arca*? Or was the order defined by the format of the books? We do not know. There is certainly a lot yet to discover.


To conclude, what does Scaliger’s legacy of learning mean? In his own time, he ensured it through outstanding disciples. Among these were Heinsius, Baudius, Snellius, Cunaeus, Meursius and Grotius. He was also keen to open the University of Leiden and its Library towards becoming the centre of oriental studies that it is today. Scaliger’s enthusiasm and willingness to engage in new fields of research, to exploring new territories and boundaries is legendary.

This hunger for knowledge had been an example to be followed by every scholar and is, in itself, a legacy to the scholarly community. Bodley himself stayed in Holland as an ambassador for a good number of years (from the late 1580s to the late 1590’s). He must have known Leiden University. Given his interest in books and his admiration for Greek and Hebrew, he is more than likely to have visited the Library. Could he, perhaps, have regarded Leiden University Library as an example for the Bodleian Library? The range of his Oriental acquisitions at a time when only a few could read the exotic languages in England might suggest that this is a distinct possibility.

Kasper van Ommen
Scaliger Institute, Leiden University Library
Today copies of these maps adorn hotel lobbies, tourist shops, official offices and even the labels of some of Crete’s best wine. What intrigued me, was not the motif per se, mapmakers have a long tradition of including cultural imagery into their work, but the persistence of its location.

Contrary to common knowledge, which places the location of the labyrinth in the northern central part of the island at the Palace of Knossos excavated by Sir Arthur Evans in the early 1900s, all these maps consistently positioned the labyrinth to the south in the shadow of the legendary Mount Ida (Psiloritis, in Greek). This proximity to Crete’s highest peak at 2456 metres seemed an auspicious location as it provides a rich natural focal point for legends ancient and modern. Today, however, there is no obvious reference to a Labyrinth in the area. Having returned to Oxford and wishing to settle the issue in my mind I began the investigation into whether there was anything more to this intriguing symbol than it being an ornamental embellishment.

This research is not without an agenda. A material building, if not properly maintained, will soon fall apart. Just so, to continue to exist, places must be kept in good repair. In addition to maintaining their physical integrity, a substantial part of the ‘mortar’ that holds a place together are visual images and language, both oral and written. Also, to continue to hold its meaning in the landscape, a place must be visited and experienced by people. Insofar as the Labyrinth Lost Project invites people to experience these sites as ‘Labyrinths’, where perhaps they have lost their meaning, it aims to help keep these places alive in the landscape.

(Christ Church Library, Arch.Inf. B.1.14)

Such ornamentation is a common feature on similar maps. Cultural symbols were often included to make a political statement, capture the imagination of the viewer or show off the cultural knowledge of the map’s owner. One famous example being the very specific motif of ‘Paradise’ located in what is today central Iran on some 16th century maps. Over the next two years, the search for what lay behind the labyrinth motif would take me on a surprising new journey of scholarship, one which eventually led the University’s Expedition’s Council, the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) and Christ Church to fund a research project which sparked the interest of National Geographic who made a television documentary about my investigation, which is expected to be released in the second part of 2010.

In this essay, I will take a geographical perspective to the creation of a ‘place’ in the landscape in exploring the enigma of the labyrinth’s location and meaning. While literary and archaeological evidence play an important part in this analysis, here I primarily follow the example set out by Oakes¹ where a ‘place’ is conceived as the geographical expression of the interactions between individual actions and historical processes. In this context, for a ‘place’ to exist it must have two key components. Firstly, it must be a site with a meaningful identity; and secondly, it must have immediate agency. In other words, human imagination, emotion and action must interact with the physical nature of the environment to create a ‘place’. This also shifts the objective of research away from trying to establish a reconstruction of a past site as it “really” was, towards a view that ‘places’ exist as part of a dynamic web of interactions between the human and natural world over time, where the relationship is always in flux.

The Labyrinth of Crete, Theseus & the Minotaur

Today, when one hears the word ‘labyrinth’, an image of a structure consisting of a complex network of paths or tunnels where it is easy to get lost probably springs to mind. People may have experienced one, such as in a hedge maze in a park or country estate, or perhaps in the tangled streets of an old medieval town. One can still experience good examples of the latter in the old quarters of many Greek island towns, originally designed to confuse marauding pirates and now entrapping hapless tourists within a charming, if baffling, network of seemingly never ending market stalls and restaurants. What is less appreciated is that there is an important distinction between true labyrinths and such mazes. While a maze is designed to mislead, some labyrinths have only one path, with no branches or room for choice, and others may even have no definite “goal” as such. Indeed, going back to the first labyrinths, as will be discussed below, one cannot even say with assurance that a labyrinth must be bound with walls, as some of the most famous ancient labyrinths were structures consisting of a vast series of rooms and columns. Some have suggested that the true meaning of the ancient labyrinths was a symbolic kind of celestial calendar, charting man’s journey through the seasons and the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Later, in the medieval period the symbology of the labyrinth was embraced by the Christian Church as a spiritual journey with birth at the start and God at the centre, the famous labyrinth floor of the Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Chartres one of the most striking examples.

Without a doubt, however, the most famous labyrinth of all is the one at the centre of the action in the legend of Theseus and the Minotaur. Similar to the oral tradition of other epics such as Homer’s Iliad and the Odyssey, the story of Theseus was most likely first told by an epic poet singer and performed across the Greek-speaking world; and likewise, it would have been many centuries of this before the first written references of it appeared. Drawing on various fragmented sources (not all of whose texts have survived independently) including Pherecydes (mid-sixth century), Bacchylides (fifth century), Demon (c. 300), Philochorus and Cleidemus (both fourth century), the Greek historian Plutarch provides one of the most important early written syntheses of the story.

Plutarch (46-120 A.D.)

Not long afterwards there came from Crete for the third time the collectors of the tribute. Now as to this tribute, most writers agree that because Androgeos was thought to have been treacherously killed within the confines of Attica, not only did Minos harass the inhabitants of that country greatly in war, but Heaven also laid it waste, for barrenness and pestilence smote it sorely, and its rivers dried up; also that when their god assured them in his commands that if they appeased Minos and became reconciled to him, the wrath of the Heaven would abate and there would be an end of their miseries, they sent heralds and made their supplication and entered into an agreement to send him every nine years a tribute of seven youths and as many maidens. And the most dramatic version of the story declares that these young men and women, on being brought to Crete, were destroyed by the Minotaur in the Labyrinth, or else wandered about at their own will and, being unable to find an exit, perished there; and that the Minotaur was, as Euripides says, “a mingled form of hybrid birth of monstrous shape,” and that “two different natures, man and bull, were joined in him.”

Plutarch’s Lives:Theseus XVI. This sets up the basic synopsis of the myth, which has been adapted, added to and embellished by story tellers to this very day. Some excellent more recent examples being the spellbinding books of The Heroes by Charles Kingsley and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s Tanglewood Tales or the unsettling vividness of Mary Renault’s The King Must Die. However, for this essay I will provide only a brief recalling of the tale, roughly following the exposition of Rossi:

Zeus, the king of gods, was so fascinated by the beauty of the Phoenician princess Europa, he transformed himself into a beautiful white bull and lured the princess onto his back, at which point he leapt into the sea to take her to consummate their union in Crete. Some say this union took place under a plane tree that never lost its leaves near Gortyn, others say it occurred in the Dikteon Andron cave. During their long relationship, Europa gave Zeus three sons (and also her name to the entire continent).

The oldest son, Minos wed Pasiphae, daughter of the sun god Helios and sister of the sorceress Circe. When King Minos of Crete took the throne, he prayed to Poseidon for a sign of his right to rule. The god answered by sending a handsome white bull from the sea. Minos was a wise ruler, famous for his justice, but he offended Poseidon by refusing to sacrifice the white bull; he was so entranced by its beauty that he could not bear to part with it. As a punishment for his defiance, Poseidon made Pasiphae fall in love with the bull, who begged the master craftsman Daedalus for his help to fulfil her longing. Daedalus constructed an imitation cow of wood and hide so skilfully that Pasiphae could conceal herself within it and satisfy her depraved lust. This unholy union created a monstrous offspring named Asterion, who was human but had the head of a bull. The horrified Minos asked Daedalus to build a prison where the beast could be hidden away from

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the eyes of his subjects. Thus the labyrinth was conceived: a tangled network of underground passages from which the Minotaur would never escape.

Pasiphae went on to bare numerous children to Minos including Androgeus, Ariadne, Glaucus and Phaedra all of whom had tragic destinies. Androgeus, travelled to the mainland to compete in the athletic games. However, having so completely vanquished his competitors, he attracted the anger of King Aegeus of Athens, who had him killed on the road to Thebes. In retribution, Minos declares war on Athens and forces the city to send seven boys and seven girls to Crete to take part in the acrobatic dance with a bull before being sacrificed to the Minotaur.

