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FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

# MESSENGER

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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## ISAAC NEWTON'S LIBRARY: TEN BOOKS AT WISCONSIN

On September 14, 1673, Henry Oldenburg, Secretary of the Royal Society, wrote to Isaac Newton, then at Cambridge:

"Sir: I herewth send you Mr Boyle's new Book of Effluviūms, wch he desired me to present to you in his name, wth his very affectionat service, and assurance of ye esteem he hath of your vertue and knowledge. I take ye liberty to Joyne in the same pacquet two copies more of ye same Book, one for Dr Barrow, and ye other for Dr More, wch he intreats you to send to ym from him, if they be now at Cambridge; if not, to keep ym in your hands, till they shall returne thither."

Oldenburg, one of whose duties was to act as intermediary, wrote on the title page, just below the date, "For Mr. Isaac Newton from the Authour," and on the fly-leaf: "The Bookbinder by mistake hath bound ye Discourse of ye Great Efficacy of Effluviūms in the wrong place, where as it should immediately follow ye discourse of ye Determinat Nature of Effluviūms." Newton added the book to his library, where it remained, together with several other works of Boyle, until his death fifty-four years later.

His library by then had grown considerably, both by contributions and by purchase, so that the inventory of his possessions taken shortly after his death mentions "362 books in folio, 477 in quarto, 1057 in octavo, duodecimo and 24 mo., together with above one hundredweight of pamphlets and wast books," 1896 books in all (without the "pamphlets and wast"), valued at £270, a large and important library.

Newton died on March 20, 1727, without leaving a will. In spite of his fame and the esteem in which he was held, little attention seems to have been paid to his library, which three months later was sold to John Huggins, warden of Fleet Prison, for £300. A list had been made

detailing the library by author, short title, and date. At the end of the list the "pamphlets and wast" books were mentioned again, also "3 dozen of small chymical books" and "Books that has notes of Sir Isaac Newton. 4 Newtoni Principia interleaved imperf. sowd 1687. Newton's Optics lat. Interleaved 1706. Descartes Geometria Tom 1 Lugd. 1649. Bible with Service Dirty and leaf wanting Field 1660. Secrets Reveald or an Entrance to the Shut-Palace 1669." These latter books, with Newton's annotations, were not to be included in the sale to Huggins, and their value was deducted from the £300.

Huggins had no apparent connection with Newton, except that he was a neighbor. Why he wanted the books is not known. Perhaps he bought them for his son, Charles Huggins, Rector of Chinnor, near Oxford, for eventually he sent the library to him. Charles Huggins pasted his bookplate in the books, and they remained in his library until his death in 1750, when the entire library was purchased by James Musgrave, who succeeded Huggins as Rector of Chinnor, for £400. Musgrave cataloged the books (the catalog still exists), marked them in ink with press marks, and pasted in his own bookplate, occasionally over that of Charles Huggins.

That the location of Newton's library was still known in the late 18th century is evident in a letter written by Jacob Jonas Björnsthål to C. C. Gjörwell, October 24, 1775, and published in his *Brief auf seinen ausländischen Reisen* (Rostock, 1777-83, vol. 3, pp. 288-9): "I would like however to announce a circumstance which, I am convinced, has never appeared before in any book: that is, that we along with others in the same neighborhood, made our journey with the express purpose of seeing the personal library of the great and immortal Sir Newton. They are now in the possession of Doctor Musgrave, Pastor, or as they say here, Rector of Chinnor, eighteen (about three Swedish) miles from Oxford. The collection cost him approximately £400 Pounds sterling. Here one can find all the editions of Newton's *Works*, including, which is most remarkable, marginal notes in this own hand, and occasionally several pages at the end of the volume which he has completely filled with remarks. I don't doubt that any Newtonian would find much pleasure and much enlightenment here. . . By the way, one can see that Newton had an admirable library. All Greek and Latin classical writers are also to be found. I also saw letters from Newton to Flamsteed, which are in the collection of the Corpus Christi Library in Oxford. More of his manuscripts are to be found at Cambridge." (Translated from the German.) This letter was reprinted by J. Edelston in his notes to the *Correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton and Professor Cotes* (London, 1850).

After Musgrave's death in 1778, Newton's books were transferred, along with the rest of the library, to the estate of Musgrave's son at

Barnsley Park. This time no new bookplate was added, but a new press mark was written onto the bookplate of James Musgrave. Here the books were to remain until 1920, during which time their association with Newton was forgotten.

