

MS. 691, on deposit as Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, Heberden Coin Archive, Arch. Coll. 9

Catalogue of the coins in Christ Church Library

Oxford, 1718

#### STRUCTURE

Material: Paper, folded in quarto, with some speckling particularly in later leaves (arms of Amsterdam), 197 × 160mm. Folios: vi + 124. The original foliation by the scribe is minimal, providing only 1-2 at top right, but that has been supplemented for the other occupied leaves (up to fol. 79) in pencil (s. xx). The last section of the manuscript (from fol. 80), mainly blank, is unfoliated.

Collation: Quires of eight: i<sup>4</sup> with first being the front pastedown ii<sup>6</sup> wanting last after fol. 2 iii-vii<sup>8</sup> viii<sup>8</sup> wanting one at end after fol. 49 ix-xvii<sup>8</sup> xviii<sup>4</sup> with last being the back pastedown.

Layout: The only ruling comprises three vertical lines, in pencil, to the left of each recto, the innermost 18mm from spine, the next 9mm further right, and the last another 8mm to the right. The first left-hand column created is reserved for numbers; the second column guides the writing of the entries, the first line of each indented to start at the third vertical while subsequent lines of the entry begin at the middle of the three verticals. Writing is only on the rectos, with versos left blank. The writing extends to the fore-edge. The number of long lines varies between 23 and 28.

Script: Written throughout in one italic script, though the ‘addenda’ provided at fol. 80, as well as two added entries at fol. 61, are in a much shakier version of the same script. The scribe identifies himself at fol. i as Charles Brent, on whom see HISTORY.

Binding: White leather over pasteboards, sewn on four thongs, with strips of marbled paper stuck to each board (s. xviii<sup>1</sup>). No bookplate.

#### CONTENTS

Fol. i: blank except for the scribe’s inscription: First flyleaf: ‘Liber Ædis Christi | Ex dono Car. Brent. A.M. | A.D. 1718’.

Fol. i<sup>v</sup>-iv: blank.

Fol. v: ‘Nov<sup>bis</sup> 26. 1718. | Reperiuntur in Scrinijis Nummarijs Bibliothecæ | Ædis Christi Nummi Antiqui in universum. 488. | sc. Aurei, quorum duo Laminati - - - 3 | Argentei Græci - - - 5 | Argentei Rom{m.} Consularis - - - 41 | Arg. Incerti - - - 2 | Argentei Rom{m.} Impp.- - - 310 | Æreus Græcus - - - - 1 | Ærei Romani - - - - 126 | [total written to right:] 488.’

A summary of the following catalogue.

Fol. v<sup>v</sup>-vi: blank.

Fol. 1-80: ‘[to the left:] Abacus. 1. Loculus. | [centred:] Numismata Ædis Christi. | Nummi Græci. | 1. Caput Philippi patris Alex. M. --- [fol. 80] 7. Numm. Gallieni. Caput Gallieni radiatum. GALLIENUS AUG. Av. Figura stans, dex: Globum, sin: Bacalum. PROVID. AUG.’.

The catalogue. After the listing of six Greek coins at fol. 1-2 (with all but the top five lines of fol. 2 blank), that of the Roman republican coins occupies fol. 3-12; fol. 13 is blank, and the main listing is of Roman imperial coins, divided into two sections, the first being for silver coins (fol. 14-60, with addenda, by the scribe, at fol. 61 and fol. 62-63 blank), and the second for bronze coins (fol. 64-79, with addenda by the scribe at fol. 80). In each section, the coins are ordered by emperor.

Fol. 80<sup>v</sup>-114: blank.

Fol. 115-116: index to the preceding work. Presented in two main columns with each subdivided into three columns for name of emperor, page reference for silver coins, and page reference for bronze coins.

Fol. 116-124: blank.

#### ADDITIONAL CONTENTS

A slip of paper (70 x 200mm) sits between fol. 60 and 61, on which is a note (s. xviii<sup>1</sup>) stating the number of coins (presumably in the ChCh collection) from English rulers, listed by name from Henry II to Charles II (and including 'Oliver').