Theseus, the son of Aegeus boldly vows to go to Crete as part of the tribute, but instead plans to slay the Minotaur in order to set his people free. On his arrival in Crete, Theseus distinguishes himself quickly with his courage and wit and wins the attention of princess Ariadne who falls in love with the Athenian hero's bravery. Having received his promise of marriage, she provides him with a sword and a clew of thread so that he may slay the Minotaur and find his way out of the Labyrinth to escape with her to Athens. Theseus successfully slays the Minotaur and escapes Crete with Ariadne and the other Athenians. On his way back, they stop and wed in a ceremony on the island of Naxos.

On Crete, three main sites have come to be associated with the labyrinth. These are:
- the palace at Knossos
- the sacred cave to the mother goddess at Skotino &
- a man-made system of quarried tunnels near the ancient capital of Gortyn in the south of the Island.

This later site was what cartographers from the 1400s up until the early 1900s were referring to on the maps which had originally caught my attention while on field studies. Indeed such is the prominence of the labyrinth motif on early maps of Crete, that it seems exceptionally likely that during the Byzantine and Venetian periods, and possibly the Roman period, the Labyrinthos Cave near Gortyn was the main site associated with the labyrinth myth – a period of almost 2000 years. While it was known of beforehand, it was not until the 1900s that the palace at Knossos became dominant in the popular imagination as the labyrinth's location. Other theories, include that of the 20th century archaeologist Paul Faure that the Skotino Cave could be the labyrinth's true site. A fourth suggestion has recently been made in 2010 by the Iraklion-based philologist Dr Gareth Owens. He believes that the Arkalochori cave, on the hill at Profitas Ilias may
be the Minoan labyrinth owing to the unprecedented cache of gold, bronze and silver double axes that was found there – a potent religious symbol, with a possible connection to the labyrinth. However, all of these claims were made long after the mythical Age of Heroes and the time of Minoans. To evaluate them we must go back to the earliest sources and also ask what was the nature of the labyrinth at different points in time.

The palace-temple of Knossos

Homer is often cited as the key reference linking Knossos with the Palace of King Minos and, by extension, the labyrinth. For example, Andrew Shapland, curator of Greek Bronze Age at the British Museum in London, said that while the caves near Gortyn had been visited by travellers looking for the labyrinth since the 13th century, Knossos has a better claim because it is based on the classical tradition rather than the later tradition of travellers: "Knossos is mentioned in Homer. If the Labyrinth is a real thing, it was the way in which a site such as Knossos was transmitted into later Greek myth," Dr Shapland was quoted in response to the Labyrinth Lost expedition’s preliminary report (The Independent, 16 October 2009). The first passage is Homer’s description of Achilles’s shield fashioned by Hephaestus and the second from the Odyssey:

Homer, circa 750 B.C.

Next the god depicted a dancing-floor like the one that Daedalus designed in the spacious town of Knossos for Ariadne of the lovely locks. Youths and marriageable maidens were dancing on it with their hands on one another’s wrists, the girls in fine linen with lovely garlands on their heads, and the men in closely woven tunics showing the faint gleam of oil, and with daggers of gold hanging from their silver belts. Here they ran lightly round, circling as smoothly on their accomplished feet as the wheel of a potter when he sits and works it with his hands to see if it will spin; and there they ran in lines to meet each other. A large crowd stood round enjoying the delightful dance, with a minstrel among them singing divinely to the lyre, while a couple of acrobats, keeping time with his music, threw cart-wheels in and out among the people (The Iliad, Book xviii, 552-566).

There is a land called Crete, set in the wine dark sea, lovely and fertile and ocean rounded. Those who live in this land are many, indeed past counting, and there are ninety cities there. The population speaks many tongues; there are Archaeans, there are the brave true Cretans, the Cydonians, the triply-divided Dorians and the noble Pelasgians. Among the cities is the mighty Creteos; its king was once Minos, who every ninth year took council with Zeus himself (The Odyssey, Book xix, 172-179).

Through this reference, written around 750 B.C. but composed continuously since around 1200 B.C., Homer provides a strong link between Knossos and several characters in the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. It’s implications for the labyrinth, however, seem open for interpretation. Herman Kern, for example, believes that Daedalus fashioned the choros [dancing ground] at Knossos. He implies that it was not a simple levelling of the ground for dancing, but a “man-made marvel” that was known far and wide, a fact that Homer takes for granted. Indeed, according to Pausanias, in his Description of Greece, a choros fashioned by Daedalus could still be seen in the second century AD: [At Knossos] is also Ariadne’s Dance, mentioned by Homer in the Iliad, carved in relief on white marble (Book ix. 40.3). Kern suggests that the shield of Achilles depicts both the movement of a dance and the dance surface. The implication is that the dance provides the shape or path of the labyrinth. Otto Benndorf has pointed out that this could be alluded to by the description of the forward and backward motion of the potter’s wheel in the passage, which would seem to correspond to the labyrinth’s winding path. Indeed, there are several theories as to the function of this dance and reconstructions of what the ‘labyrinth dance’, may have been has given rise to a delightful merging of scholarship and choreography. Certainly, the heritage of such labyrinthine dances continues strongly, as anyone who has been to a Greek wedding could testify – even if its true nature has been obscured in the mists of time. The connection with the mythical past in Homer is, with little doubt, what prompted Arthur Evans to give the Minoans their name after the legendary King Minos and focus his search for the labyrinth at the ruins of Knossos. Evan’s connection of the myth with the site at Knossos was further strengthened in his mind by the discovery of coins at Knossos dating from the classical era (circa 300-270 B.C.) which depict a minotaur on one side and a labyrinth on the other.

A further piece of evidence linking Knossos to the labyrinth employed by Evans was a possible connection through the frequent occurrence at the site of the double-axe or Labrus - the non-Greek Lydian (or Carian) word for axe. Evans had adopted Heinrich Schliemann’s theory that the double-axe motif symbolised “Zeus Labrandeus” an early form of worship of Zeus at the Carian city of Labraunda, on what is now the Turkish Aegean coast.

Evans speculated that the Lydian word for axe, labrus, was the basis for the Greek word “Labyrinth”, which thus meant “house of the double axe” (inithos being a suffix typically added to place names). Thus, Knossos became the House of the Double-Axe and from there the Labyrinth.

This debate is well described by Sandy Macgillivray when he sets out how Evans’s theory was met with contempt by some philologists of the day. W. H. D. Rouse took serious exception to the link between the double axe and the worship of Zeus stating that, “the Greeks would be just as likely to worship a pair of top boots”. He argued, “Λαβύρινθος [Labirinthos] cannot be derived from λάβρυς [labrus] by any known laws of language. The derivation is a guess and no more, not supported even by the meaning, for a ‘maze’ has nothing to do with axes. From the root of labra, Burrows argued, the Greeks and Romans adopted the labyrinth which they took to mean a place of passage. From here it then evolved into the concept of a maze. Evans, however, never relented supporting the Labyrinth’s link with Knossos through the connection with the Lydian word for double axe. Macgillivray critically notes that recent etymological dictionaries now accept Evans’s proposed origins, “…and the palace of Knossos has become the Labyrinth, against all previous logic, proving that the force of one man’s will can and does change the course of history, ancient as well as modern”.

Two quotes which seem to herald this sense of frustration Macgillivray today expresses towards the site are from a visit to the site by travellers Evelyn

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Waugh\textsuperscript{10} and later by Umberto Eco.\textsuperscript{11} One connection between the labyrinth and \textit{labrus} which can be made, quite separate from any linguistic speculation, is its use as a template for the labyrinth design found on Knossos coins. If this was indeed used by the Minoans, it could provide a link between the Minoan period masons’ marks and the classical period labyrinth coins.

As Davaras\textsuperscript{12} notes, the labyrinth pattern – that is one in which, beginning from an entrance, one has to pass through all corridors with seven layers only once, in order to reach the centre of the design – is a very difficult one to invent, and cannot easily be done from memory. It has to be copied exactly, or it may be drawn very easily off the template of a linear double-axe. Curiously, if one adds four angled brackets to guide an encircling movement around a stylised \textit{labrus}, as shown in the diagram above, and then erases the \textit{labrus} from the drawing when finished, then a labyrinth emerges as a glorified evolution of the basic \textit{labrus} sign. Today, as Hitchcock and Koudounaris\textsuperscript{13} note there is a reluctance to criticise Evans and most commentaries on the site fall into the category of apologia, best exemplified in the following quote from J.W. Graham’s \textit{The Palaces of Crete} currently the standard text for the study of Minoan architecture: ‘[Georg] Karo [a former director of the German Archaeological Institute] caustically comments that many of the most vocal critics are ‘unencumbered by knowledge of the facts’, and that he himself is perhaps the only living scholar who knows what brain racking (kopfzerbrechung) each new phase of the excavations brought because of the extremely perishable nature of the remains. Without restoration, he declares, the site would be little today but a heap of ruins. ‘If one will examine the immense remains carefully to see how many restorations were essential and mandatory he will find surprisingly little that was unnecessary.’ Certainly it cannot be doubted that the restorations add much to the interest of the ordinary visitor; if he is occasionally misled this will be outweighed by what he is helped to comprehend correctly. Un-restored buildings are often, in their own way, quite as misleading as over restored’\textsuperscript{13}.