In 1920, because of the sale of a family estate at Thame Park, part of the library at Barnsley Park was transferred to Thame Park to be included in the sale. The books were sold in large lots at little value. About 800 volumes were sold, not all of which had come from Newton's library, although the sale catalog mentioned some as having the autograph of Newton. A considerable part of Newton's library (858 volumes), had not been sold in the Thame Park sale and remained at Barnsley Park. This library was eventually tracked down by Richard de Villamil, who did more than anyone to establish the provenance of Newton's library, and whose book *Newton the man* prints the list of Newton's books made at the sale to Huggins and the catalog of James Musgrave. The books of Newton remaining at Barnsley Park were purchased in 1943 by the Pilgrim Trust for £5500 and presented to Trinity College, Cambridge, Newton's College, and remain there as a memorial to Newton.

Not all of Newton's books followed the provenance described above. In 1813 a public sale was held of "the library of the late Mrs. Anne Newton, containing the collection of the great Sir Isaac Newton." What relationship Anne Newton bore to Sir Isaac, and how she came into possession of part of his library is not clear. Only twelve of the 1363 books offered are described as having the "autograph of Sir I. Newton," but Newton did not always sign his books, so perhaps some of the other scientific works in the collection belonged at one time to him. Of the twelve books indicated as his, only one (T. Gale, *Opuscula mythologica*, Cambridge, 1671) is also on the Huggins list. It would seem likely, therefore, that the books which eventually belonged to Anne Newton were never included in the sale to Huggins and that part of Newton's library was disposed of in another way. Anne Newton was probably related to Isaac Newton.

There are other difficulties in tracing the provenance of Newton's library. Villamil's reprinting of the list of books sold to John Huggins and the books cataloged by Musgrave contain inaccuracies (some dates given for books on the Huggins list are long after Newton's death), and many circumstances difficult to explain—why, for example, so many substantial books (as distinguished from pamphlets) in the Musgrave catalog, which by their subject should rightly have belonged to Newton, do not appear on the Huggins list. Also, in the Musgrave list a copy of the 1717 edition of Newton's *Opticks* is listed "in Eng. with his Correction in MSS, 4to." This book (now in the Babson Institute Library) was offered for sale in 1921 by Sotheran. Zeitlinger, who cataloged the

book, claims to have bought it in 1910 at auction. It did not contain the Musgrave bookplate, in spite of the fact that, according to Villamil, it was in the Musgrave library.

It is apparent that the story of Newton's library has not yet been completely unraveled. What is certain, however, is that all but 858 of over 2,000 books belonging to Newton have been scattered. Many have turned up at auctions and in booksellers' catalogs, sometimes recognized as having belonged to Newton, sometimes not. Most of them are easily identifiable, if they followed the usual provenance: Huggins—Huggins—Musgrave—Barnsley Park. These books will have the bookplate of Musgrave, the bookplate of Huggins, and two written press marks—one assigned by Musgrave, the other when the books were at Barnsley Park.

One cannot be certain, however, that a book containing these markings once belonged in Newton's library, unless the book is also listed in the inventory of books sold to John Huggins, since some books were undoubtedly already in the library of John Huggins' son Charles before the Newton books were added. The most obvious explanation for the curious fact that so many of the books in the Musgrave catalog that one would expect to have come from Newton are not also on the Huggins list is that many of them are small chemical and alchemical texts and thus might very well have been included in the general list of "3 dozen chymical books, dozen of wast 8° & 12°, above one hundred weight of wast books and pamphlets."

The ten books identified with Newton's library now in the Memorial Library were acquired either in the purchase of the Thordarson collection or the Duveen collection. Three of them have an indisputable provenance. Undoubtedly the most important is the pseudonymous *Secrets reveal'd: or An open entrance to the shut-palace of the king* (London, 1669), by Eirenaeus Philalethes. This alchemical book, heavily annotated and corrected by Newton, is the same copy mentioned at the end of the Huggins sale list as one of the five "books that has notes of Sir Isaac Newton" specifically excluded from the sale of Newton's library. According to the Duveen catalog, where this copy is described, it is from "the library of the Viscount Lymington, to whom it descended from Catherine Conduitt, Viscountess Lymington, great niece of Sir Isaac Newton." The copy is mentioned in David Brewster's *Life of Newton* (London, 1855) as having "great changes . . . made upon the language and meaning of the thirty-five chapters of which it consists." Newton's interest in alchemy is well known. He left in manuscript a great number of pages relating to that subject. No one as yet has studied his annotations to this popular and important alchemical text.

The other work unquestionably from Newton's library now in the Memorial Library is the presentation copy of Boyle's *Essays of effluviūms*



(London, 1673) described at the beginning of this article. The covering letter from Oldenburg transferring the book between these two great contemporaries has only recently been published in Oldenburg's collected correspondence. Unfortunately, Newton made no annotations in the book.

