

## Malthus Collection Report.

The project to catalogue the family library of T. R. Malthus, onto the University's Newton Catalogue, was completed on time at the end of November 2011, having begun in November 2010. The project was undertaken by Mr Liam Sims, Rare-Books Cataloguer, working 2.5 days per week.

Detailed examination of each volume was undertaken and information relating to bindings, provenance, artists and engravers (involved with plates or maps) and defects (missing pages or plates) was recorded. In cases where one text was printed in several editions during the same year (sometimes as many as ten or fifteen), each with minute differences, our holdings were often discovered to be erroneously recorded in the ESTC (English Short Title Catalogue; see [estc.bl.uk](http://estc.bl.uk)). In these cases the correct edition was established, the record for the wrong edition was deleted and a new record added to ESTC for the correct edition. Information on the provenance of our copies of ESTC items (those printed in the English language or in this country between 1476 and 1800) has been added to their ESTC records.

Throughout the project I compiled an index of provenance, both alphabetical by name and in classmark order, detailing both Malthus family and non-Malthus owners (a copy can be found in the 'lists' folder in the Old Library). As anyone who has researched the Malthus Library will know, T. R. Malthus was not in the habit of annotating his books, nor did he own a bookplate. Identification of his books is therefore difficult. However, his son Henry (1804-1882), who inherited much of the library on his father's death in 1834, did use a bookplate, which appears inside the majority of books in the collection.

One of the most fascinating discoveries for me was the identification of some 311 works, bound in 271 volumes (about 30 volumes are collections of pamphlets of between three and ten works per volume), belonging to Jane Dalton, cousin of T. R. Malthus' father Daniel. Dalton (c. 1742-1817) is mentioned briefly in the printed Malthus Library Catalogue (1982), which reports that 105 volumes in the library carry her bookplate, and that of these only two also have the bookplate of Henry Malthus. The printed catalogue goes on to state that "*all the volumes [with her bookplate] are quite small, and their size may have persuaded Henry Malthus that the one bookplate already occupying most of the paste-down was sufficient, and so he saw no point in attaching his own*" (p. xxviii). I have found this to be completely incorrect, since in almost 150 further volumes, her bookplate has been covered by that of Henry Malthus, but is still visible underneath. Furthermore some of the books are not 'small'; they cover everything from tiny 16mo books to folio volumes. Dalton was a learned lady of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and was probably the translator of two French works into English, one of which is held in the collection in two copies (MJ.1.24 & 25), one bearing her bookplate (*An essay on landscape* - London: Dodsley, 1783 – a translation of the Viscount d'Ermenonville's *La composition des paysages*); Daniel Malthus is sometimes erroneously credited the translation of both. She is also known to have corresponded with J. J. Rousseau, and Daniel Malthus bequeathed books to her which had once belonged to Rousseau (Daniel Malthus and Rousseau worked together on botany in the 1760s); some of these remain in the Malthus Collection (including MI.1.16 and MK.3.15). I have also compiled a list detailing the books owned by Jane Dalton, and am in the process of writing an article on her library for the *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*.

Other provenance information has been discovered in several books. Most interesting for me was a small volume (MB.6.52) containing five works published between 1542 and 1566, the first four on language and grammar (Greek, Latin & Hebrew) and the last on the history of Scandinavia. This final work bears the 16<sup>th</sup>-century name "Thomas Knyvett" and the date 158[-], the last digit cut off by a binder. An Elizabethan courtier of this name (1545/46-1622) was a fellow-commoner at Jesus College in 1564-65, and as Keeper of Whitehall Palace was responsible for searching the cellars

under parliament in November 1605, resulting in the arrest of Guy Fawkes; a 16<sup>th</sup>-century provenance to a famous old member would have been an interesting find, and a coincidence given the Malthus Library has only been part of the Old Library for some sixty years. However the Thomas Knyvett who wrote his name in this book turned out to be someone else: an important 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>-century book collector, whose collection is now largely in the University Library, having passed into the library of Bishop Moore (Bishop of Ely), whose library was in turn bought by George I and presented to the UL in 1715. The collection of around 1000 titles was documented by David McKitterick, now librarian of Trinity College, in 1978. Although the work appears in 17<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript catalogue of Knyvett's library (and corresponds to no. 638 in McKitterick's 1978 catalogue) its survival was not known to David at the time and, although he learned of its existence more recently, he had not yet managed to examine it. I took it over to the Wren Library where David confirmed Knyvett's ownership and added to his notes.