The labyrinth as the cave to the Mother Goddess

According to the French archaeologist Paul Faure, the Labyrinth is not to be associated with Knossos, but with the sacred cave of Skotino. In the 1950s Michael Ventris and John Chadwick deciphered the script known as Linear B. This yielded the earliest of the references to a “labyrinth” on a tablet which mentions, among other deities, a \textit{potinija dapuritjo} – a lady or goddess of the Labyrinth.

\begin{center}
\includegraphics[width=5cm]{labyrinth_diagram}
\end{center}

\textit{Evolution of a 7 layered labyrinth motif using the prop of a double-axe or Labrus masons mark as found at Knossos.}

\textsuperscript{10} ‘I accompanied a party of fellow passengers to the museum to admire the barbarities of Minoan culture. One cannot well judge the merits of Minoan painting, since only a few square inches of the vast area exposed to our consideration are earlier than the last twenty years, and their painters have tempered their zeal for reconstruction with a predilection for the covers of Vogue. We chartered a Ford car and drove with a guide to Cnossos where Sir Arthur Evans... is rebuilding the palace... I think if our English Lord Evans ever finishes even a part of his vast undertaking, it will be a place of oppressive wickedness’. E. Waugh, \textit{When the Going Was Good} (London: Duckworth, 1946), pp.51-52.

\textsuperscript{11} ‘The Palace’s philosophy is not, ‘We are giving you the reproduction so that you will want the original’, but rather, ‘We are giving you the reproduction so you will no longer feel any need for the original’. But for the reproduction to be desired, the original has to be idolized, and hence the kitch function of the inscriptions and the taped voices, which remind you of the greatness of the art of the past’. U. Eco, \textit{Travels in Hyperreality} (San Diego, London, and New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1986 [1976]), p.19.


\textit{Knossos KN Gg 702 c.1400 B.C}

\textbf{Transcription:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item Line 1: pa-si-te-o-i me-ri
  \item Line 2: da-pu-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja me-ri
\end{itemize}

\textbf{Translation:}

To all the gods, 1 vessel honey

to the lady of the labyrinth, 1 vessel honey
or female divine was worshiped. Skotino, with its proximity to Knossos, was an obvious strong candidate. Faure also points out that it was long after the age of the Minoans, that Philochoros reduces the idea of a labyrinth down to a prison.

Plutarch (46-120 A.D.)
Philochorus, however, says that the Cretans do not admit this, but declare that the Labyrinth was a dungeon, with no other inconvenience than that its prisoners could not escape; and that Minos instituted funeral games in honour of Androgeos, and prizes for the victors and gave these to Athenian youth, who were in the meantime imprisoned in the Labyrinth. ... And Aristotle himself also, in his "Constitution of Bottiaea," clearly does not think that these youths were put to death by Minos, but spent the rest of their days as slaves in Crete (Lives: Theseus, XV).

It can also be pointed out that one of the difficulties in deriving "labyrinth" form "labrus" is that the Mycenaean word for 'labyrinth' seems to have an initial 'd' instead of 'l' in the linear B tablet.

The Labyrinth of the Messera
Paul Faure also mentions in his account of the competing claims to the location of the labyrinth the ancient complex of man-made caverns near Kastelli, in the north of the Messera plane. This site had been visited for centuries by those wishing to experience the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur. Originally an ancient quarry, dating from Roman times, possibly earlier (the site is yet to be rigorously surveyed). It was also common in ancient times to use such quarries as prisons. The sense of fear of being entrapped in this dark complex network of tunnels, with its blind endings and miles of interweaving passageways, would have evoked in many peoples’ mind the idea of the Labyrinth. Perhaps the story was even a tool of terror used by the Minoan kings to keep the unruly elements of their sea-based empire subdued. For those who have experienced an earthquake (still a common occurrence in Crete, and more so in antiquity) they would know of the deep roar it makes as it rolls across the landscape. Applying some imagination (or fear in the case of an ancient prisoner brought up on myths of the Minotaur) this noise could easily be taken for the roar of an angry bull. Experienced in the underground quarry-prison-labyrinth of the Messera, the connection with the myth of Theseus seems irresistible, if also terrifying. Over time this site has attracted thousands of visitors, hundreds of whom have written their name deep within the labyrinth’s so-called ‘Trapeza Room’.

The Labyrinth of Gortyn
Franz Sieber (1821)
Today the site is in need of urgent restoration in order to preserve its integrity and so that it may one day be presented once more to the public. The local community is desperate to protect and recognise the site and several plans over the last three decades have been initiated. However, coordination across civil engineers, archaeologists, the military, local and national authorities as well as securing the necessary resources, makes the project a daunting task. With the labyrinth of Knossos the second most visited tourist site in Greece, the potential payoff of protecting and presenting this once famous site must be considerable. Indeed, it is noteworthy that just 500 metres from the site tens of millions of euros are being spent on a major new road between the north and the south of the island, perhaps just a fraction of this funding could hold the key to once more
unlocking the labyrinth for the public. This, and the energy of the local people to make progress on the issue, gives hope that this labyrinth will not be lost forever.

**Other ancient Labyrinths and further research**

My research into the competing claims to the location of the Labyrinth in Crete has opened a much wider set of enigmas relating to the location of ancient labyrinths. One of these sites, the Egyptian Labyrinth, was said to surpass even the pyramids in its majesty. The others are less well known, but what they all have in common is a delightful air of mystery and intrigue. Here I will sketch the outline of a wider project to investigate the most famous of the Labyrinths of the ancient world. We can begin our journey beyond the shores of Crete by following in the footsteps of the Roman natural philosopher and military commander Pliny the Elder:

Pliny the Elder (AD23-79)

We must mention also the labyrinths, quite the most abnormal achievement on which man has spent his resources, but by no means a fictitious one, as might well be supposed. One still exists in Egypt, in the nome of Heracleopolis. This, the first ever to be constructed, was built, according to tradition, 3600 years ago by King Petesuchis or King Thithoeis, although Herodotus (Hdt.ii.148) attributes the whole work to the 'twelve kings,' the last of whom was Psammetichus. Various reasons are suggested for its construction. Demoteles supposedly it to have been the palace of Moteris, and Lyceas the tomb of Moeris, while many writers state that it was erected as a temple of the Sun-god, and this is the general belief. Whatever the truth may be, there is no doubt that Daedalus adopted it as the model of the labyrinth built by him in Crete, but that he reproduced only a hundredth part of it containing passageways that wind, advance and retreat in a bewilderingly intricate manner. It is not just a narrow strip of ground comprising of many miles of 'walks' or 'rides,' such as we see exemplified in our tessellated floors or in the ceremonial game played by our boys in the Campus Martius, but doors are let into walls at frequent intervals to suggest deceptively the way ahead and to force the visitor back upon the very same tracks that he has already followed in his wanderings. The Cretan labyrinth was the next in succession after the Egyptian, and there was a third in Lemnos and a fourth in Italy, all alike being roofed with vaults of carefully worked stone. There is a feature of the Egyptian labyrinth which I for my part find surprising, namely an entrance and columns made of Parian marble. The rest of the structure is of Aswan granite, the great bulk of which has been laid in such a way that even the lapse of centuries cannot destroy it. Its preservation has been aided by the people of Heracleopolis, who have shown remarkable respect for an achievement they detest.

The ground plan and the individual parts of this building cannot be fully described because it is divided among the regions or administrative districts known as nomes, of which there are 21, each having a vast hall allotted to it by name. Besides these halls, it contains temples of all the Egyptian gods; and furthermore, Nemesis placed within the 40 shrines several pyramids, each with a height of 40 cubits and an area at the base of 4 acres. It is when he is already exhausted with walking that the visitor reaches the bewildering maze of passages. Moreover, there are rooms in lofty upper stories reached by inclines, and porches from which flights of 90 stairs lead down to the ground. Inside are columns of imperial porphyry, images of gods, statues of kings and figures of monsters. Some of the halls are laid out in such a way that when the doors open there is a terrifying rumble of thunder within: incidentally, most of the building has to be transversed in darkness. Again there are other massive structures outside the wall of the labyrinth: the Greek term for these is 'pterom,' or 'wing.' Then there are other halls that have been made by digging galleries underground. The few repairs that have been made there were carried out by one man alone, Chaeremon, the eunuch of King Necthebis, 500 years before the time of Alexander the Great. There is a further tradition that he used beams of acacia boiled in oil to serve as supports while the square blocks of stone were being lifted into the vaults.

