

The Robert Ashley Founding Bequest to the Middle Temple Library and John Donne's Library

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ABSTRACT

Hitherto scholars have accepted Geoffrey Keynes' account of the disposal of John Donne's library at his death. An eighteenth century catalogue offers an opportunity to challenge that account, that of Charles Worsley of 1734. There has been no serious analysis of this catalogue. This catalogue allows us to access with reasonable accuracy the actual content of Robert Ashley's bequest of 1741. Since 1948, there has been a suspicion that Ashley acquired part of Donne's library when he died in 1631. The catalogue allows a larger inference, namely that Ashley actually acquired a very substantial part of Donne's library. A series of tests were made, all of which point in the same direction and to the same conclusion. These are summarised in the paper. Obviously this discovery has considerable implications for Donne's scholarship.

The late Sir Geoffrey Keynes (1973:258) wrote:

Donne's erudition and virtuosity in ecclesiastical polemics can only have been founded on hard reading and familiarity with contemporary writings. He is likely, therefore, to have possessed a considerable Library...

After claiming the identification of two hundred and thirteen books associated with Donne's ownership and use, Keynes continues:

It is noticeable that the great majority of them [*i.e.*, the two hundred and thirteen books] were published before the appearance of *Pseudo-Martyr* in 1610, the work for which Donne first applied himself seriously to controversial theology. It is still more remarkable that very few of the [two hundred and thirteen] books were published after 1615, the year in which he took [Anglican] orders. It seems,

therefore, that he collected a good part of his Library while at work on *Pseudo-Martyr*, and that he bought fewer books after entering the Church. (Keynes 1973:258)

Donne's interests were, of course, far wider than ecclesiastical polemics and theology; he nursed ambitions for many years to be employed as what today we should call a senior civil servant and diplomat, seeking to be British representative in Venice just months before taking Anglican orders. Such ambitions must have influenced the organisation and reading of books and more ephemeral matter. Keynes' account however failed to press home avenues of enquiry that were available to him. Although he knew of a concentration of Donne's books in the Middle Temple Library, he did not attend to a surviving catalogue of books drawn up by Charles Worsley and dating from 1734¹ and therefore reached conclusions about Donne's acquisition of books and the dispersal of his library after his death that were premature.

Keynes writes that as recently as 1949 the late Professor R.C. Bald learned of a considerable number of Donne's books in the Middle Temple Library amongst those bequeathed by Robert Ashley in 1641. John Sparrow duly investigated and identified an initial tranche of sixty one volumes. Keynes adds:

Not all the books in this library were then available and eight in the [Sparrow's] list of 1958 were marked 'not verified.' These have recently been seen and verified by John Sparrow with the exception of one ... which cannot now be found. During the re-examination five additional books belonging to Donne's Library were found ...[!!] (Keynes 1973:258-259)

¹ The title page in Latin reads
 CATALOGUS
 LIBRORUM
 BIBLIOTHECAE

HONORABILIS SOCIETATIS MEDII TEMPLI
 LONDINI
 ORDINE DICTIONARII DISPOSITUS
 IMPRESS, ANNO DOMINI 1734
 CAROLO WORSLEY, ARMI GERO
 THE SAURARIO EXISTENTE

British Library Shelfmark 620.h.5(1.). There was a reprint in 1766 overseen by Sir Thomas Sewell, who added seventeen pages of entries at the end. By reason of their publishing date, these need not concern us.

Keynes politely glosses over the confusion and inaccessibility surrounding the surviving books of Robert Ashley's bequest, a situation continuing at the present day.

Izaak Walton (1962:67) records that Donne left

The resultance of 1400 Authors, most of them abridged and analysed with his own hand. [Walton's "Authors" may have contributed more than one and even numerous books to the grand total.]

Walton adds:

Nor were these only found in his study, but all businesses that past of any public consequence, either in this or any of our neighbour-nations, he abbreviated either in Latine, or in the Language of that Nation, and kept them by him for useful memorials. (Walton 1962:67-68 and 36)

As Gosse (1899) repeatedly makes clear, Walton's *Life* is strongly hagiographical; but the thrust of his account may surely stand: Donne acquired and read voraciously not merely "Authors" but much that today we should categorize as tracts, reports, propaganda and topical political and religious ephemera.

Gosse, who was clearly fascinated by Donne's personal relationships, does not extract full value from apparently the only surviving letter of Donne to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot, a letter that Gosse (1899:178) tentatively places between November 1621 and Spring 1623. Amongst the clear implications of this letter are that Donne regularly received packets of books from Frankfurt, then as today, a major centre of the European book trade; and that he was an ongoing correspondent with book merchants in Frankfurt at least six years after taking Anglican orders. In fact, quarto volume 100 of *Tracts* at the end of Worsley's 1734 catalogue of books in the Middle Temple Library is comprised entirely of sixteen Frankfurt book catalogues, 1603, 1612, 1613, 1615, 1616, 1617, 1619, 1621, 1622, 1623, 1624, 1625, 1626, 1628, 1630 and 1641. Only the last post-dates Donne's death. A British ecclesiastical polemicist like Morton was published in Frankfurt. I suspect that Donne remained close to the dissemination of polemical material, religious and political, throughout his life and his awareness was European in scope.