Several other early Cambridge provenances have also been discovered. A copy of the 1550 edition of Bede's Ecclesiastical History (MF.7.19 - Antwerp: Johannes Gravius) bears the name John Parkyn, in a contemporary hand. A John Parkyn took his MA from Trinity in the year of its foundation (1546) and was one of its first fellows. Another volume, a copy of Horace's poetry (ME.5.58 – Lyon, 1559), has the inscription "Jacobus Howlandus me tenet" in a 16<sup>th</sup>-century hand. A James Howland became a fellow at St John's in 1577 and was later Archdeacon of Northampton. This edition of Horace's poetry is incredibly rare; the only other copy I could locate in this country is in the John Rylands Library.

The most significant non-Cambridge provenance is a volume on the history of St George by Peter Heylyn (ML.3.1 - London, 1633), which bears the inscription "*tanquam explorator*", the motto of the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup>-century dramatist Ben Jonson (1572-1637). Although the existence of this volume was already known by the Fellow Librarian, Jonson's ownership of it seems not to be widely known in scholarship; it is not, for example, recorded in the catalogue of his surviving books compiled in 1974 by David McPherson ("*Ben Jonson's library and marginalia: an annotated catalogue*", pp.1-106 in *Studies in Philology* 71, no. 5). Comparing the hand in this volume with examples of Jonson's handwriting in McPherson's article, there is no doubt that it was his.

The other significant feature of the Malthus Collection is the rarity of some of its editions. For example, our copy of a French prayer book printed at Bourges in 1747 (MJ.2.22) is one of only two in the country (the other being in the BL). The sole edition of a late 18<sup>th</sup>-century commentary on the Book of Genesis, entertainingly titled *Annihilation no punishment to the wicked* (ME.1.40[4] – London, 1792), survives in only three copies globally and ours is inscribed 'From the author', Philip Burton, presumably when he presented it to T. R. Malthus. There is also a provincial printing of a local tale, *The legend of Saint Robert, hermit of Knaresbro'* (MB.6.61[6] - Knaresborough, 1792), which again survives in only two copies. Finally, Béroalde's *Le moyen de parvenir*, a parody of the work of Montaigne and Rabelais originally printed around 1617, is present in the collection in a mixed set of three volumes (ME.1.34-3: vols. 1 & 3 are London, 1781; vol. 2 is London, 1786). The 1781 volumes are the only recorded copy of that edition in this country.

Many of the earlier books in the Malthus Collection retain their 17<sup>th</sup>- or 18<sup>th</sup>-century bindings. Particularly worthy of note are some Dutch vellum prize-bindings. A copy of the 4<sup>th</sup>-century Quintus Smyrnaeus' poetry (MI.2.10 - Leiden, 1734) is bound in The Hague prize-binding (an identical binding on a copy of Terence of 1732 can be found for sale at <http://www.forumrarebooks.com/Terentius-Comoedia-sex-cum-interpretatione.html>). Another such binding, on the works of Ausonius (MI.2.13 – Amsterdam, 1671), was executed in 1674 for an Amsterdam school. Other fine bindings include a three volume set of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides (MM.1.38-40: Geneva, Estienne, 1567), bound in beautifully tooled green morocco (probably 17<sup>th</sup> century), Raleigh's

*Historie of the World* (MD.1.1 – London, 1634), in contemporary panelled olive morocco, and a mid-16<sup>th</sup>-century copy of ME.5.58 (the volume belonging to James Howland) with two pieces of medieval manuscript used as endleaves.

Finally, one volume has been added to the collection during this project. A copy of sermons by Richard Whately (London, 1835), classmark MF.5.16, was found for sale in a London antiquarian bookseller's stock on Abebooks.com. As it bears the bookplate of Henry Malthus and the classmark entered when the books came to the college in 1949, it seems to have left the library after that date. It may have been borrowed by a fellow at an early date and not returned, ending up in a bookshop with the rest of their books.

This project has been a joy to work on, and I have thoroughly enjoyed the chance to get to know an important collection in such detail.

*Liam M. Sims, January 2012*