The eight other books with marks which indicate they might once have been in Newton's library are:

Lancelot Colson, *Philosophia maturata: An exact piece of philosophy* (London, 1668); Patrick Blair, *Botanick essays* (London, 1720); Johann Friedrich Helvetius, *The golden calf which the world adores and desires* (London, 1670); Geber, *The works* (London, 1686); George Starkey, *The marrow of alchemy* (London, 1654); Anon., *Sanguis naturae* (London, 1696); Giovanni Francesco Vigani, *Medulla chymiae* (London, 1683); Luigi de Conti, *Disceptatio practicae manualis . . . hoc est De liquore alchaest* (Frankfurt, 1661).

Only one of these, Helvetius' *The golden calf*, is on the Huggins list. The Huggins bookplate is loose in the book, and the Musgrave bookplate is missing, although the press mark is present on the flyleaf. Its small size probably accounts for its not having accommodated the rather cumbersome bookplate of Musgrave. There is one small annotation which may or may not be in Newton's hand.

A *Works* of Geber was on the Huggins list, but the date given (at least in Villamil's reprinting of the list) was of the 1678 edition. Our copy has all the bookplates and markings necessary to have come from Newton's library, but the edition is 1686. There are a few small manuscript corrections in the text.

The Memorial Library's copy of *Sanguis naturae* does not have any of the bookplates described above, but inserted loosely is an old manuscript note in Newton's hand indicating purchase of the book. A copy of the book, although probably not this one, was in the Musgrave library.

While only three of these books can without question be established as from Newton's library, it is fair to assume that most of them, because of their subject and because their small size could easily have lead to their being treated as a group on the Huggins list, were once on Newton's shelves.

John Neu  
Bibliographer for the  
History of Science

## REPAIRING HISTORY

In this age of disposable bottles and paperback books, the need to preserve bits of our collective past grows stronger, becomes indeed almost a passion. The cost of preserving and restoring rare books and manuscripts has always been high, both in time and money, and the costs will undoubtedly continue to rise as an hour of a skilled artisan's time becomes more precious.

Some time ago I was working at a large academic library which sent its very rarest books to the Newberry Library in Chicago for restoration of the bindings. The work always required many months, but seldom did anyone complain. The workmanship could not be equalled. Finally a letter came saying that the European craftsman who had done much of the work had died and there was simply no one to take his place. The university would have to look elsewhere—and elsewheres were extremely difficult to find.

Fortunately new technology has been developed to help with part of the preservation process. Esther Alkalay, head of the Department of Restoration at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, has designed a machine for the mechanical restoration of paper. Called the "recurator," this machine reduces dramatically one of the most time-consuming processes in the restoration of rare materials.

With the recurator it is possible to mend several pages at once, as long as they are approximately the same thickness and quality. According to Mrs. Alkalay, the process of restoration is very rapid, taking only a minute or two. The text surrounding holes on a page is not obscured as it often is in hand patching.

Before a page can be processed in the recurator, it must undergo the same treatment which precedes hand mending: disinfection, cleaning, deacidification, fixing ink and reinforcing the paper. Then calculations of the weight of the paper and size of area to be filled are made to determine what fiber content is needed for the pulp. When the recurator is filled with the necessary substances and the damaged page or pages placed on the 72 x 52 cm surface, "finely defibrillated paper fibers are homogeneously dispersed in water, which is passed over a fine screen on which the damaged pages are lying."

The recurator not only repairs holes but it fills cracks, joins pages and fragments, and repairs margins. It can also make new watermarked sheets of paper resembling hand-made paper.

Mrs. Alkalay's machine has been in use for three years in the library on the Hebrew University's Givot Ram campus. The first export order

came from the U.S. Library of Congress early in 1973 and the Yessim Research Development Company, which is handling the sale of the recurator, has indicated that subsequent orders were received from Archives Nationales in Paris and the New England Document Conservation Center in North Andover, Massachusetts. George Cunha, director-conservator of the New England Document Conservation Center, feels that the recurator is "one of the most revolutionary developments in paper restoration in this country." He also notes that, based on the samples he has inspected, the work produced by the machine is "as good as the most expert hand mending" he has seen.

At a cost of \$9,500 the recurator is not something every library can or should have, but it seems to represent a significant advance in preservation technology.