Donne's will of 1631 is pertinent and explicit: "My will is that my plate and books (such books only being excepted as by a schedule signed with my hand I shall give away) ... [be] sold" (volume II, 361). The will as a whole reads like an effort to raise immediate cash for his dependants; and notwithstanding the specialist nature of much of Donne's reading, the quoted passage seems to betray a confidence that he knew that his library, specialist and non-specialist, would find immediate ready money. However, from a single instance which he cites, Keynes (1973:259) infers that apart from those books that Donne left in his will specifically to named friends, "most of Donne's library was sold soon after his death and was thus dispersed gradually through the booksellers".²

As will be argued, there are sound grounds for believing that this inference reflects twentieth century practice and is substantially wrong: Donne's books were sold but protracted large scale dispersal did not take place. Walton is silent on the disposal of Donne's library to realise ready money; and none of the eminent scholars of the last one hundred years evince any awareness of the contents and implications of the catalogue of the Middle Temple Library drawn up by Charles Worsley in 1734. Keynes does remark that Robert Ashley "evidently acquired a portion of [Donne's] library after his death [1631]", but his observation that "All these books can now be seen in the Rare Book Room of the Middle Temple Library" (Keynes 1973:278, footnote 3) is simply incorrect. Ashley's precise acquisitions are not known and the Rare Books Room is not open or in order, and even if it were, the remains of Ashley's original bequest, certainly as identified by Keynes and John Sparrow, would seem to be scant. Keynes must have known that Ashley left many books to the Middle Temple Library in 1641 because the *Dictionary of National Biography* (1908:645) states as much. Unfortunately he did not pursue this fact in Worsley's 1734 catalogue. Other scholars have continued to follow Keynes and to treat his account as authoritative. Ashley's was in fact the founding bequest of the Middle Temple Library in 1641.

Worsley's 1734 catalogue would not meet present day standards and requirements; there is no classification by subject matter as today; its basic organisation is alphabetical by author, each entry further identified by size (usually quarto, octavo, duodecimo or folio) when and where printed, and

² One of Donne's books, Keynes' L135, was bought secondhand in Duck Lane in December 1633.

by room location, namely shelf, side and seat of a particular room of the Middle Temple. There is no index by subject or author. Worsley or his assistants did not have the requisite linguistic skills (or patience) always to record accurately: for two examples from dozens, a work *Vida de Mateo Alemán* is recorded under Antonio (Santo de Padua) Seville 1605 on page 14 and Guzman (de Alfarach) First and Second Parts, Milan 1603 will be found on page 195 as an author; in fact Mateo Alemán (1547-1615) wrote a biography of San Antonio de Padua (1603) and the first picaresque novel *Guzmán de Alfarache* (part I 1599, part II 1602); and Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* is entered under S for *Stultifera Navis* on page 389.

Further, Worsley's *Catalogus* is strictly in two parts, first the *Catalogus* proper and then another one hundred and thirty seven pages of *Miscellaneous Tracts* whose classification must be guessed or inferred by the reader. Many of these by title and date recall the famous Thomason collection in the British Library but cover a far greater span of time, some dating from the last three decades of Elizabeth's reign until the early eighteenth century. There are one hundred and seventeen volumes of *Tracts* recorded in quarto, and a final thirty four volumes, all of which except volume thirty three are in octavo. At the time of Worsley's census these volumes were presumably bound; their present circumstances are not known. Clearly some material classified under *Tracts* might equally appropriately have turned up in the *Catalogus* as a book: Galileo's *Sidereus Nuntius*, Frankfurt 1610, is found both in the *Catalogus* and the *Tracts* in the form *Siderus Nuncius* octavo volume I entry 4, Frankfurt 1610, page 557 and Galileo's *De Proportionum Instrumento* is entered in quarto volume 97, 2, on page 537; and the Jesuit Heissius' *Ad Aphorismos Jesuitarum* Ingolstadt 1609 is both in *Catalogus* and *Tracts*, octavo, volume 22, entry 5, page 566, not the only cases of their kind. None the less, notwithstanding these inconsistencies and inadequacies that a modern professional librarian would not tolerate, the *Catalogus* is of unique value: of some four thousand eight hundred and twenty two entries, only some four hundred and sixty three post-date the year of Ashley's death and bequest, 1641, that is less than ten percent by date of publication were acquired subsequently, or fractionally under five volumes for each of the ninety three years down until 1734, following Ashley's death. In short, over ninety percent of the books catalogued by Worsley in 1734, by date of printing *prima facie* may be regarded as falling under Ashley's bequest and may be regarded as a catalogue of that bequest. We are looking at the inventory of a remarkable Renaissance Library, which to my knowledge has never been examined as such.

What then of Robert Ashley? Keynes surmises in the cited footnote that he might have been known to Donne and even been a friend. There is the mentioned entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. Perhaps the best biographical account of Ashley is Heltzel's (1947) in his Introduction to Ashley's little book *Of Honour*. In his will Ashley said:

I have addicted myselfe to the general study of the great booke of the world, wherein all the glorious workes of God are comprehended. For the attaining of some knowledge whereof, I have not spared any labour or expence in procuring the principall writers in their severall languages, especially such as had opportunities to be acquainted with the moste remote and unknowne partes. (page 7)

Worsley's *Catalogus* has entries for Library catalogues of both Oxford and Cambridge (page 39). In his "Advertisement To The Reader" of *Almansor The Learned And Victorious King that conquered Spaine*, a little conduct book dedicated to Charles I, and a translation out of Spanish, Ashley admits that he came across the Spanish original whilst conducting a superficial survey of the famous Library of Oxford University [Bodleian]; and offering no apology for using a Muslim Arab as a model of royal conduct, writes:

That as no one soyle or territorie, yeeldeth all fruits alike, so no one Climate or Region, affordeth all kind of knowledge in full measure. (Ashley 1627: British Library shelfmark 1060.h.6.)³

In his bequest, Ashley arguably may have had one eye on the Library holdings of the two ancient universities, the other on the broad cultural and educational objectives of an Inns of Court education, which in Hutchinson's words:

have at all times kept up the character originally attributed to them as the resort also of students whose object was general culture as much as profound training. None other than the Master of the Revels, Sir George Buc, reckoned the Inns amongst the 'Universities of England' (Hutchinson 1902:x-xi)

Ben Jonson's dedication of *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599) in the 1616 Folio reinforces this point. Nonetheless Ashley's purchase of a substantial part of Donne's private library may have had other motives which I address at the end.

