

CATHOLIC LIBRARIES AND THE EARLY IMPRINTS PROJECT IN NEW SOUTH WALES

RECORDING OF THE PRE-1801 HOLDINGS of institutional libraries in New South Wales was initiated with the appointment of a Research Assistant towards the end of January this year. The way ahead had already been significantly signposted by John Fletcher and Rose Smith in their compilation during 1976-1977 of *A short-title catalogue of sixteenth century printed books held in libraries and private collections in New South Wales*¹ and their lists of STC and Wing items which have previously appeared in the *Bulletin*.² The *Short-title catalogue* listed 1,988 titles, comprising the sixteenth-century holdings of 31 institutional collections, while one of the lists cited 641 titles for the Wing period in the collections of the State Library, where the comparatively small Dixon Library alone holds at least 600 pre-1801 titles *in toto*. Such figures hinted at both the breadth of opportunity and the magnitude of the task confronting EIP in New South Wales.

With both magnitude and opportunity in mind, a library with significant holdings which could yet be recorded in well under twelve months was selected, so that recording there would help to determine the most feasible strategy in approaching larger institutional collections. Since January recording has been concentrated on the estimated 3000 pre-1801 titles in the collections of the library of St. Patrick's College Manly, a process which should be completed by September this year. Time has also been found to record smaller holdings in the Colin Library, Marist Fathers' Seminary, Hunters Hill, and the two Catholic residential colleges at Sydney University, St. John's and Sancta Sophia. All are not merely institutionally cognate, but by virtue of interrelationships in their administrative histories have some books of common provenance. A single of several instances is provided by the books of William Augustus Duncan (1811-1885), Scots Catholic convert, teacher, journalist and eclectic collector, who featured prominently in the robust Catholic controversies and interdenominational polemics of mid-nineteenth-century Sydney. All four institutions have pre-1801 and other books bearing his bookplate and/or his characteristic inscription in the language of the text.

St. Patrick's Manly, a massive stone pile which occupies a commanding position in ample acreage above Manly and the sea, is the seminary of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. A monumental reminder of a church once militant, it was the late 1880s foundation of Patrick Francis Cardinal Moran, third Archbishop of Sydney, and was probably conceived as a putative antipodean Maynooth. There rest in the library books acquired at the establishment of a Catholic diocese in 1833-1834. These were acquired as part and parcel of an earlier Catholic vision of an abbey-diocese, the vision of the first Bishop, John Bede Polding and his English-derived Benedictine monks. The vision failed and vanished by the 1870s in the face of the realities of Australian geography, majority Irish Catholic preference for clergy of their own race, and the internecine problems of an

atrophied monastic community. But of the 5,698 volumes entered in the Benedictine library catalogue, approximately half have survived at St. Patrick's.

The present library organisation results from a re-ordering in the wake of a study of holdings and their disposition by the Department of Library and Information Studies, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education and the appointment of a full-time professional librarian at the end of 1976.³ For several decades previously, student and staff librarians had grappled in limited time with collections swollen by ordinary acquisitions for teaching purposes and the considerable donations of College friends and benefactors. Inevitably, intermittent and haphazard sorting of books not currently required left or consigned older books in or to various locations about a vast building.

The library now consists of two physically separate and discrete sections to either side of the vestibule inside the main entrance of the College: the teaching library for the current use of staff and seminarians and the research library of restricted access in an air-conditioned room. Compact shelving in the second houses the rare book collections and back runs of periodicals. Among the former are included: the large remnant of the Benedictine Collection, the Rare Book Collection of mainly pre-1850 material, the predominantly pre-1900 Australiana Collection, which complements the more recent Australiana holdings of the teaching library, the Hiberniana Collection of Irish literature, history and material of other Irish association, the Australian Catholica Collection, relating to the history and development of the Catholic Church in Australia, separate collections of English and French literature, and the personal library of Fr. Hartigan (John O'Brien). The bulk of these collections have been shelf-listed, if not entirely catalogued, and the majority of pre-1801 books are to be found in the Benedictine and Rare Book Collections. Very few pre-1801 books remain in the teaching library, chiefly large folios like the *Vitré Polyglot Bible*, Paris, 1629-45, 9 vols. in 10.

Before the rare book collections were broached, a modest accumulation of about 60 books awaiting processing in the library office were carded for EIP. Of these a small random selection presents: Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum*, Lyons, 1561, 4to (Fletcher & Smith 950), Cardinal Cullen's copy of *De persecutione Anglicana libellus*, Rome, 1582, 8vo (Fletcher & Smith 713) and the *Astronomia instaurata* of Nicolaus Copernicus, Amsterdam, 1617, 4to. Australian reference is provided by 4 volumes in wrappers with folding plates, *Viaggi intorno dal mondo dal Capitano Giacomo Cook*, Venice, 1794-95, 8vo.

The Benedictine collection, recording of which is complete, has been reassembled in original order — that is, by accession numbers determined from the manuscript numbers in each book. These match the finely-written entries by running accession number, author, title, place and date of publication in the rediscovered Benedictine library catalogue. Many incomplete multi-volume sets

have been recorded by virtue of past unrecorded losses and the discard of severely deteriorated volumes at the time of the collection's *rassemblement*.