#### HISTORY

The opening flyleaf reveals the author of this catalogue as Charles Brent (1683/84-1722), Librarian of Christ Church from 1713 until his early death. Brent was responsible for overseeing the reorganisation of the library that was necessary following the bequest of wide-ranging collection of the late dean, Henry Aldrich (for the context and for Brent's biography, see Rundle and Hanna, pp. 63-64). The year before the production of this volume, he had overseen the creation of a new catalogue of the contents of the library's Archive (MS. LR. 15, fols 2-13, edited at Rundle and Hanna, pp. 86-121). Also in 1717, Brent had given to the library a set of four printed books and three modern coins (MS. LR. 1, p. 235b):

Numismata tria Argentea ob Inaugurationes Caroli II Jacobi II & Georgii Mag.  
Britanniae &c Regum solenniter percussa.

Archbishop Sharps Sermons. 4 vols. 8<sup>vo</sup>

(The printed volumes, of the sermons of John Sharp (1645-1714), archbishop of York, appear no longer to be in the collection, replaced by those with the shelfmarks WW.1.20-23; on Sharp and coin-collecting, see MS. 464). Brent's numismatic interests inspired him to produce a new catalogue of the House's classical coin collection. He presumably considered it an appropriate undertaking at this time of re-ordering and, while he delegated other work (as is seen in MS. LR. 15), he produced this volume himself, and records it as his gift to Christ Church.

Brent's opening inscription has, in fact, been mistakenly assumed to imply that the coins listed were his gift, and that they formed the 'nucleus' of the institution's holdings (Sutherland, *Oxoniansia*, p. 140). In truth, Christ Church had a longer tradition of collecting, and Brent's catalogue was indebted to an earlier one: he was working from and often paraphrasing MS. 690, which he had also annotated. His notes there most often recorded a coin as 'deest' but while there had been losses since the compilation of the earlier catalogue in 1686, there had also been new arrivals. So, for instance, Edward Hanes in MS. 690 had

recorded thirty-three Roman republican coins, but Brent noted in the volume that five were missing and added entries for two more. In his own catalogue, Brent has thirty-five coins in the same category: he excluded those he had noted as missing, introduced into the series the two he had inserted into MS. 690, as well as three others which must have been recent arrivals. Likewise, for the reign of Antoninus Pius, MS. 690 had recorded sixteen silver coins and one bronze; Brent has the same number of silver but three more bronze coins, one of which was presumably the late 1680s gift of Walter Moyle recorded at MS. 690, fol. 65. Others recorded in this catalogue presumably were part of the gift of Browne Willis, recorded in the Library's Donors' Book under 1703: 'Quadraginta circiter melioris notae numismata' (p. 226; on Willis, see N. Doggett in *ODNB*).

While this manuscript opens with a single date, a change in script suggests that it received additions after its year of production. At fol. 61, Brent provides 'Addenda Nummis Imperatorijs ex Argento', listing three items, and then, slightly lower on the page, two more in a much shakier script, perhaps from his last illness (and thus from 1721). After his death, there were no additions (or subtractions) made to his catalogue but it was not entirely forgotten. As noted, a slip of paper was placed in the volume recording some English coins, not of direct relevance to this listing. Similarly, at the final verso (fol. 124<sup>v</sup>), there is a note: 'Jan: 4<sup>th</sup> 1733/4. given to the Library by the Rev'd Mr Colley a small Picture in a silver case with twelve different Habits of Horn.' Though not directly relevant to a catalogue of coins, there is some association, since Jonathan Colley (d. 1738) was the cathedral chaplain who had earlier given a coin to the library (MS. 690, fol. 65).

In 1940, the coin collection was placed on deposit with the Ashmolean Museum and the papers relating to the collection, including this catalogue (like MS. 690), migrated with it. It was given its present shelfmark in April 2018.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

C. H. V. Sutherland, 'The Coin Collection of Christ Church, Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, v (1940), pp. 140-145.

Dr David Rundle, 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018

[Draft]