

**A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF
THE MANUSCRIPTS IN
THE COLLEGE LIBRARY OF
MAGDALENE COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE**

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A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the College Library of Magdalene College,
Cambridge by Montague Rhodes James

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INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

THE only printed list of the manuscripts in the College Library (as distinguished from the Pepysian Library) at Magdalene College which I have as yet been able to discover is that given in Gustav Haenel's *Catalogi librorum manuscriptorum* (Leipzig, 1830, p. 782): though before this date a notice of some few volumes was published in the travels of von Uffenbach. Before I give particulars of either of these two sources of information I will shortly review the collection as we have it now.

It consists, so far as I can ascertain, of thirty-three volumes, including a Register of Benefactors to the Library. Upon this Register I chiefly depend (as is natural) for knowledge of the donors of the several volumes. The earliest of these is the great Thomas Nevile, Master of the College from 1582 to 1593, in which year he became Master of Trinity. He presented two Bibles (I am only concerning myself, be it noted, with manuscripts), one of which (no. 3) is still recognizable. Next comes Barnaby Goche (1604-1626) with a gift of a rather interesting Psalter (no. 7), then Richard Hollingworth, credited somewhat baldly with "manuscripta quatuor," and last, Simon Gunton, the historian of the Cathedral of Peterborough (d. 1676). Thirteen books, not all manuscripts, stand as his gifts, but of the MSS. only six are still to be found. Thus much the incomplete Register tells us. From the books themselves I can only add the names of Browne Willis, the antiquary, and Dr Peckard, Master, and Dean of Peterborough, to the list of donors.

Proceeding to classify the manuscripts according to their subjects, we have:

Biblical. Four Latin Bibles (nos. 1-4), the first a large and fine example.

An Illuminated Apocalypse (no. 5) with a later comment in English: a fine undescribed specimen.

A Wycliffite New Testament (no. 6).

Liturgical. Three Psalters (nos. 7-9), two of the thirteenth century, one from the French-Flemish district, the other from a more northerly region: a third of the fifteenth century, which belonged to the parish church of Lechlade and is bound up with an early printed book.

An interesting book of Offices, with music, from Peterborough (no. 10). A group of three devotional books from Syon Monastery (nos. 11-13) which have not attracted the attention they deserve. Two of them contain the daily office, one with rubrics in English, the other wholly in Latin; the third, which was not written specially for Syon, is a very curious and rich collection of private devotions.

Theological. Nos. 14 and 15 are miscellaneous collections of patristic and medieval matter: no. 14 contains some unusual lives of saints.

In later theology we have a *Compendium Theologicum* (16), works by Walter Hilton (17) and Kelle of Hampole (18), an English version of the *Imitatio* (19), a Jesuit's collection of Exorcisms (20), and the commonplace book of an English divine, perhaps Simon Gunton (21).

Historical and Legal. A good copy of William of Tyre from Waltham Abbey (22), a late Martinus Polonus (with other matter) from Syon (23), documents relating to the Earl of Bristol (30), some collections by Browne Willis (24, 25), statutes of the University and of England (31, 32).

The arts and sciences are represented by Isidore (26), a volume principally concerned with Geomancy (27), and a late copy of Aristides Quintilianus on Music (28).

The Register (33) closes the list.

It is unfortunately certain that there were at one time more manuscripts in the Library than can now be found there. Mention is made both in the Register and by von Uffenbach of a *Psalterium*

Beda with much gold lettering, presented by Gunton. Nothing is said of this by Haenel, nor does it occur in the modern catalogue. One cannot suppose that it had much connexion with Bede, but it would seem to have been a handsome and precious book. An illuminated almanac or kalendar of the fifteenth century does occur in the modern catalogue, but is not to be found on the shelves.

The collection, small as it is, is undoubtedly very interesting, and deserves a wider celebrity than it has yet enjoyed. I should like to express my thanks to the College, and particularly to the College Librarian, Mr V. S. Vernon Jones, for the facilities ungrudgingly given to me for the purposes of my work.

The history of the Library-building and of the various places in which the books have from time to time been kept is given with all necessary detail in Willis and Clark's *Architectural History* (ii 307 etc.).

I append the gist of the passage in von Uffenbach, a copy of Haenel's list of the manuscripts, and a list of donors, owners, and provenances.

M. R. J.

October 1907.