Among the earliest surviving acquisitions are 19 small quartos in half calf which contain sermons and "Sendbriefe", published between 1518 and 1546, of Martin Luther (Fletcher & Smith 1186-1211, 1214, 1216-1225, 1228-1232, 1234-1337) Philip Melanchthon (Fletcher & Smith 1406-1407, 1410-1414, 1416-1421, 1423-1425, 1428-1440) and other offerings by Bodenstein, Oecolampadius and Emser. Acquired in Dublin at half a crown each by Bernard Ullathorne, the first Catholic Vicar-General, they arrived with him in Sydney in 1833.⁴ Eight days of recording displayed their excellent and often near fine condition. Some bear abstruse manuscript notes, while the titlepages of a few have undergone amateurish and incomplete attempts at colouring by hands unknown.

Original poems and translations by John Dryden, London, 1743, 12mo, 2 vols. (RB605-606) and Temple Stanyan's *The Grecian History. From the original of Greece to the end of the Peloponnesian War*, London, 1739, 8vo (RB376), both published by J. and R. Tonson, are more typically pedestrian books in sprinkled calf. Like a number of others they are inscribed: "For the Bishop's library in eternum [sic]" and were the pious gift of Mrs. Sarah Neve of Cheltenham.⁵ No less in evidence are the bookplate and stamp of Polding's old abbey, St. Gregory's Downside, near Bath, in Recusant literature, devotional and liturgical books and various French imprints, the last probably reflecting to some extent the long Continental sojourn of the English Benedictines after the Reformation. Donors, clerical, monastic and lay, responded to Polding's insistent pleas for books to buttress an aspiring centre of Christian civilisation.

Another early acquisition, but of unknown provenance, are five sermons of Savonarola (RB487), small quartos bound together and published in Florence between ca.1496 and 1529, the printing of the earliest, *La expositione del pater noster*, possibly ante-dating its author's end at the stake. The volume escaped the scrutiny of the sixteenth-century STC, having lain hidden in a box and masked by an eighteenth-century papal bull.

A common mark of provenance borne by the Benedictine books is an oval stamp: "St. Mary's-Lyndhurst monastic library 1864". Fortuitously moved in that year from the crypt of old St. Mary's Cathedral to this Benedictine seminary in Glebe, nearly 6000 books escaped the cathedral's conflagration in the next.⁶ Particularly in evidence are books deriving from the history and traditions of Benedictine monasticism which reflect the contemplative pretensions of the Sydney monks. The several editions, including eighteenth-century French ones, of the Rule of St. Benedict begin with the *Regula sanctiss. patris Benedicti. Cum declarationibus & constitutionibus editis a patribus Congregationis Casinenensis*, Venice, 1580, 4to (RB4771) (Fletcher & Smith 155), in full calf. *A Caeremoniale monasticum jussu & auctoritate Capituli Generalis Congregationis Sancti Mauri Ordinis Sancti Benedicti editum*, Paris, 1680, 8vo (RB5652), is inscribed: "... de

la Congregation de St.Maur", while the scholarship of the Maurists is represented *inter alia* by the works of St. Augustine in 12 elephant folios published at Antwerp 1700–03 (RB28–36). A kind of *memorare* for the black monks is provided by the monumental compilations of Jean Mabillon, the *Acta sanctorum Ordinis St. Benedicti in saeculorum classes distributa*, Venice, 1733–38, 9 vols. (RB 2275–2283), and the *Annales Ordinis St. Benedicti*, Lucca, 1739–45, 6 vols. (RB 2269–2274). Both are folios with volume-one titlepages in red and black, and the latter is replete with folding plates depicting great European abbeys.

Polding's European journeyings on *ad limina* visits to Rome in 1840–43 and 1846–47 procured not only duplicates from houses of a variety of religious orders, but exotic missionary material of doubtful utility in the Australian Colonies from the Propaganda in Rome. In 1842 he gained books in Armenian, Georgian and Arabic "thriftily preserved in their original wrappers, mostly uncut, some unopened, untouched since coming off the Roman presses in the first half of the 17th century."⁷ The continuance in a condition even now not too far removed from the pristine of eighteenth-century examples like the Roman Catechism in Arabic, 1786–87, 2 vols., 4to (RB4527–4528), or the *Interpretatio Catechismi pro Burmanis*, Rome, 1785–86, 8vo (RB 5031), with Latin and Burmese texts, recalls a recent suggestion that the monastic library was more a necessary monastic ornament than a scholarly resource.⁸ Nevertheless, within it were contained works amply representing not only theology, patristics, Scripture and liturgy, but classics, mathematics, history, English and French literature, and travel, a scope still abundantly obvious in the surviving pre-1801 books, which have yielded 1267 titles and 2082 bibliographical volumes for EIP.