³ Ashley, R. (trans.) 1627: *Almansor The Learned And Victorious King that conquered Spaine*, printed by John Parker, British Library shelfmark 1060.h.6.

Ashley's self-confessed broad interests and what little publishing he undertook suggest someone more inclined to travel literature than ecclesiastical polemics; his translation and adaptation of Cristoforo Borri's account of Jesuit missionary activity in the Kingdom of Cochin-China is explicitly intended to encourage British trade; the Roman Catholic religious material is expunged in the English, a fact that may indicate sensitivity to the religious polemics of that time, a sort of calculated reticence.⁴ Yet a remarkable feature of Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Tracts* and therefore of Ashley's bequest is the overall volume of religious material. What must be noted is a marked contradiction between Ashley's evident timidity over religious polemic in his scant publications and the overwhelming presence of religious polemical material in his 1641 bequest.

The examination and analysis of a Renaissance Library like Ashley's require a multidisciplinary team of scholars. Apart from evident cataloguing inaccuracy from time to time, book titles may not be a perfect guide to their contents. However, I estimate that of some four thousand three hundred and fifty nine books which by date of publication may be ascribed to Ashley's 1641 bequest, some one thousand and eighty nine entries or twenty two percent relate to what I loosely call Science, to include Mathematics, Astronomy, Medicine, Commerce, Agriculture, Military Science and their allied subjects. Two hundred and fifty eight entries broadly fall under travel literature, almost certainly a predilection of Ashley's, though Donne possessed travel literature too, that is almost six percent of pre-1641 entries. However a phenomenal two thousand four hundred and fifty seven entries, over fifty six percent of all the pre-1641 entries of the bequest should be placed within Theology, Church History and ecclesiastical polemics. Of these last, some three hundred and fifty five, over fourteen percent of religious material and over eight percent of all entries possible by date of publication in a bequest of 1641, were of Spanish and Jesuit origin. In fact, a prominent feature of Worsley's *Catalogus* is that Jesuit authors are identified explicitly as such: the Society of Jesus has itself fifteen entries, only two of which post-date Donne's death, and entries attributed to individually identified Jesuit authors amount to some two hundred and twenty three. Further, the

⁴ Ashley, Robert (ed.), Bori, Cristoforo, *Cochin-China*, extr. out of an Italian relation [*Relazione della nuova missione al regno della Cocincina*] and published by R. Ashley, 4°, R. Raworth for R. Clutterbuck, 1633. Bodleian shelfmarks 4°R53 Art. and 4°L70 Art. Worsley's *Catalogus* has an entry for a French translation dated 1631 on page 46.

Miscellaneous Tracts that follow the *Catalogus* of 1734 also evidence a great quantity of ecclesiastical polemical material. These *Tracts* show hasty organisation, by topic and alphabetically within volume. In general terms, but by no means wholly, the first seventy three quarto volumes focus upon the Civil War and its polemics, and this focus resumes at octavo volume thirty two. Most, but by no means all, of the entries relevant to Donne's lifetime fall between quarto volume seventy six and octavo volume thirty two, or pages 515 to 579. I calculate that some fifty nine per cent of all *tracts* date from before 1641. I further calculate that upwards of forty documents refer to Jesuits alone. Few entries in *Catalogus* or *Miscellaneous Tracts* that we may identify by title or author as Jesuit or anti-Jesuit actually post-date Donne's death in 1631 by their date of publication. Whereas Ashley has absolutely no record of involvement in theological or ecclesiastical polemics with Jesuits, Donne's *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611) made him an outstanding polemicist allied with Morton and King James himself. When Donne went to the continent with Lord Doncaster's peace-mission to the Rhineland and Low Countries in 1619, he wrote in a letter to Sir Harry Goodyer: I goe into the mouth of such adversaries as I cannot blame for hating me, the Jesuits, and yet I goe. (Gosse 1899:121). Donne's *Ignatius His Conclave* had been published in Latin in London and Paris in 1611 (Healy 1969:xi).

Upon common sense grounds, it is amongst the theological, ecclesiastical, scientific and, to put the matter a little loosely, contemporary diplomatic and political material of Ashley's bequest that we are entitled to speculate Donne's ownership. First, however, it is important to resolve a point of difference between Keynes and Healy about how Donne actually accessed the books he used in his involvement with ecclesiastical and theological polemics, in brief whether Donne bought or borrowed and consulted. As noted, Keynes argues that *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610) marks Donne's first serious application to controversial theology, that his known book acquisitions peaked at about this time, declining thereafter, few being acquisitions published after 1615 when Donne joined the Anglican ministry. Healy, however, whose grasp of the detail of the source material drawn on by Donne in his polemical *Ignatius His Conclave* is unrivalled, puts forward a very different view of Donne's access to books. Healy points out that Donne's mocking polemic against Bellarmine and the Jesuits has fifty six direct citations, none of which is English or Anglican, almost the entirety Catholic, no fewer than fifteen of named Jesuits. He adds that:

The list demonstrates that Donne either had, or had access to, a well-stocked and up-to-date library of Catholic controversial and theological writers ... There is reason for doubting that the library belonged to Donne himself...

