

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE CAMBRIDGE
ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY. A DESCRIPTIVE
CATALOGUE OF THE MANUSCRIPTS AND
SCARCE BOOKS IN THE LIBRARY OF ST.
JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, NO. VI -
PART I; NO. VIII - PART II**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649453399

Publications of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Scarce Books in the Library of St. John's College, Cambridge, No. VI - Part I; No. VIII - Part II by Morgan Cowie

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MORGAN COWIE

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2 vols 9/-

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Nº VI.

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PART THE FIRST.

CAMBRIDGE:

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AND BY

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M.DCCC.LII.

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OF THE
MANUSCRIPTS AND SCARCE BOOKS
IN THE
LIBRARY OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

BY
THE REV. MORGAN COWIE, M.A.,
FELLOW OF ST JOHN'S COLLEGE.

"His chamber was all hanged about with rolls
"And old records from ancient times deriv'd,
"Some made in books, some in long parchment scrolls,
"That were all worn-out and full of canker holes."
Shakespeare's Florio Quondam, B. 2, Cant. 3, Stanza 57.

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INTRODUCTION.

I BELIEVE there is no printed Catalogue of the following MSS., for I cannot meet with one, or find any record of its existence. The *Catalogus MSSorum Angliae et Hiberniae* (Oxon. 1697.) contains the Catalogues of the MS. Libraries of some of our Colleges, but not that of St John's College Manuscripts. The *Ecloga Oxono-Cantabrigiensis*, by T. J. (T. James,) contains very few of the College MS. Libraries. It is true, that Dr Cave in his *Historia Literaria*, and his editor Wharton, refer often to MSS. existing in the College, as also Bishop Tanner in the *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica*, and these references being generally accurate, I must conclude that they had personal access to the Library, (Dr Cave was a member of the College,) or had friends who supplied them with information among the resident Fellows. It seems very probable that Mr Baker may have supplied such references to the Bibliotheca of Bishop Tanner, as it is asserted that he did assist in the second edition of the *Notitia Monastica*. See *Master's Memoir* of him, p. 52.

However, if there had been a Catalogue in existence, it would not have been a useless task to have reconsidered and carefully reconstructed it from personal inspection. Those who have consulted the works above-named, will readily agree with me, that nothing can be more meagre than the accounts they give; and it is often quite impossible to make any use of the information, such as it is, from the careless manner in which the materials have been heaped together. That I may not be supposed to erect myself into a censor without sufficient ground, I will give an extract from a foreign review of some note, which expresses more censure on the ponderous volumes of the Catal. MSS. Ang. and Hib., than I should venture to do.

The passage occurs in a review of one of Hearne's publications, and it goes on to speak of the then expected second edition of the Bodleian Catalogue of printed Books:

"Si spera, che questa ultima Edizione non solo sarà più copiosa, ma anche più corretta, e meglio disposta delle due precedenti, e farà più onore a i compilatori di essa, di quello che n'abbia fatto a suoi compilatori il Catalogo dei Manoscritti d'Inghilterra e d'Irlanda, stampata pure in Oxford

nel 1697 in due tomi in foglio, dove incredibili sono gli sbagli ed errori presi nei titoli degli autori e dei libri, a riguardo della poca attenzione posta nell'osservarli e trascriverli." *GIORNALE de' Letterati d'Italia*, Tom. 28, p. 401.

An accurate and careful investigation of each particular Library ought to be undertaken by some one on the spot, with ready means of reference to authorities. These means exist in the Universities in abundance, and our Catalogues ought to have been, before now, perfect and accurate in their details. The thankless nature of the task, and the very small credit to be gained by its performance, have most probably deterred those most qualified to undertake it. Yet it appears to me a duty we owe to our benefactors to make ourselves acquainted with their legacies, and to render them as useful to literature as we can.

A desire to become acquainted with the general character of these Collections was the motive that first urged me to the investigation of our College MSS. I soon found that the mere titles of the works was of very little service to me in this pursuit, and I then first thought of hunting out what I wanted to ascertain for myself, and forming a new Catalogue containing references to sources of information. This last circumstance led to the notes which are appended to the descriptions of the several volumes. They should be considered as *references* entirely, and this may perhaps excuse the abrupt form in which the sentences sometimes appear, as I wished to contract as much as possible, that I might not trespass too far on the kindness of the Society who have charged themselves with the expence of the publication.

It may be expected that a few words should be said of the way in which the Collection was made. The principal part we owe to the munificence of Thomas and Henry Wriothesley, Earls of Southampton, principally the former, who purchased them of Mr William Crashawe, brother of Robert Crashawe the poet, and a Fellow of St John's¹, admitted as Bishop of Ely's Fellow, Jan. 19, 1593. They are marked T. C. S. (Thomas, Comes Southampton) and H. C. S. The next benefactor to be mentioned is the pious and excellent antiquary, Mr Baker, who not only went through all the other MSS. and noted several in his own hand, but left us a good many very interesting relics of his own. Amongst others, Dr Beale, 19th Master, and Bishop Gunning should be mentioned; the names of others will be given, whenever any MS. contains a record of the source whence we derive it.

¹ He was nominated by the Crown, the See of Ely being then vacant. Mr Baker notices that the case is different here to what it is at Jesus College, where the Archbishop of Canterbury acts if the See of Ely is vacant.