The development of the recurator is obviously the result of genius, but it is also the result of dedication. Mrs. Alkalay points out that her library has the largest collection of Hebrew manuscripts in the world. They have been through wars, surviving ghettos and refugee camps. They have come from different cultures and different eras. "Devotion has gone into their making. In this department, devotion goes into their preservation."

Jill S. Reddig

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## THE FIFTY-FIVE

Innumerable objects, ranging from paintings, guns and books to ash trays and chamber pots, have drawn the interest of proud collectors; and the resulting aggregate of these fervid conservators carries the proud term "collection". An "accumulation", however, is a designate with a pejorative cast — something garnered by a frugal and compulsive eccentric, amorphous, unselective, and lacking a unifying, goal-determined principle. With respect to the prints and photographs of libraries which I recently gave to the library of the University of Wisconsin, I have always thought of them as an accumulation, gathered by one whose respect for books redounds to the buildings, hallowed through providing shelter for the books.

It was dazzling. Simply by asking one of the considerate and intelligent guides in the British Museum, I got my first look at a Gutenberg bible. During the same afternoon, there followed illustrated medieval texts, the Codex Sianaticus, a case-full of documents connected with the



Magna Carta, Grolier bindings, and the miniature missal with a painting on the fly-leaf of Henry VIII, which Anne Boleyn carried to her execution. As a memento of this vast engrossing find, I wanted to take home something more than the penny postcard and the museum photographic laboratory kindly let me have prints of two library rooms. Sometime later, on a visit to the Wellcome Historical Medical Library, the director permitted access not only to the exhibits and open shelves, but also to the subterranean vault with its stacks of breath-taking Oriental, Persian and European rarities. Here, too, the photographic laboratory prepared a picture of the principal reading room, in which can be seen an enlargement of a page from the *Fabrica*.

A Vatican librarian once told me that much material as yet unknown to the book world lay hidden in the small town and village libraries of Italy. He hoped that one day this material would be systematically catalogued. Alinari's was, of course, the place to search out any photographs. But while this great firm had its prints indexed geographically and artistically, it had no cross-reference to libraries, and the young lady in charge could think only of the hard way for me to get pictures of small Italian libraries. She provided a large table and dozens of albums for me to go through and I found five endearing photographs — Ravenna, Classe, Verona, Torino, and Cesena — all are uniformly framed.

Except for one of the Escorial library, none of the slides which I took were suitable for enlarging as prints. Poor illumination was unquestioningly the reason. This, however, led to my single admitted act of book vandalism. The print of the Strahov library was removed with a sharp razor blade from Karl Plick's "Prague the Golden City". The Ackerman prints were found in a small Oxford bookshop. A young clerk showed me several recently made colored etchings of the Bodlian and the Radcliffe, which did not quite do justice to the great names. I then talked with the more seasoned owner, who turned over several portfolios for me to search through and the find was the four fine original color prints. The small engaging etching of the Chapin library was kindly sent me by its chief librarian; and one day, while visiting the Newberry, actually to search the Theodore Thomas music collection, I came upon the lithograph of this great American library.

One day, when musing painfully over the disappearance of the many ancient structures which had housed books — what would we not give for a stone or slab of marble from the Alexandrian library — I hunted up my slides of the libraries at Ephesus and Pergamum, but they were not suitable for enlarging. The excellent professional slides of the American Archaeological Association then provided the source from which seven slides were made into enlarged prints and framed under a single matt — Athens, Ephesus and Pergamum.

In the matter of frames, I was helped by the good taste of the Kilbride-Bradley Art Gallery in Minneapolis. We pondered over the molding and type of matting appropriate to each picture, yet in retrospect, we missed badly on a couple of frames. The earlier frames have windows cut into the matting for the titles, but in the last years we used brass and aluminum name plates. Information about the libraries that would be of interest to scholars and the more curious was gradually added to the back of the frames. Should energy (human) permit, I would like to add a thumb-nail statement on the critical contents of each library, which in turn makes it "great".

Although not intended, this note is developing a characteristic of the book preface and I must add that the several names mentioned do not exhaust the thanks I owe to librarians and institutions for kindnesses shown. Anthony Hobson's handsome "Great Libraries" has been the source of several finds. With one exception, there are no other prints framed in the manner identical to those in this accumulation. Some years ago I came across a color print of the beautiful book room at Chantilly. I immediately wrote the author of the book for a copy of the print. He had none. The publishers courteously informed me that they had none. At last the printers, Conzett and Huber, Zurich, let me have, with their compliments, not one but two prints. After having one framed, I joyously showed it to a bookish friend, who became downright envious. In order to raise his spirits, I offered him the spare print, but this he would accept only under the condition that his be framed in the exact manner of the original. Thus, should any reader come across a print framed in the exact manner of the one in the "fifty-five", he may bet that the owner of it is my friend, Harry.