Another reason for doubting that he owned the books involved is the dates they bear. *Ignatius His Conclave* quoted from nineteen books which had appeared before 1600: but from thirty-seven dated after 1600. Of those thirty-seven, no fewer than eighteen are dated either in 1609 or 1610. Someone was manifestly buying almost everything published under Catholic auspices and it is unlikely that in 1610 Donne himself could have afforded the expense of these books or that he would have had the necessary contacts abroad to arrange for their purchase. The fact that he had the run of such a controversial library, so generously and exactly supplied, serves to confirm the conclusion about the quasi-official character of the work he was doing. (Healy 1969:xxvii-xxix)

That Donne wrote against Bellarmine and Gretser [Gretzer] in a quasi-official capacity and probably had 'devilled' for Thomas Morton, then James' chaplain and later Bishop of Durham, is well-established. It is noteworthy that Morton prided himself on conducting his battles in the main from Catholic authors. Following the list of "authors cited" that precedes *Biathanatos* [1608], Donne writes:

In citing these authors, for those which I produce only for ornament and illustration, I have trusted my own old notes, which, though I have no reason to suspect, yet I confess here my laziness, and that I did not refresh them with going to the original. Of those few which I have not seen in the books themselves — for there are some such, even of places cited for greatest strength — besides the integrity of my purpose, I have this safe defense against any quarreler: that what place soever I cite from any Catholic author, if I have not considered the book itself, I cite him from another Catholic writer: and the like course, I hold in the Reformers, so that I shall hardly be condemned of any false citation, except, to make me accessory, they pronounce one of their own friends principal. (Rudick and Battin 1982)

This may have been written in 1619 at the time of the dedication to Sir Philip Ker, but the practice of citing Catholic or Protestant authors where they cite their own side surely echoes Morton's practice and has the same strategic and polemical purpose. Healy suggests that Donne may have accessed the "private library in the Deanery House of St. Paul's" (Appendix C, page 171). However, it seems equally possible that the quasi-official nature of Donne's polemical activity resulted in Donne being supplied with the most up-to-date controversial material, and that such books and tracts subsequently remained in Donne's ownership. As will be seen, Worsley's

Catalogus contains fourteen entries under Bellarmine and fifteen under Gretser and numerous titles of Tracts bear their names; and there are many other theological controversialists with multiple entries.

It is not possible to examine the books and tracts of Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Miscellaneous Tracts* in the room where they were located and catalogued in 1734 to identify evidence of Donne's ownership and use. During the Second World War the bulk of the holdings of the Middle Temple Library was safely stored at Bletchley, thus avoiding the serious war damage suffered by this and other Inns of Court. The Library is now dedicated to legal training and the antiquarian books are locked away in the "Rare Books Room" and the Basement stacks, beyond open scholarly access, a situation not reflected in the subsequent 1880 and 1914 catalogues, any more than in Worsley.

However, all is not lost. Even where we cannot establish proof, we can subject Worsley to a series of 'tests' that may produce results that in themselves may be highly indicative of Donne's ownership and use. Broadly these 'tests' or procedures are of two kinds:

First, and successively, to examine Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Miscellaneous Tracts* to confirm how many of the authors that Donne is known to have used in his writings also occur there as entries. I use the following:

- *Biathanatos* [1608] [Rudick and Battin 1982]
- *Ignatius His Conclave* [1610/11] [Healy 1969]
- *Pseudo-Martyr* [1610] [Raspa 1993]
- *Essayes in Divinity* [Simpson 1953]
- *Sermons* [Simpson 1962]
- *The Courtier's Library* [Simpson 1930]
- *A Bibliography of Dr. John Donne*, Appendix IV [Keynes 1974];
and, second, to place known and prominent facts of Donne's life against Worsley's *Miscellaneous Tracts*.

These tests are not perfect and it is sensible to acknowledge their deficiencies from the start. The titles of books and tracts, together with dates and places of publication, may be inaccurately recorded and mislead; Worsley and his assistants made many maddening mistakes; and dates of publication do not necessarily capture dates of purchase. Even if these and doubtless more objections be admitted, nonetheless the results of these 'tests' are still striking.

Uniquely Donne himself prefaced his manuscript of *Biathanatos* [1608] with a list of “Authors cited in this Book” which the modern editors Rudick and Battin reproduce. Their editing contains some slips; the quoted proverb “Da vida osar morir” is surely Spanish, not Portuguese; and Procopius Gazaeus listed by them as one author in fact were two. Inconveniently some authors in Donne’s library and Worsley have variant names: for example Azpilcueta may be Navarre or Navarrus, Gabriel Vásquez may be Cordubensis; and numerous names were available to Donne in commentaries as he acknowledged, and we should not assume or seek their original works in Donne’s library or Worsley. In fact Donne’s list of “Authors cited in this Book” comes to a total of one hundred and seventy four sources/authors. All may be found in Worsley’s *Catalogus*, except for forty one of Donne’s list, that is over seventy six per cent. When, however, we further bear in mind that, as noted, many of Donne’s sources, not entered in Worsley’s *Catalogus*, were accessed through authors that *are* in Worsley, then the strong possibility arises that the entirety of Donne’s source material for *Biathanatos* is represented in primary or secondary form in Worsley’s *Catalogus*. Exact confirmation of this would be an exercise beyond the scope of this present study.

If the sources/authors of explicit citations given by Donne himself in his *Ignatius His Conclave* [1610/11], together with sources identified by Healy in his ground-breaking commentary, are both sought in Worsley’s *Catalogus*, the results are equally startling: all seven authors cited in “The Printer To The Reader” are present in the *Catalogus*; of some sixty five authors and citations in the main section mockingly titled “To The Two Tutelar Angels, Protectors of the Pope’s Consistory and of the Colledge of Sorbon”, forty three are in Worsley. Of the twenty two ‘missing’ cited authors, some occur as secondary references. Upon present knowledge, some ninety percent of the author sources for *Ignatius His Conclave* are in Worsley’s *Catalogus* and *Tracts*. Many of these authors Healy describes as “the less familiar authors from whom Donne quotes” (Appendix B, page 162). Arguably Robert Ashley’s bequest to the Middle Temple in 1641 engrossed a formidable part of Donne’s specialist religious polemical library.