What has already been said must suffice for the Cretan labyrinth likewise. The Lemnian, which was similar to it, was more noteworthy only in virtue of its 150 columns, the drums of which were so well balanced as they hung in the workshop that a child was able to turn them on a lathe. The architects were Zmilis, Rhoeocus and Theodorus, all natives of Lemnos. There still exist remains of this labyrinth, although no traces of the Cretan or Italian now survive. For it is appropriate to call 'Italian,' as well as 'Etruscan,' the labyrinth made by King Porsena of Etruria to serve as his tomb, with the result at the same time that even the vanity of foreign kings is surpassed by those of Italy. But since irresponsible story-telling here exceeds all bounds, I shall in describing the building make use of the very words of Marcus Varro himself: He is buried close to the city of Clusium, in a place where he has left a square monument built of squared blocks of stone, each side being 300 feet long and 50 feet high. Inside this square pedestal there is a tangled labyrinth, which no one must enter without a ball of thread if he is to find his way out. On this square pedestal stand five pyramids, four at the corners and one at the centre, each of them being 75 feet broad at the base and 150 feet high. They taper in such a manner that on top of the whole group there rests a single bronze disk together with a conical cupola, from which hang bells fastened with chains: when these are set in motion by the wind, their sound carries to a great
distance, as was formally the case at Dodona. On this disk stand four more pyramids, each 100 feet high, and above these, on a single platform, five more. The height of these last pyramids was a detail that Varro was ashamed to add to his account; but the Etruscan stories relate that it was equal to that of the whole work up to their level, insane folly as it was to have courted fame by spending for the benefit of none and to have exhausted furthermore the resources of a kingdom; and the result, after all, was more honour for the designer than the sponsor. (Natural History X).

Pliny the Elder thus sets out the four Labyrinths of the ancient world: the Egyptian Labyrinth, which he says preceded, the Cretan Labyrinth, discussed above, the Labyrinth of Lemnos, of which little is known and the Italian or Etruscan Labyrinth at the Tomb of Lars Porsena, near the ancient city of Clusium, thought to be the modern day city of Chiusi in Tuscany.

The Egyptian Labyrinth

While ancient writers such as Strabo (63B.C. – A.D.24), Diodorus Siculus (1st century B.C.), Manethon (3rd century B.C.) and others speak of the Labyrinth of Egypt, the most vivid early reference comes from the Greek author Herodotus.

Herodotus (484-425B.C.) Moreover, they decided to leave to posterity a common memorial and caused to be built a Labyrinth for their greater glory, a little above Lake Moeris more or less in the vicinity of the city called the City of Crocodiles; this Labyrinth I actually saw, a work greater than all power to describe. For if anyone were to add together the buildings constructed by Greeks and their architectural achievements, they would appear inferior in labour and expense to this Labyrinth. Yet both the temple at Ephesus and that at Samos are by no means negligible. Indeed, the Pyramids also surpassed all power to describe and the Labyrinth stands a pyramid 40 orguiae high on which mighty figures are carved; and a subterranean passage runs into it (Histories, II, 148).

As Kern notes, the allusion to 3000 chambers should not be taken too literally, but was probably a reference to the Egyptian idea that the soul wanders for 3000 years. What also stands out from this passage is that the well travelled Herodotus neglects to mention the Cretan Labyrinth here or anywhere else and he does not say that Daedalus modelled his on the Egyptian one, as do Diodorus and Pliny, several centuries later. Kern argues that this may suggest that by the time of Herodotus the term “labyrinth” may have been used metaphorically for every impressive building.

An alternative theory to the naming of the labyrinth of Egypt comes down to us through the work of Manetho, the Egyptian high priest of Heliopolis. In the fragments of his work preserved in his history of Egypt, Aegyptiaca (Epitome), he notes that the builder of the labyrinth was the fourth pharaoh of the 12th Dynasty, Amenemhat III, whom he refers to as Lachares, Lampares, or Labaris (see Manetho, fragment 39, p. 73, note 1, p. 10) and about whom he reports: “[H]e reigned for eight years: in the Arsinoite nome he built the many chambered labyrinth as his tomb”.

As discussed above, these Hellenized forms of the Egyptian names (Manetho wrote in Greek) support the notion that “labyrinth” derives from “Labaris” as argued by Spiegelberg.

This structure is thought to be situated near Ezbut Habib, south east of Fayoum in the Western Desert, occupying part of the ancient site of Crocodilopolis, around 80 kilometres south of present day Cairo. Today, what is most visible of this immense wonder of the world is the Pyramid of Amenemhat III, the

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greatest pharaoh of the 12th dynasty, who ruled from 1842 to 1797 B.C. under the throne name Lampares. Shiode and Grajetzki describe the site where to the south of the pyramid the king constructed a large cult complex (approximately 120 metres by 300 metres), where he was worshipped as a god. The complex was most probably built in the second half of his reign, and seems to have been called Ankh-Amenemhat. After some 1500 years, king Amenemhat III was still attested as a god in the Fayum region, especially in Hawara. During the period of classical antiquity, the complex of buildings and structures came to be known as the "labyrinth".

Flinders Petrie excavated the site in 1911, unearthing a number of stunning portraits (the Fayum portraits, of which some are on display at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford) and a papyrus scroll which includes books one and two of the Iliad (the "Hawara Homer" of the Bodleian Library). Shiode and Grajetzki note that since Petrie's excavations in 1911, no official excavation has been carried out at the labyrinth site, though some shorter expeditions from the Antiquity Service have dug in the necropolis of Hawara. Apart from Dieter Arnold, notable written work on the Labyrinth includes Ingrid Blom-Boer's Die Tempelanlage Amenemhets III in Hawara and Eric Uphill's Pharaoh's gateway to eternity. Until recently, it was thought that the labyrinth had been mostly destroyed by being used as a quarry for material for other buildings in Ptolemaic times. However, in 2008 a Belgian expedition completed a survey of the site using new ground penetrating imagery techniques and in 2010 controversially declared their results: "...below the artificial stone surface appears (in spite of the turbid effect of the groundwater) at the depth of 8 to 12 meters a grid structure of gigantic size made of a very high resistivity material like granite stone. This states the presence of a colossal archaeological feature below the labyrinth "foundation" zone of Petrie, which has to be reconsidered as the roof of the still existing labyrinth. The conclusion of the geo-archaeological expedition counters in a scientific way the idea that the labyrinth was destructed as a stone quarry in Ptolemaic times and validates the authenticity of the classical author reports. The massive grid structure of the labyrinth is also out of angle by 20° to 25° from the Hawara pyramid orientation.

Threatened by salty groundwater, the labyrinth of Egypt currently lies at the centre of controversy due to the seemingly premature release of the Mataha Expedition’s results against the request of the Egyptian Supreme High Council of Antiquities.

The Italian Labyrinth

Lars Porsena was a semi-legendary Etruscan king who ruled over Italy around 500 B.C. Etruscans were known for their elaborate tombs and that of Lars Porsena was rumoured to be the best example. Despite the fantastical nature of Varro’s description, archaeologists have been searching for his tomb since at least the 1940s in the Tuscan city of Chiusi based on the premise that Chiusi and the ancient Clusium have the same name of “closed city”. Chiusi also has a tradition of travellers who have come searching for the labyrinth in the subterranean passageways underneath the city and in the labyrinthine crypts of the Poggio Gajella, an ancient cemetery about three miles north-east of Chiusi.

However, a Professor of Urban Restoration at the University of Florence, Giuseppe Centauro has an alternative theory. The location of the tomb is not as straightforward as the above hypothesis suggests as in 89 B.C. the Roman general Cornelius Sulla razed Clusium and with it Lars Porsena’s tomb to the ground.

Professor Centauro believes in an alternative location of Clusium at a site on a mountainside near Florence. It has been reported that he has identified two concentric walls 17km in circumference, qualifying it as one of the biggest ancient cities in Italy and fitting the profile of Clusium.