With this broad overview of the pictures, they appear to take on some semblance of a collection that might be entitled "Library Architecture Through the Ages". A bit pompous, indeed, but there is a certain stylistic uniformity in the way the Romans built their libraries. The one at St. Mark's, through which Savonarola strode and possibly thought through his fiery sermons, is unornamented, its walls and vaulted ceiling a chalky white, and it maybe compared with Dean Sudbury's library in Durham — another late medieval building. The Laurenziana, designed by Michaelangelo and the Recardiana, are both in high renaissance style. There are at least four in baroque, culminating in the grand baroque edifice in Vienna, which was designed by the Fisher von Erlachs. These last are jewel-box in conception, evidently built to house a definite and limited number of prized volumes. I leave these comments with a feeling of gratitude and a sense of good fortune that the pictures are to be hung in the new University of Wisconsin library.

Marvin Sukov

## RARE BOOK DEPARTMENT EXHIBIT: 20TH CENTURY LITERATURE (AMERICAN & ENGLISH AUTHORS)

Every century of human experience, thought and endeavor and their manifestations in the written word is interesting, and the twentieth century has the additional fascination of immediacy. What we lack in perspective, we gain in involvement, and only the philistines among scholars, librarians, and critics will turn their blue noses up at the genre. The Rare Book Department has for years assembled a fine collection of twentieth-century English and American authors in first and early editions, convinced of the importance of contemporary literature for the present and the future, and in order to form a *pendant* to our little magazine collection, which contains so much of the source material of modern literature and so many of its big names when their bearers were still largely unknown and struggling. The existence of such a collection disproves also conclusively the old wives' tale that books have to be old in order to be rare, that the very term "rare book" is equivalent to "old book". A first edition of James Joyce's *Ulysses*, for example, costs \$1,000 and up today, and a signed copy of the first edition of *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, such as ours, would cost at least \$500.

Our predicament in putting up this exhibit was a lucky and enviable one: We were suffering from an embarrassment of riches — we had many more authors and titles to choose from than we had room for in our seven large cases. Since the eye appeal has always to be kept in mind in such displays as much as the mind appeal, we had to avoid crowding. For the sake of the visual effect, we sometimes chose not a famous author's most famous book, but some more colorful-looking volumes, sometimes issued from small presses and never reprinted.

The question of colorful make-up vs. drabness of appearance presented a typical dilemma for us in our capacity as display artists but constitutes an interesting phenomenon to speculate about in our role as commentators. As pointed out in some of the notes, the second, third and fourth decades of publishing a specifically American literature were characterized by a great interest in the text of the words, with little accent being placed on eye appeal or sex appeal of dust covers, covers, and illustrations. Apparently, the books sold on their internal merits without the aid of admen's gimmicks. All this changed in the course of the victory march of the paperbacks from the printers to the supermarkets, where the various brands of paperbacks sit on the shelves next to other canned goods. The very drabness, externally, of books as great as *An American Tragedy*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *the Nigger of the "Narcissus"*, *The Great Gatsby*, *The Waste Land*, etc., contrasting so

vehemently with their dynamite-charged texts, is, happily, typical for the outstanding works of the American and British imagination.

As to arrangements, we decided against any artificial structure like chronology, but divided the books into the categories of fiction, poetry, and drama, with a few critics added. The notes, as always, are an integral part of all library exhibits. Many we simply pulled out of our hats, often carrying the hats and ourselves out on a limb in the process—but literature and one's reaction to it are and should be a largely subjective matter, not an exact science. When our own knowledge failed us or our idiosyncrasies took on the flavor of outright bias, we relied on Stanley Kunitz's monumental work, *Twentieth Century Authors* and its supplement, on *Current Biography*, and on *Contemporary Authors*, interspersing our own observations and those of Kunitz with quotes from various critics. The background photos—apart from some book covers—are blow-ups from a beautiful catalog titled *Les Ecrivains Américains A Paris Et Leurs Amis 1920-1930 — Exposition 11 March - 25 April 1959* (Centre Culturelle Americain, [Paris, 1959] ).

Anita Danigelis—the Rare Book Department Assistant—was most helpful in setting up this display. We also appreciate the assistance of Rita Roemer in Humanities Reference in typing the numerous notes.

Finally, a footnote for statistic-minded readers: On display are 42 novelists with 56 volumes, 33 poets with 46 volumes, 12 playwrights with 15 volumes, and 2 critics with one volume each.

Felix Pollak  
Curator of Rare Books

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