Anthony Raspa’s (1993) edition of John Donne’s *Pseudo-Martyr* is by any standards monumental. I used the “Finding” list at the end of “Raspa’s Commentary” to make a cross check against Worsley’s *Catalogus*. I excluded names of historical figures who were not authors and authors whom Raspa’s commentary identifies as occurring through, and therefore embedded in, other authors. I give some idea of the lateral thinking involved in using

Worsley if I point out that Erasmus Alberus' *The Alcoran of the Bare-foot Friars* turns up in Worsley under Franciscus, and Worsley's Latin entry records a French translation, Aelianus occurs under Ex Aeliani, Augustine of Hippo carries eleven entries only four of which seem plausible by title, Renatus Choppinus' *Monasticon* has a Paris dating of 1650 (1605?), Peter Colonna is under Galatinus, Blackwell is listed under a letter from Bellarmine, Du Perron is correctly entered in *Tracts*, octavo volume 8, entry 5, page 563, but occurs both as Davy, Jacques and Davy M. Jean in the *Catalogus*, Frontino's *Strategemi Militari*, Venice 1574 is in Italian not English, Plessis du Mornay is listed as Mornaeci, Rastell as Rastall, Senesis as Sixti Senensis, Jean de Serres and Serani have separate entries, four in all, and Severus is under Sulpitii. Nonetheless [!] I estimate one hundred and eighty one authors identified by Raspa as used by Donne, one hundred and forty five of which, that is over eighty percent, are in Worsley.

In her edition of Donne's *Essays In Divinity*, the late Evelyn Simpson (1953:101-108) provides a helpful section entitled "Sources of the Essays in Divinity". Mrs Simpson lists fifty four authors. Of these, thirty four are immediately identifiable in Worsley's *Catalogus*, that is sixty three percent. Her Introduction also includes the names of Calvin, Augustine, Aquinas, Duns Scotus and Galileo as sources, but does not go on to list them. All have multiple entries in Worsley, and we may then identify thirty nine of fifty nine authors, or sixty six percent. If further we recognise that Donne met and used Baldus, Bibliander, Cusanus, Festus, Gerson, Rosellis and Vercellus through commentaries, then forty six of the fifty nine names, or seventy eight percent, may be accounted for by the entries in Worsley's *Catalogus*. Comitulus' *Responsa Moralia*, quarto, Lyons 1609 was given to Selden, (Keynes' L47, page 266) so we may account for virtually eighty percent.

Turning now to Simpson and Potter's (1962) *The Sermons of John Donne In Ten Volumes*, and its "List of Mediaeval and Renaissance Commentators and Controversialists quoted by Donne in *The Sermons and Other Main Prose Works*", we find a very similar picture emerging. Very properly, the editors point out that their list of references, one hundred and twenty five, is not complete; many more may be found in Donne's prose works. Of these, seventy four have so far been identified in Worsley's *Catalogus*, though not without some ingenuity: Andradius (Diego Andrada de Payva) is entered under Payva, Eugubinus (Augustinus Steuchus) is entered under Steuchi, Gerard under Gerhard, Gregory de Valentia under Valentia, Mesues under Messua, Porrecta (Serafino Capponi) under Capponi,

Saunders under Sander, and so on. In addition to these seventy four almost certainly another twenty authors would seem likely to have come to Donne's attention and use through commentaries and in secondary form. If these likely authors of secondary access be added to the seventy four, then ninety five of the one hundred and twenty five, or seventy six percent appear to be accountable either as direct entries in Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Tracts* or in commentaries like those of Osiander or Pererius which are entered in Worsley.

A further issue arises which for reasons of honesty must be faced: just a few of the entries in Worsley do by publishing date fall after Donne's death: the Binnius (Severin) folio, in Simpson and Potter (1962), Cologne 1606 appears as Paris 1636 in Worsley. The latter may of course be an inaccurate recording by Worsley and would not be unique. Similarly the entry for Bolduc in Worsley is Lugd. 1640, and a Choppinus Folio is dated Paris 1650, that is, nine years after Robert Ashley's death and at the height of Parliamentary power. Certainly works could have been purchased substantially later than their printing and it is possible to deduce from Worsley at least the provisional view that those administering the bequest and the 'embryo' Middle Temple Library did undertake a little updating in the areas of Law and Jurisprudence, and in respect of the religious constitutional polemics that exercised Donne; but the actual number of acquisitions was small, and the effort to update holdings in the Middle Temple Library (*pace Worsley*) was not significant down to 1734.

Mrs Simpson's (1930) edition of Donne's *The Courtier's Library*, with a translation by Percy Simpson offers a different focus. The alternative title, in English translation, is *Catalogue of Incomparable and Unsaleable Courtly Books*. This little *jeu d'esprit* is a burlesque imitation of Rabelais. Simpson's translation of Donne's little foreword reads:

I have therefore jotted down for your use the following catalogue that, with these books at your elbow, you may in almost every branch of knowledge suddenly emerge an authority, if not with deeper learning than the rest, at least with a learning differing from theirs.

No firm dating can be given; the Simpsons offer 1603-1611, perhaps 1604.

Those books not for sale under author are Lullius, Gemma [?Frisius], Sebundus, Agrippa, Erasmus, Ramus, Empiricus [Sextus] and Trit[h]emius. All are identifiable in Worsley, most with multiple entries. Of those who do not have entries in Worsley, the most significant would seem to be John

Florio (Montaigne is entered with the French original) and John Harington. Thomas Campion's *Poemata* was possessed by Donne. It is now in the Pierpoint Morgan Library, New York. It would seem to have been separately gifted (Keynes' L36, page 266).