The Labyrinth of Nauplio

One additional curious reference in Strabo’s Geography to an ancient labyrinth in the Peloponnese, on mainland Greece:

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22 G. Denis, The cities and cemeteries of Etruria (London: John Murray, 1848).
Strabo (63 B.C. – A.D. 24)
Next after Nauplia one comes to the caverns and labyrinths built in them, which are called Cyclopean... and they came by invitation from Lycia. And perhaps the caverns near Nauplia and the works therein are named after them... (Geography, 8.6.2)

Little is known of what Strabo meant by reference to these Cyclopean Labyrinths. He may have been referring to some caves in the vicinity, which were built into by Lycian guest workers, about whom Strabo also writes: [...] the Cyclopes, who were seven in number and were called ‘Bellhands’ because they got their food from their handicraft (Geography, 8). However, caves are not usually referred to as Cyclopean, rather an alternative reference would be to connect them with the nearby Mycenaean cities of Mycenae and Tiryns, which dominated the eastern Mediterranean world from the 15th to the 12th century B.C. and played a vital role in the development of classical Greek culture.

Also nearby on the Peloponnese, there is the Tholos of Epidaurus, a strange round building which represents the only remnants from antiquity of what can be described as a pathway of concentric circles focusing in on a centre-point which, in this sense, might be perceived a labyrinth. The Tholos, mentioned by Pausanias, was constructed by Polycleitus the Younger between c. 360 and 320 B.C. in the sanctuary of Asclepius.

Pausanias (2nd century A.D.)
Opposite the temple (of Asclepios) is the place where the pilgrims of the God sleep. A circular edifice built of marble nearby, known as the Tholos, is truly worth seeing. Inside the Tholos there is a painting by Pausias depicting Eros who, having left aside his bow and arrows, is holding a lyre. Methe, the goddess of inebriation, is also depicted drinking from a glass cup - another work by Pausias. The cup seems to be of real glass and through it one can see the woman's face (Corinthiaca: 27, 3).

All that remains of this fascinating structure is its labyrinthine foundations. These comprise of six concentric rings, the three outer ones set much deeper into the ground. They are also thicker than the three inner rings, which are connected by a system of openings and transverse walls. Many theories have been put forward to the structure’s purpose, but its true nature remains, like so much, shrouded in mystery.

Petroglyph labyrinths
Before concluding, it is worth noting the geographical distribution of ancient labyrinth petroglyphs, which mainly show a ‘Cretan’ type a circular or square single-path labyrinth, usually with seven winding passageways. Of particular note are the following sites:

- Luzzanas, Sardinia (2500 -2000 B.C.) in the “Tomba del Labirinto”;
- Camonica Valley, Province of Brescia, near Capo di Ponte (multiple sites) Italy’ (750-550 B.C.);
- Pedra do Labrinto, San Xurxo de Mogor, Marin, Province of Pontevedra, Spain (c. 900-500 B.C.);
- Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain (multiple sites) (c. 900-500 B.C.);
- Rocky Valley, Tintagel, Cornwall, England (c. 1800-1400 B.C.);
- Hollywood stone, County Wicklow, Ireland (c. 1800 -1400 B.C.);
- The Caucasus, near Machčesk in North Ossetia (c. 2nd millennium B.C.);
- Dobruja, Romania (c. 10th century A.D.);
- Tell Rifa’at, Syria (13th century B.C.);
- Pylos, the Palace of Nestor, western Messenia, Mycenaean (c. 1200 B.C.);
- Delos, ‘Maison des tritons’ (probably second half, first millennium B.C.);
- Pompeii (multiple sites) (c. 79 A.D.);
- El-Salamuni, Egypt (Graffiti in a quarry, probably 4th century B.C. but possibly earlier);
- Kom Ombo, a temple just south of Thebes, dating from 181-146 B.C. but labyrinth graffiti possibly Roman form a later period);
- Taouz, Morocco (possibly c. 500-200 B.C.)

While several of these sites most likely have had a labyrinth design inscribed onto them at a later time by Romans or Greeks (such as the Egyptian petroglyphs), other examples are important evidence of the possible relations between the Mediterranean and other peoples from as far as Ireland across to the Caucasus and represents an intriguing area for future research.

Conclusions
That an original labyrinth existed, in some sense, once, is almost certainly true. However, it has also been destroyed, created and added to again and again in different locations throughout history to suit the needs of the people of the time in a process that
continues to the present day. Due to our chronological view of history, we do not have an easy word for such a process, but at the heart of the labyrinth’s power, is its ability to serve as a metaphor to help people understand their lives and place in the universe. There is something of a challenging, mysterious adventure inherent in the idea of a labyrinth, which at its most basic serves a metaphor for the journey that we must all make in life. In this sense, it seems to represent something universal and immutable. If there is a silver lining to Sandy Macgillivray’s critique of how the force of Arthur Evans’s will skewed the course of history, it is that it may also offer a way out of the hegemony that Knossos now exerts on the myth of the labyrinth. It is true that places are created through the force of our collective imagination and actions. It is how we choose to experience a site, which over time can shape its nature as a place. By drawing attention to this we may be able to revive these lost labyrinths in the landscape.

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Christ Church

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News and Updates from The Early Printed Books Project

This time last year things were looking bleak for the Early Printed Books Project: our funding was coming to an end and it seemed likely that the Project would finally close after 15 years. However, despite the economic climate, new funding has emerged and we continue to catalogue the early printed collections in Oxford libraries outside the Bodleian.

Two new college libraries have joined the project this year: Exeter and Harris Manchester. At Exeter we are aiming to catalogue every book in the library printed before 1801 (roughly 7000 items) and at Harris Manchester we will catalogue the first 5000 items out of a collection of more than 11,000 non-conformist British pamphlets. Work also continues at Queen’s, All Souls, Merton and, of course, Christ Church. To deal with the increased workload we have expanded the team to five full-time antiquarian cataloguers and we welcome Lucy Evans, a rare books librarian with an interest in non-conformist British religion; Dr. Amanda Flynn, a special collections librarian specializing in 18th and 19th century popular culture, and David Stumpp, a professional rare books cataloguer previously based in the USA.

Dave began cataloguing at Christ Church on 8th June 2010 and is continuing work on the college’s truly enormous collection of mainly English pamphlets.

He is ideally placed to undertake this project as he brings with him more than ten years experience working with early books and pamphlets for the English Short Title Cataloguing Project (http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/catblhold/estchistory/estchistory.html) one of the largest and most important early book projects in the world. He has worked in many of the world’s most important antiquarian libraries as a roving cataloguer and has managed the ESTC’s contribution to the “Britain in Print” Project (http://www.britaininprint.net/).

Dave takes over from Maria Franchini who has been based in Christ Church Library since January 2007 (with occasional breaks) working on the collection of books belonging to Archbishop Wake. She has recently completed that project, which catalogued some 8000 books, and has mounted an exhibition in the Library to celebrate some of the most important and unusual items in the collection. She now moves to All Souls to complete antiquarian cataloguing work in the Codrington Library.

Sarah Wheale  
Oxford Early Printed Books Project  
Department of Special Collections, Bodleian Library
Christ Church Library is a treasure-trove more versatile than one might perhaps imagine. Like an ‘ark’, it was meant to embrace not only priceless books and manuscripts, but also prints and drawings, paintings and sculpture. The whole space indeed, with its attention to detail and sumptuous decoration, is a work of art in itself.

The Old ‘Picture Gallery’

The imposing eighteenth-century building was designed to impress from the start. As Dr Stratford, Canon and formerly Treasurer, recorded in a letter to Edward Harley in 1716, the aim was ‘to make it the finest Library that belongs to any society in Europe’.

It took many years (from 1717 to the end of the 1760s) and several changes of plans to fine-tune the building to its contents. The last and possibly the most spectacular of these changes affected the ground floor. The fact that it happened at all was the result of an unexpected benefaction. In his will of April 1760 General John Guise (Gentleman Commoner and then Nobleman of Christ Church), left to the College a large collection of pictures and drawings. These required a very different quality of space than needed for a pure ‘book library’. Faced with this new challenge, the Library adjusted. Although it was not the earliest art collection acquired, it was the size of the Guise bequest that determined the change of plans.

At the time this collection arrived, the ground floor of the Library was still an open piazza. This had to be scrapped to create the space and conditions for the display of art. The building changed dramatically under the supervision of the architect Henry Keene. He converted the ground floor into two large rooms with a vestibule between them. These rooms were created for the hanging of pictures and until as late as 1968 (when the Picture Gallery opened), they housed the greater part of the art collection. As at July 2010, to follow up on a remark made by Rob Dunton, the architect in charge of the restoration of the Library, those who are familiar with the building and its contents will, until the project is finalized this autumn, “be more aware of the absence of familiar objects than the presence of unfamiliar ones”.