The closure of St. Mary's Lyndhurst in 1877, a consequence of falling enrolments and the general demise of the Benedictine experiment, occasioned the transfer of the Benedictine books to augment the holdings of St. John's College at Sydney University, then the *pietate* of Roger Bede Vaughan, Polding's successor and the second and last English Benedictine Archbishop of Sydney. In due course they became the major part of the books consigned to St. Patrick's at its opening in 1889.⁹ Their reassembly in original order and recataloguing some 90 years later has resulted from the sustained efforts of the present librarian, Mr. Hans Arns.

St. John's College is a massive neo-Gothic aggregation of stone which recalls Oxbridge rather than Ireland in the antipodes; it was founded in 1857, as Polding struggled in the face of sectarian rivalries and lay factionalism to realise his impossible abbey-diocese. Although lacking formal library organisation, it retains considerable accumulations of books deriving from its early days when the College uniquely symbolised Catholic aspirations to scholarship and gentility. These include the Fitzherbert Collection, a closed collection chiefly in classics, which yielded 5 titles for the sixteenth-century STC. The number for all the College's holdings swelled to 91 for EIP, ranging in date from Plato's *Omnia opera cum*

commentariis Procli in Timaeum & Politica, Basle, J. Walder, 1534, fol., 2 pts. in 1 vol. (Fletcher & Smith 1583) to Livy's *Historiarum quae supersunt, ex recensione Arn Drakenborchii*, Oxford, e typographeo Clarendoniano, 1800, 12mo.

The most obvious grouping in the library of Sancta Sophia College is of the major, if not uncommon, books relating to the discovery and settlement of Australia, which includes the following authors and Ferguson numbers: William Bligh 125; David Collins 263; Thomas Gilbert 38; John Hunter 152 (2 copies); J.J.H. de Labillardiere 309; Arthur Phillip 47 (?); Watkin Tench 48, 171; John White 97. Also included is William Eden's *The history of New Holland from its first discovery in 1616 to the present time*, London, Stockdale, 1787, 8vo. These all rest in the closed collection given by John Lane Mullins (1857-1939), Sydney solicitor, collector and bookplate enthusiast, the last apparent from his several bookplates.

Although, having been founded only in 1816 and introduced to Australia by Marist Brothers in 1872, the French-derived Society of Mary lacks the antiquity of Benedictine monasticism, it survived and flourished as a teaching order from the time of the local Benedictines' decline. Not surprisingly, the older books in the Colin Library at the Society's Seminary in Hunters Hill consist in large part of nineteenth-century editions of French works of theology and spirituality. However, a rare book cupboard and a search of the shelves produced 22 pre-1801 titles.

An echo of the Benedictine past in Sydney is provided by a single Benedictine book with manuscript library catalogue number, *Dies sacra, per loca divinae Scripture progrediens*, Bologna, [1736?]. The Benedictine catalogue noted its missing titlepage when originally acquired, while the author, who appears in the imprimatur as "Patre Joanne Scotti", remains unidentified. Also amongst a chiefly theological miscellany is Alexander Ross, *Virgilii evangelistas Christiados*, London, 1638, 8vo⁹ with the book-plate and inscription of William Augustus Duncan.

This selection of titles from four institutions, while giving a sufficient impression of the three smaller holdings, does but scant justice to the total pre-1801 holdings of St. Patrick's library. The notable and interesting collections there offer a broadly varied range of books throughout the whole pre-1801 period, whether viewed by author, subject, imprint, format or even binding, despite the severely deteriorated condition of many books. Progress in recording so far has given fair promise of significant pre-1801 holdings in other Catholic institutional libraries.

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¹ *A short-title catalogue of sixteenth century printed books held in libraries and private collections in New South Wales*. Compiled by John Fletcher and Rose Smith, Sydney, The Library Council of New South Wales, 1979.

² John Fletcher, 'STC items in the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney', *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* no.12 (vol.3 no.3), May 1978, 103-108; John Fletcher, 'STC and Wing items in St. Patrick's College, Manly, N.S.W.', *BSANZ Bulletin* no.14 (vol.4 no.1), May 1979, 63-64; Rose T. Smith and John Fletcher, 'STC items in the State Library of New South Wales', *BSANZ Bulletin* no.17 (vol. 4 no.4), November 1980, 283-287. John Fletcher and Rose T. Smith, 'Wing items in the State Library of New South Wales', *BSANZ Bulletin* vol.5 no.2, 1981, 61-68;

³ See Mairead Browne, 'Library developments at St. Patrick's College, Manly and other Sydney Theological Colleges', *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* vol.8 no.3, September 1977, 119-123.

⁴ John Fletcher, 'The Library of St. Patrick's College, Manly' *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* vol.7 no.4, December 1976, p.249.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.250.

⁶ *Ibid.* p.251.

⁷ John Fletcher, 'The Library of St. Patrick's College, Manly; Unfamiliar Libraries XXIII', *The Book Collector* vol.29 no.2, Summer 1980, p.186.

⁸ Terence Kavenagh, 'Benedictine Monks in Australia', in *A man with an idea; St. Benedict of Nursia*, ed. John Stanley Martin (University of Melbourne, 1981), p.95.

⁹ STC (Pantzer) 24827.

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