The Courtier's Library may seem to us a rather 'damp squib'. Its comic thrust, even its purpose, is not clear. I calculate forty two 'authorial' names, some of which are obviously comical. However, the mock catalogue contains thirty three 'serious' authors, twenty eight of whom, eighty five percent, have entries in Worsley, *Catalogus* and *Tracts*. The Sorbonne is named or implied several times in the titles of *Tracts*.⁵

Keynes; Appendix IV, Books from Donne's Library, is not in itself a clear account and needs substantial re-working to be drawn into this present study. The fundamental issue is to identify the whereabouts of his listed two hundred and thirteen books at the time of Worsley's Middle Temple Catalogue of 1734. I admit some necessary interpretation on my part, but broadly Keynes' notes allow the following summary:

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Selden/Oxford | 31 |
| Stillingfleet/Ireland | 4 |
| Moore/Cambridge | 16 (? + 11) |
| Private hands | 17 |
| (This includes the second hand purchase of Paracelsus in Duck Lane in 1633) | |
| Royal College of Physicians | 3 |
| Chichester Cathedral Library | 8 |
| Middle Temple Library (Keynes' figure) | 82 (? + 12) |
| | 161 (? 184) |

Keynes' account is especially unclear in his treatment of bound copies or tracts: for example, surely his record of the binding of L53 with L1, L9, L10, L13, L22, L26, L71, L105, L106, L132 and L174, makes a total of twelve not ten tracts as he states. Further L174 is also in Worsley, which raises the suspicion that the bound twelve tracts now in Harvard College Library were part of the Middle Temple holding in 1734; and Keynes also records L70, L103, L125 and L129 in a volume of eleven bound tracts apparently in

⁵ The Sorbonne is referred to precisely in *Tracts*, quarto, volume 113, 14; and surely implied in references to the Paris Faculty of Theology, octavo, volume 26, 18, Liege, 1612, and University of Paris, octavo, volume 31, 5, Lyons, 1594.

Cambridge in 1734, but does not cite or identify the other seven tracts; and L25 is entered as one of nine tracts, but Keynes' notes read "(see L53)" so that it is unclear whether L25 is in another binding of nine tracts or should be added to the group binding of twelve. Keynes locates L25 and the eight tracts with which it is bound, also in Harvard College Library.

The above distribution overall does not suggest a wholesale disposal of Donne's Library through the second hand book trade. Selden's relationship with Donne seems to have involved substantial book sharing and exchange. Keynes' L20 and L21, works by Theodore Beza published in 1568 and previously used or owned by Donne, now amongst Selden's bequest in the Bodleian, have equivalents in Worsley, but placed and dated Geneva 1610; if the latter had indeed been Donne's too, then he gave the older printing to Selden. Worsley's *Catalogus* has nine entries for Selden, four of which fall within Donne's lifetime; and Selden's quarto *Arundelliana Marmora* is the first entry of Volume 113 of the *Tracts*, placed and dated London 1628 with Selden's name Latinised as J. Soldani. Selden, of course, is an important figure in the history of English jurisprudence and notably his works were subsequently acquired for the Middle Temple Library after Ashley's death for their importance to a law library.

That the two bishops Stillingfleet (d. 1699) and Moore (d. 1714) were involved in the acquisition and transmission of books from Donne's library is illuminating: both were ardent book collectors and Moore in particular assembled a magnificent scholarly and ecclesiastical library with many manuscripts. Of course they were born after Donne's death but in times when the religious polemics that engaged Donne still dragged on. Stillingfleet's biography offers parallels to Donne's: he too preached to lawyers and was heavily involved in controversy and polemics with Jesuits. Interestingly Worsley has an entry for Stillingfleet: a folio *Origines Britannicae: Antiquity of the British Churches*, London, 1685, a late purchase that may have reflected one of Ashley's original motives in assembling the library in the first place. After his death, his library was acquired by the Anglican Archbishop of Armagh in 1704 who may well have himself been involved in ecclesiastical polemics in Ireland, hence presumably the surfacing of four of Donne's books, three known to have been Stillingfleet's, in Ireland. At his death, Moore left a library of twenty nine thousand books and manuscripts which George I bought for six thousand guineas and presented to Cambridge University in 1717. Both Stillingfleet and Moore had a clear interest in acquiring works from Donne's library since the religious controversies that engaged him also occupied them during the rest of the seventeenth century. That so relatively few of his library holdings

apparently found their way into their collections is further suggestion that Donne's books were not widely dispersed through the second hand book trade. Stillingfleet preached in the Temple Church and may well have known the Middle Temple Library.⁶ It is also worth noting that Moore's holdings from Donne's library included two bindings of *Tracts*. Keynes investigated these and writes:

Most of the tracts, signed and unsigned, carry clear evidence of having been read by Donne and, moreover, conform in their subjects to his interests. (Keynes 1973:261)

I return to the issue of Donne's interests below.

Keynes used Donne's motto

Per Rachel ho servito, & non per Lea

from Petrarch's *Canzoni*, xix, st. 7, l.1, as a means of identification and comments upon its occurrence in a book by Botero (pages 259-260). Worsley's *Catalogus* lists four works under Petrarch, printed 1577, 1581, 1604 and 1609, the folio *Opera omnia* being of 1581; and under Botero, has entries for eleven works all dated between 1598 and 1620. Such was the linguistic weakness of Worsley or his assistants that seven entries are listed under Botero (Giov.) and four under Boteri (Jo.); these were of course one person. By date all could have been Donne's.

If the books of Donne identified amongst the libraries of Selden, Stillingfleet and Moore are set against Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Tracts*, then duplicate copies are identifiable. There are, of course, examples of duplicate copies not only between Worsley and Selden, Stillingfleet and Moore on the one hand, but within Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Tracts*. Lodowick Lloyd's *Dial of Days* (1590) has two entries, both quarto at *Tracts*, Volume 18, 2 and volume 98, 11; and *Aphorisms of Jesuits* likewise quarto Volume 93, 2 (1609) and octavo Volume 22, 1 (1629). The former reflects possibly Ashley's purchasing, the latter Donne's. But commonsense suggests that duplication may be a consequence of the bulk purchase of books upon the liquidation of libraries. Worsley's *Catalogus* and *Tracts* reflects such practices and has numerous duplicate copies unresolved nearly a century after Ashley's death.