This is particularly evident as one enters. The heavy doors facing Peckwater Quad open onto a space bare of everything apart from a few mismatched pieces of furniture, a couple of computers and the strong colour of the walls. None of the familiar statues and paintings can be seen. They have all been placed in storage for the duration of the building works. Although disconcerting, their absence during this academic year has had the advantage of providing a blank canvas, enabling us to become more aware of the architecture and the impact it was meant to have on the viewer. Recovering some of this space’s former glory is an important part of what is going to happen in the Library during the summer of 2010. In this specific context, being able to add to the Library a rather unusual portrait of Thomas Wolsey would not only enhance the space with a deeply relevant painting, but also help restore more of the feel the space must have had as a library and an art gallery combined.

The Portrait

This is Wolsey as we have not seen him before. The sitter is associated with several portraits. At Christ Church alone there are seven painted versions and copies of Wolsey’s image recorded.

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2. The first (consisting of some 2500 prints) includes works by Mantegna and Dürer and was bequeathed by Dean Henry Aldrich (1648-1710).
3. The Guise collections numbers 257 pictures and 1734 drawings. See W.G. Hiscock, A Christ Church Miscellany: New Chapters on the Architects, Craftsmen, Statuaries, Plate, Bells, Furniture, Clocks, Plays, the Library and Other Buildings (Oxford University Press, 1946), 79.
5. The Cardinal’s hat, assumed to have belonged to Thomas Wolsey is also housed in the Library.
Although they all share a number of characteristic features, the portrait we have in mind for the Library is refreshingly different.

Strangely perhaps, no contemporary portrait of Wolsey has come down to us. All existing portraits are based on a drawing by Jacques Le Boucq (c.1565) in the library in Arras and a coarse posthumous profile at the National Portrait Gallery.

As Jacqueline Thalmann, Curator of the Picture Gallery at Christ Church puts it, ‘this is a difficult legacy for portraitists who were asked for posthumous portraits of Wolsey.’ It might seem surprising that Wolsey's image should be reproduced at all after his dramatic fall in 1529. Despite this however, he seems to have remained very much in people's minds. This trend could well have had George Cavendish as its source. He was the Cardinal's loyal servant and a fine poet and biographer. In his *Thomas Wolsey, Late Cardinall, his Lyffe and Deathe* (probably written between late 1554 and 1558), Cavendish draws on his observations and experiences in the Cardinal's household to offer a work that has been acclaimed as the first major English biography. Although the first edition appeared as late as 1641, the text of the biography was well known by Cavendish's contemporaries. Not only did Shakespeare take it as a source for *Henry VIII*, the popularity of the *Life* during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is further demonstrated by the number of manuscripts that have survived (more than thirty). The problem here, as with the many copies of Wolsey's portrait, is that all these codices derive from a textual tradition different from that of Cavendish's original manuscript. What we have in both cases is a series of copies, and copies of copies.

Take, for example, the most widely reproduced portrait of Wolsey by Sampson Strong (for which Christ Church paid £3 in1610).

The National Portrait Gallery portrait is clearly the basis for Strong's work. The sitter is depicted half length and standing in profile. He wears a scarlet biretta and robes over a dark cassock. In his left hand he holds a scroll. Unlike the London painting, the Strong portrait is not ambiguous in terms of setting, stressing the sitter's association with the College by means of a view of Christ Church through an opening on the top left hand corner and the shield of arms on the right.

Comparing Strong's portrait with the anonymous one we would like to hang in the Library, one notices some very interesting features. In terms of similarity, perhaps the most striking is the face of the Cardinal. This is almost identical in the two paintings, and was probably copied from Strong's portrait by the unknown artist. The composition with the Cardinal represented in profile facing left is probably inherited from a now lost picture by Hans Holbein the Younger. This seems to have been copied by painters and engravers from the late sixteenth- to the end of the eighteenth-century. Indeed, in so far as representations of Wolsey are concerned, there is almost no variation on this pose. Both known

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7 The date of completion is given by Cavendish himself, in the colophon to his holograph (British Library, Egerton MS 2402).
9 The Negotiations of T. Woolsey, the Great Cardinal of England, Containing His Life and Death ... Composed by ... his Gentleman Usher [i.e. G. Cavendish] (London: 1641).
10 Among those who engaged in producing portraits of Thomas Wolsey were William Marshall, Nicolas de Larmessin, Magdalema and Willem van de Passe, Étienne Jehandier
unknown artists engaged in little re-evaluation of the model. This may seem surprising. Wolsey’s artistic patronage was conceived on a grand and striking scale and his sensitivity to the latest artistic fashions was well-known. Given the impact that the Cardinal, at the height of his power, had on the arts, his apparent lack of interest to commission more paintings by acclaimed artists is somewhat puzzling and is certainly a subject worth further scrutiny.

In a context in which compositional originality is so hard to find, the portrait we have in mind for the Library is an unexpected breath of fresh air. What makes it different from the others is that, although the Cardinal’s head is in profile, his body is pictured frontally. He is sitting on a carved chair wearing a white collar and cape edged with elegant and intricate patterns of lace. There is something about this portrait, in that it is both awkward and intensely familiar. On the one hand, the head is almost a carbon copy originating from another portrait (very likely Strong’s). The bottom half however presents an entirely different story. Focusing of it alone brings to mind an entire gallery of paintings, some very famous, such as Raphael’s Portrait of Julius II and Velásques’ Portrait of Innocent X. Among the closest, in terms of composition and style, is Caravaggio’s Portrait of Paul V.

Whereas Raphael’s and Velásques’ works are masterpieces of the genre, the portrait of the Borghese Pope, with its frozen pose, is less inspiring (some scholars even doubt Caravaggio’s authorship). There is a sense of deep unease about the subject. It is difficult to view a character who appears so tense and uncomfortable. One way to escape this is by focusing away from the Pope’s eyes onto the multi-faceted surface of the textures he is enveloped in: the soft velvet, smooth silk and crisp lace. This becomes an interesting balancing act, channelling the viewer’s attention to the outer layers of its subject. Like armour, clothes such as these confirm status and can intimidate. We, as viewers, are entertained but kept at a distance. Just as in the anonymous portrait of Wolsey, what attracts is the contrast between the rigidity of the sitter’s pose and the intricate design of the textures he wears. The lace of the white garment the Cardinal is wearing beneath his cape is especially eye-catching. Against this background the painter has inserted the one element which makes this canvas ‘sing’ on a different note from the other Wolsey portraits. Instead of gripping a scroll in one hand, he holds an unfolded document. Echoing the fine gossamer lines of the lace immediately beneath, the writing, although upside-down, faces the viewer and is clear enough for us to be distracted in reading it: “Rex omnibus ad quos &c. salutem…”

With its pairing of image and text, subject and word, the picture unfolds a whole realm of meanings we would not, at first sight, be likely to credit it with. Dressed for the occasion, Wolsey fills the frame, holding a document with a seal. Surprisingly, despite its orientation, it is a document relatively easy to decipher. This alone is exciting enough. The context it alludes to is even more so, since what Wolsey holds in his hands is the assignation to the title of Cardinal Priest of Sancta Cecilia in Rome. This referred to certain key priests of important churches of the Diocese of Rome, who were recognized as chosen by the Pope to advise him in his duties. Several cardinals bearing the ‘titulus’ of Sancta Cecilia were themselves elected Popes. Wolsey was one who narrowly missed the opportunity.

Without juxtaposing this particular text on the image, the portrait might have been just another pastiche, a work made up of parts drawn from a variety of sources. The text however turns it into a rather potent and creative re-interpretation of an over-used model. ‘Language is an indelible token, the function of which derives from its brute presence and its
Its use in the visual arts is something we should pay attention to, as often it proves to be not merely decorative but intended to help the viewer enter into a dialogue with the picture.

In Wolsey’s portrait, the awkward division of the image into two irreconcilable halves makes sense. What we see is an official document laid open in front of our eyes and the subject turning away from it. That’s exactly what had happened. Though he was to declare that he was enticed by the power his legateship conferred, Wolsey was in truth infinitely more interested in his ascendancy at the court of Henry VIII. A Cardinal who aspired to become Pope would have been expected to pay more attention to his standing in the Roman court. Wolsey did not. He did not even seem to bother collecting his revenues from the titular church of Santa Cecilia.12 This is the story the portrait tells. His face turned away from the reality which the document in his hands reveals, the Cardinal voices his choice and in doing so he seals his fate. With the advantage of hindsight, the anonymous painter ventures a comment on the rise and fall of one of the most powerful men in England. Hermeneutic depth in the case of paintings such as this lies in front of our eyes, etched like a wound on its very surface and no deeper than the word.

Restoration

Unusual and intriguing this painting is now too fragile to be viewed. Talking to Ruth Bubb (paintings conservator) who has closely examined the work, we learn that the canvas has been lined, but discoloured varnish was not removed from it before lining. Losses of paint and ground, which are extensive, have not been filled or retouched. The restoration of the painting would be completed by removing the discoloured varnish film, applying an isolating varnish and filling and retouching losses invisibly. The frame can be restored as well. Weak areas of wood should be consolidated and losses repaired.

The estimated cost for the full restoration of the painting and frame would be some £5,000. If you are interested in donating to this project please contact Simon Offen or Cristina Neagu at Christ Church. If this sum can be raised, restoration work will commence immediately and the portrait be in place for the reopening of the Library.

Cristina Neagu
Christ Church


Esther Inglis, Calligraphy and the French Psalter

The Library at Christ Church possesses an astonishingly beautiful manuscript book of the psalms of David in French, richly bound in crimson velvet decorated with silver-thread embroidery and seed pearls. Each of the 150 psalms is written in a different script, varying from gothic hands and flowing loose scripts to the most immaculate of print-like roman letters, some of which are no more than 3mm tall.

Many of the pages are also ornamented with hand-executed borders and cartouches of complex strapwork, knots or foliage, together with putti and mannerist grotesques.

This luxurious volume is prefaced by several dedicatory verses and a letter from the scribe to Elizabeth I, begging that this volume will find a place in some retired corner of the Queen’s cabinet. The title page includes a self-portrait of the scribe, and gives her name as ‘Esther Anglois, Francoise’.
Esther Anglois, or Inglis, was, according to her own words, born in France in 1571 to Huguenot parents. Her family left France during the hectic violence of the St Bartholomew’s Day massacres in 1572, and by 1578 had arrived in Edinburgh. Her father, Nicholas Langlois, was appointed by James VI as master of the French school, where he also taught handwriting. Her mother, Marie Presot, was also a well-known calligrapher.

By the time of her marriage in 1596 to Bartholomew Kello, Esther was already producing high quality manuscripts for friends and patrons. The texts were usually in French and religious in nature, including translations of the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes as well as the Psalms. After the turn of the century the manuscripts became increasingly colourful and naturalistic in their decoration.

Many, like the Psalter that now survives at Christ Church, were dedicated to members of the political elite in an attempt to secure patronage. However, it is clear from Esther’s dedicatory epistles that several of her manuscripts were unsolicited gifts, and it is a sad truth that there was never a high demand for her work. She probably gained very little more than glory through her meticulous and demanding labours. She was close to debt when she died.

An aspect of Inglis’s work that has attracted the attention of modern scholars is the use of her calligraphic styles she used in the Christ Church manuscript were often drawn from the handwriting manuals of John de Beauchesne, another Huguenot immigrant to Scotland who became writing master to James VI’s children. She also borrowed from the Continental exemplars that would have been familiar to her parents. Her faith acted as a counterweight to her audacious position as a female artist in the early modern period.

Handwriting, like needlework, was associated with virtue in the humanist canon; the clarity of the pennmanship was seen as a reflection of the pure mind.

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1. D. Laing, ‘Notes relating to Mrs Esther (Langlois or) Inglis, the celebrated calligraphist, with an enumeration of manuscript volumes written by her between the years 1586 and 1624’, Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Vol. 6 (1865), p. 284.

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Example of calligraphic style in MS 180, fol. 106

The manuscripts by her husband Bartholomew Kello to promote his separate career as a news gatherer and political messenger. The Christ Church psalter was prepared with two more manuscripts, copies of the Proverbs of Solomon, dedicated to the Earl of Essex, and of Ecclesiastes, dedicated to his secretary Anthony Bacon (the elder brother of Francis).

All three manuscripts were delivered to their dedicatees in London by Kello in the spring of 1599. By 1599, Essex was beginning to position himself as Elizabeth’s political rival, rather than her favourite, and it is interesting to note that whilst Inglis compares Elizabeth to King David in the preface to the psalter, Essex is in turn hailed in his copy of the Proverbs as the Solomon of his day, and his martial prowess as the ‘father of the fatherland’ is explicitly praised in the dedicatory verses.

The manuscripts seem to be intended to express Kello’s allegiances in the hovering succession crisis, and to highlight his potential as a go-between for Essex and James VI. Esther Inglis’s Huguenot heritage played an important part in her work and in the formation of her artistic persona.
This attribute of her work was strengthened by Inglis through the deliberate description of her skill as God-given.

Her motto, present in the self-portraits drawn in almost all of her manuscripts, was ‘De l’Eternal le bien, de moi le mal ou rien’ (‘From the Lord comes goodness; From myself, badness, or nothing’). In the book at Christ Church, the verse appears on the book lain open before her on the table (see illustration on page 27). By focussing on French religious texts, attributing her skills to God, and describing the variety of her styles as a reflection of the variety of God’s creation, Esther Inglis used her Huguenot principles as the justification for outstepping the boundaries of prescribed behaviour for women in her period.

The manuscript at Christ Church is not only connected to a pivotal moment in English history, but is a testament to the determination of one woman to support her family through her talents, and to dedicate those talents to the God for whom her family had suffered.

Lucy Gwynn
Huguenot Library, University of London

Exhibitions in the Library, Benefactors and the Kimbell Art Museum

At the time of our visit the Upper Library looked magnificent. April sun was streaming in through the Serlian windows and the light reflecting off the wooden floor into this vast space was spectacular and utterly unforgettable. The bookcases were still housing the Wake and other collections of leather-bound volumes but the space was almost surreal as it was completely empty of all its furniture; the Cardinal Hat was in Yale, the familiar Chippendale stools were in storage and, more importantly, not a single photocopier was in sight! …

In April 2010 members of the Board and Circle of Benefactors of the Kimbell Art Museum, Forth Worth, Texas, came to London and environs on an intensive art tour. The tour was organized to mark the Museum’s recent acquisition of Michelangelo’s earliest known panel painting The Temptation of Saint Anthony. Their aim was to visit key collections in the UK having works by Michelangelo. The Kimbell Museum has a small but priceless collection of about 350 works of art. It holds a unique position among world museums as it houses works of the highest quality across a wide spectrum including pre-Columbian, South East Asian, Italian Baroque and French Twentieth century. The collection is housed in probably one of the most famous modernist museum buildings designed by the architect Louis I. Khan (1901-1974).

The Museum has also made a name for itself among the international art community for its continued commitment to art historical scholarship and debate. It regularly curates some of the best temporary art exhibitions. I was lucky to have been involved with the exhibition “Picturing the Bible” under the Directorship of Timothy Potts (Christ Church JRF 1985-90). Among the Kimbell’s masterpieces is the smaller pendant to the House’s own seminal painting Butcher’s Shop by Annibale Carracci, currently in the Christ Church Picture Gallery, which was of particular interest to the visitors. Having seen Oxford
on the Kimbell group’s itinerary I was able to persuade them that no visit to Oxford would be complete without a visit to the House. The Dean responded generously in giving us full access to the college, and Simon Offen from the Development Office ensured that the afternoon would be truly memorable. On the 8th April we were welcomed in Tom Quad by Simon and Judith Curthoys, the archivist. After visiting Hall and the Cathedral, the group was met by Jacqueline Thalmann whose talk in the Picture Gallery focussed on the Carracci Turcher's Shop. She then proceeded to show the group some of the treasures from the Print Room, including several sheets by Michelangelo. I had been in touch with Janet McMullin of Christ Church Library earlier in the year while planning this visit. Her response, along with that of Cristina Neagu was extraordinarily generous in allowing us to visit the Library at a time when it was unquestionably “off limits” to the common mortal. At the time the Library was undergoing the last phase of a major refurbishment. Despite this however, the Library staff were undeterred and rose to the occasion, arranging to have some highlights of the collection taken out from storage to view in the East Wing. It was a privilege to be so close to such treasures, including Wolsey’s very own famously illuminated lectionary. A small printed catalogue of the exhibition was produced by the Library for the group. Simon Offen escorted us from the Library’s back door straight into the Dean’s very own garden, where he was there to receive each of the Kimbell visitors including Mrs Kay Forstson, Director of the Board of the Museum, and Dr Eric Lee, the newly appointed Director of the Museum. The Dean and Mrs Lewis opened the Deanery for us and hosted a wonderful afternoon tea.

Christ Church is unique for its heritage and treasures, but the Kimbell group also left knowing that this great institution was both hospitable and generous and had made them feel very welcomed indeed.