⁶ *Dictionary of National Biography*, volume XVIII, page 1263.

Of the eighty two books that Keynes lists as in the Middle Temple Library, I have identified all except three in Worsley. The three books which Keynes records for the Middle Temple Library, not confirmed in Worsley, are L41, L200 and L206. In fact, L41, duodecimo, Venice 1575 is entered in the 1880 catalogue and therefore must be in Worsley unless left out in error. L200 and L206 are not entered in Worsley or the 1880 catalogue. According to Keynes, L200 and L206 were bound together “and probably acquired by Donne in that form, though published separately”. In fact Keynes claims L200 for the Middle Temple Library but not L206. Possibly Keynes’ notes misled him, and neither was part of the Middle Temple holding. Of the fifty two books, according to my interpretation of Keynes’ commentary, unlocated in 1734, at least eleven have entries in Worsley and *prima facie* may have been part of the Middle Temple holding at that time. Keynes offers no evidence that he knew that these eleven might have been catalogued by Worsley and subsequently dispersed. It is possible that of the remaining forty one books listed by Keynes with no known location in 1734, yet more will be identified in Worsley.

I have already referred the reader to several of the *Miscellaneous Tracts* that conclude Worsley’s *Catalogus*. Notwithstanding Worsley’s choice of name, this section comprises a range of material from substantial books to topical ephemera, at least by their titles. My concluding purpose quite simply is to highlight possible relationships between this material and well-known biographical facts of Donne’s life.

Donne’s poetry and its content may seem remote from the subject range of this paper. In fact octavo volume 19 has fourteen tracts, all from Donne’s lifetime, three on rhetoric, and its number eight has the title *Harangue faicte en la Defense de l’Inconstance*, Paris 1598. Further there are two copies of Agnolo Firenzuola’s *Dialogo della Bellezza delle Donne*.⁷ Quarto volume seventy seven has twenty three tracts on the Oath of Allegiance, the second of which is entitled *Apology for the Oath of Allegiance, against the Two Breves of Pope Paul V. and Cardinal Bellarmine’s Letter to G. Blackwell*, London 1607. Quarto volumes seventy eight to eighty two all deal with Alchemy, Medicine, Chemistry, Astronomy and Astrology. Quarto volumes eighty three to eighty six, sixty six tracts in all are almost entirely given over to the polemics of the Anglican Church. Quarto volumes eighty seven to ninety, sixty seven tracts, are devoted to theological polemics.

⁷ Worsley, *Tracts* 8° Volume 16, number 16, and 8° Volume 24, number 9.

In quarto volumes ninety one and ninety two there are forty four sermons. Quarto volume ninety three has fifteen tracts focused on the Jesuits. Quarto volume ninety four has twenty one tracts on polemics between Catholics and the Reformed. Volumes ninety six to ninety eight have fifty three tracts almost all devoted to Applied Mathematics. Quarto volume one hundred and seven contains fourteen tracts on the Reformers versus Rome, including ones by Luther, Scioppius [Sciopy] and Sutcliffe. Quarto volume one hundred and twelve has twenty tracts on Bohemia, quarto volume one hundred and fifteen, twenty nine tracts, only three of which post-date Donne's life, on France and Germany, quarto volume one hundred and sixteen has twenty nine tracts on the Low Countries, indeed the sheer volume of material on the Low Countries, including speeches of Dudley Carleton, British Resident at The Hague, with whom Doncaster and Donne stayed in 1619, much of it apparently acquired over there, strongly suggests Donne's former ownership.⁸ Similarly there are many tracts on the Virginia Company, a well known interest of Donne.⁹ I have no wish to plunge into circularity of argument. My purpose is to point out that Donne's voracious appetite for the ephemera of politics and current affairs, identified by Walton, may be substantiated in Worsley's *Miscellaneous Tracts* if these did originate with Donne. These were very possibly interests that Robert Ashley shared; but there remains a well grounded suspicion that such lively matters could have passed through Donne's hands first since they fit the known facts of his life.

In seeking to maintain a focus on Worsley's *Catalogus* of 1734 I have held back reference to the two Middle Temple Catalogues of 1880 and 1914 (Supplement, 1925).¹⁰ A short monograph by Robert Scarr Sowler *A Few Rare And Curious Books* (1867-1868),¹¹ reveals that Sowler clearly believed

⁸ Worsley, *Tracts*, 8° Volume 33 number 6 deals with the arraignment and execution of John Van Olden Barncvelt; 4° Volume 116 contains twenty nine tracts on the Low Countries, all from Donne's lifetime; and orations of Dudley Carleton will be found as number 2 in 4° Volume 75 [1613] and number 5 in 4° Volume 76 [1618]

⁹ See for example 4° Volume 92, number 18 and 4° Volume 114 number 15, for the Virginia Company and Lord Delaware. There are numerous others in 4° Volumes 11, 17, 91, 103 and 8° Volumes 28-31.

¹⁰ *Catalogue of The Printed Books in The Library of The Middle Temple*, alphabetically arranged with "An Index of Subjects", Phipps and Connor, London, MDCCCLXXX, British Library Shelfmark 11903.g.6; and Bedwell, C.E.A., *A Catalogue of The Printed Books in The Library of The Honourable Society of The Middle Temple*, Robert Maclehose, Glasgow University Press, MCMXIV, three vols., with Sturgess H.A.C., *Supplement To The Catalogue 1914-1924*, Phipps and Connor, London, MCMXXV.