Maria Cristina White-da Cruz
Queen’s Gate School, London

Postscript to ‘Shakespeare’s Mentor’
MS184: Sir William Daniel of Over Tabley

There are a couple of errors in my piece on William Daniel in the previous issue of the journal.¹ I had followed The Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940² (under Katrin) in calling Catherine of Berain the grand-daughter of Henry VII, but the general consensus seems to be that she was his great-grand-daughter. If Ursula Stanley had been the legitimate daughter of the 4th Earl of Derby by his wife Lady Margaret Clifford, then the marriage of Ursula and John Salusbury would have been between the great-great grand-children of Henry VII. The alleged dedication of Titus Andronicus to Lady Strange is a mistake which has crept in from the previous paragraph relating to Spenser’s The Teares of the Muses. It is an error for which I am entirely responsible. I have received a few comments on the article varying from ‘very interesting’ and ‘thought provoking’ to ‘there is no evidence that Shakespeare was ever at Lathom’. Admittedly, the only evidence is the quotation (lines 434-447) of Spenser’s Colin Clouts Come Home Again (1595). Unfortunately it is unlikely ever to be proved as the Stanley and Wilbraham archives (apart from those of the former removed from Lathom to Knowsley and those from both in the offices of their London solicitors) were assigned to the furnace at Blaguegate Colliery by the 3rd Earl of Lathom, 4th Baron Skelmersdale, before demolishing a large part of Lathom House in 1929 to avoid death duties. He died without an heir in the following year. He had inherited Lord Strange’s former home and the archives that had remained there. Whether these contained evidence of Shakespeare being at Lathom is a matter of speculation. Suffice it to say that the loss of Lathom House and its archives was a tragedy for Lancashire and the nation as they might have accounted for Shakespeare’s ‘lost years’. I would like to think that the young Shakespeare witnessed some of the performances of Leicester’s Players at the Earl’s castle at Kenilworth, which is only 12 miles from Stratford, and that he accompanied them on their travels reaching Lathom in July 1587 where he remained under the patronage of Lord and Lady Strange until the former’s death in April 1594. It was then that William Daniel was made a Serjeant-at-law and had to leave Gray’s Inn for the Serjeant’s Inn in Fleet Street. There is no doubt that he was influential in arranging the first performance of The Comedy of Errors at Gray’s Inn in December 1594 as a grand farewell to his former colleagues and to mark the arrival of Shakespeare in London.

John Wing
Christ Church Library 1962-1995

Preserving the Past
St John Chrysostom’s Homilies (MS 4)

Christ Church Library contains one of the most important collections of manuscripts and early printed books in any of the great national libraries. Its holdings are particularly rich in music, theology, classics, travel books, numismatics, early science, medicine and Hebrew studies.

These collections are not only priceless from a scholarly point of view, they are also historically unique and largely irreplaceable. Despite being designed to last for hundreds of years, books are vulnerable and can get damaged, sometimes very badly.

It is important to remember that the Library has a duty not only to make all its stock available to the readers of today, but also to maintain and keep its treasures accessible for future generations. In an effort to keep our collections in the best condition possible, the Library has started a thorough programme of care and conservation of books. Tracing which manuscripts and early printed books are in most need of specialist attention is the first step in a long and laborious process.

Below is a case study focusing on a priceless illuminated Greek manuscript dating from c.10th century. It is a heavy and voluminous codex containing works by John Chrysostom, Amphilochus, Georgius Nicomediensus and Gregorius Antiochenus. Proportionally, the largest section is devoted to Chrysostom’s Homilies.

Book report on MS 4

Binding

The manuscript is bound in a plain mid brown calf skin binding with blind tooled fillet lines to the boards. The spine is also largely undecorated with blind pallet lines on either side of the raised bands and 2 gold tooled red sheepskin skiver labels in panels 2 and 5. The endleaves are constructed of an attractive early marbled paper with a French curl pattern. The primary endband is worked in red/pink and white silk. All aspects of the binding can be typical of books bound in the early part of the eighteenth century.

Marbled paper on endleaves

This connects with the catalogue entry for the purchase date of 1724, and may indicate that the original binding, when purchased by William Wake, was in poor condition or missing and had to be replaced or reinstated.

Primary endband

Textblock

This is made up of bifolio and single sheets of highly burnished parchment with heavy and distinct ruling lines. There are manuscript annotations and rather charming marginalia.

It is very difficult to see the make up of the quires in terms of the number of bifolia per quire due to a combination of sewing structure and hooked single leaves.

There may also be evidence of missing leaves due to the presence of stubs in the gutter.

The eighteenth century sewing structure is based on 5 raised cord supports which are laced into the boards. There is, however, evidence of at least 2 sewing structures throughout the textblock: the first using a heavy thread which runs along the gutter of
the bifolio and is the primary sewing to the supports and a lighter thread being used to overcast certain sections or loose leaves.

The overcasting may have been used to attach bifolia during rebinding in the eighteenth century and to avoid time consuming repair to the damaged spine folds.

**Binding condition**

The binding is in good if worn condition. The cover is heavily abraded on the linear surface of the boards, the joints are split either wholly or partially and the headcaps have worn away to reveal the endband tie downs. There is a distinct crease line running from head to tail down the spine indicating an opening of particular and repeated interest. This has resulted in the endbands being broken at this point. All of the cord sewing supports are intact, although the more exposed areas are starting to break.

**Textblock condition**

The textblock is very firm in terms of sewing structure and the leaves are clean. There has been some rodent damage to the final few quires. As the binding has not been affected by this it is highly likely that the damage occurred prior to rebinding.

Many of the illuminated initials have been cut out. The parchment is also heavily distorted across each leaf and this has resulted in pleating at the upper and lower extreme of the textblock. This is predominantly due to storage in uncontrolled environments with cycling fluctuations in humidity. There is a (contemporary?) repair to two bifolia where a large manuscript waste patch has been applied to the tail edge of the fold to allow sewing. A piece of Greek manuscript waste has been used for this. In sharp contrast to modern conservation practice an excess of animal glue has been used to attach the repair and is evident in the brown discolouration around the patched area.

The use of waste materials was common and accepted practice in binding in northern Europe until the early seventeenth century when the aesthetic changed in favour of new materials for aspects of binding such as endleaves and repairs.

It is my conjecture that this patch was applied at some point before it was rebound in the early 1700s. Whether this is an indication of a further rebinding after the original or whether the patch was applied when the manuscript was first bound is unclear.

**MS 4 offers up many mysteries**

What was the original binding like? Many tenth century manuscripts were bound in wooden boards and fully covered in alum tawed leather. Greek bindings also have a distinctive headband structure, in that the headband continues to be worked over the edge of the boards and forms part of the board attachment. This gives the headcaps on Greek bindings their characteristic stepped appearance.

Are there missing bifolia? Or are the scribes using hooked guards to attach single sheets within a largely bifoliate text block? This evidence is obscured somewhat by the areas of oversewing.
What date was the manuscript patch applied and is this an indication of a second lost binding?

Was there a binding at all on MS4 when Wake purchased the text in the 1720s? If so, it was likely to have been in a very poor condition. There is a high possibility that there was no binding at all. This is indicated by the rodent damage and the evidence for uncontrolled swelling and shrinking of the parchment due to environmental humidity in the distorted textblock. A binding may have gone some way to protect the textblock from either rodent or environmental damage.

This would involve lifting the leather on the boards and spine to allow new materials – probably toned paper backed with a linen textile (aerolinen), to bridge the joint area and reinstate it functionally and aesthetically. A paper support would be applied to the endbands and the headcaps would be reinstated, again probably using thick toned paper to prevent the bulking up of new material under the existing thin leather of the spine.

Even though they are distorted, no attempts would be made to flatten the parchment leaves. At present they are not distorting or straining the binding and they are shaped in a way that each leaf is fits snugly against its neighbour. The areas of rodent damaged would not be infilled. Repairs would only be made in areas where there is risk of further damage through accidental tearing or loss, where an area of parchment was vulnerable to being detached. These areas will be secured with toned Japanese paper using wheatstarch paste as an adhesive.

The manuscript would benefit from being boxed and stored flat if not housed on open shelving to protect against further damage and dust accumulation during handling and storage. A box with a pressure flap to lightly hold down the reactive parchment textblock would provide some control over further distortion. If the book is housed on open shelving a shoe with a raised support in the base would prevent the binding and sewing structure from being strained by the weight of the textblock and provide the binding with some protection from abrasions when being removed or replaced on the shelf.

Victoria Stevens
Oxford Conservation Consortium

Conservation potential

As the volume is in good condition, its conservation requirements are minimal. All volumes are mechanically cleaned as part of their conservation using a latex sponge and eraser. As the ink does not penetrate into the parchment, unlike its penetration into a paper substrate, care must be taken during cleaning not to dislodge the ink layer from the surface. In this case however it is only the head edge and outer leaves which would need to undergo substantial cleaning.

The main area for treatment would be the joint area of the boards to prevent further wear and losses to the covering leather and cords due to excessive movement of the boards.

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