¹¹ Sowler, Robert Scarr, *A Few Rare And Curious Books*, Descriptive List, photocopy, British Library Unbound Pamphlets/Books, British Library Shelfmark 1568/8878 London. III Inns of Court.

that the Middle Temple Library was a proper repository for Anthony Fitzherbert's *La Nouvelle Natura* [sic] published by Richard Tottel in 1567, and his short monograph of presentation refers explicitly to the 1581 octavo with Rastell's Tables already in the Library and entered in Worsley. The implicit philosophy of Sowler's brief notes is that the Middle Temple Library existed as much for educational breadth as for specialist legal training, and shows that a Renaissance ideal evident in Buc's remark quoted above and Ashley's bequest, still survived into the reign of Victoria. The 1880 catalogue confirms this: books of Worsley's *Catalogus and Miscellaneous Tracts* were still integrated with the main library offering and openly accessible. The Victorian cataloguing is superior to Worsley's and there is a useful subject index; but clearly the greater part of the non-legal subject matter, for instance in Medicine, Metallurgy, Mathematics and so on, remained the Renaissance books of Ashley's 1641 bequest. There is no evidence that anyone saw anything disparate or discordant in these materials rubbing shoulders in open stacks with the legal resources of a world empire, of the English-speaking world and beyond. Worsley's *Tracts* are identified in the 1880 catalogue and the library that Worsley recorded in 1734 appears assimilated in the 1880 "Index of Subjects" under classifications like Alchemy, Anatomy, Astrology, Astronomy, Canon Law, Chemistry, Christian Religion, Church of England, Church History, Church Law, Conscience Cases, Ecclesiastical History, Episcopacy, Franciscans, Geometry, Hebrew Language, History of Holland, Jerusalem, Luther, some three hundred entries under Medicine, Jesuits, Monastic Life, Poisons, Pope and Papacy, Spain and Surgery, and many dozens more! Printing dates from Donne's lifetime and before abound. A study of the survival of the entries of the 1880 catalogue into that of 1914 lies beyond this present account. Bellarmine, Baronius, Ribadeneira, Feuerdent, Parsons, Lipsius, Morton, Steuchus, d'Espence, Albizzi, Cajetan [Cayet], Gretzer, Scultetus, Sedulius, Serarius, Endaemon-Joannes and Tilenus are still fully represented in 1880. However loss is evident by 1914. Corn. Gemma has no entry, apparently neither has Cajetan; and twenty six entries under Jesu Societas, all dating from Donne's lifetime, dropped to just six entries under Jesuits in 1914. None of the above listed authors appears on the present day computerized Library database. The subject categories of the database are restricted to professional needs.

For the present situation of rare and antiquarian books held in the Middle Temple Library I can do no better than quote from a letter dated 14th January 2003 of A.S. Adams, Senior Librarian of the Middle Temple Library who writes:

The ‘Rare Books Room’ (which is not in the Basement) contains fewer than 800 printed texts (from *incunabula* to twentieth-century publications); the Basement stacks, in contrast, hold ‘inter alia’ over 13,000 pre-1850 books, of which a high proportion would be sixteenth & seventeenth-century publications. Any serious study of Donne’s bibliographical remains would require access to both collections and (I agree) preferably the involvement of a whole team of specialists, granted the individual examination of any and all books which he might have owned and the concomitant time factors which would be involved. There can be no question however of generally “opening up” (as you put it) the collections, for security reasons...

...[our] known losses have necessitated the double-locking of the antiquarian collections. It is just a shame that the sins of the few foul the pitch for the many. As matters stand, access to rare items is a matter of retrieval: of specific items or small numbers of books at a time, to be used under what amounts to staff supervision in the main library. Retrieval of large quantities of material is simply not feasible.

It may interest you to know that re-cataloguing of the Basement stock has been budgeted for in the current financial year; and I am hoping that this, if successfully enacted, will enhance our bibliographical control and in-house cognisance of our earlier monographs in the near future.

It is fair to ask how this survey may be taken forward. The ideal —though it does seem remote— would be for Worsley’s 1734 *Catalogus* and *Miscellaneous Tracts* to be placed on a computerized database together with the Middle Temple Library Catalogues of 1880 and 1914. Only co-operative scholarship backed by modern technological skills is likely to resolve such key outstanding questions as: did Ashley acquire the greatest part of Donne’s Library; and if so, why has this fact passed unnoticed for nearly four hundred years?

Clearly these investigations are at a very early stage. Sensibly we can only put forward temporary hypotheses to be the subject of further enquiry and evidence. The following would seem amongst the most plausible for testing:

- 1) Donne remained a book purchaser/acquirer throughout his life and remarkably close to the book trade —contrary to Keynes’ view that his active acquisition of books declined after 1615.
- 2) Many modern editions of Donne’s poetry and prose should be subject to revision in the light of Worsley’s *Catalogus* and *Tracts*. There must be a strong possibility that his reading may be more accurately reflected in the 1734 Middle Temple Library holding than in much ingenious scholarly guesswork.

- 3) Donne used secondary sources and took over their citations without himself accessing the primary works. This practice inflated the appearance of his scholarship.
- 4) Donne read Latin fluently but his knowledge of classical languages was otherwise very weak, almost no Greek and little Hebrew. In contrast his command of contemporary modern European languages was sound; besides French, Italian and Spanish, he probably read Flemish, German and Portuguese.
- 5) Ashley's apparent purchase of a substantial part of Donne's private library may have arisen from the acquisitive drive of a moneyed bibliophile. However, the subject matter of so much that he perhaps bought from Donne's executors strongly suggests that Ashley's motive was to hold together a huge resource of polemical material judged to be essential to debates that outlived Donne, in defence of the Anglican Church, the Oath of Allegiance, a Protestant Monarchy and Ascendancy, and, in dispute with, admittedly, declining Papal claims. The fact that the Bishops Stillingfleet and Moore also held books originally owned by Donne may indicate that they saw things similarly. Ashley may have judged this polemical material as rightly located in an Inn of Court and thereby available to senior servants of the state and the crown.

The *Tracts* seem especially relevant. Donne's own *Pseudo-Martyr* [1660] is entered as quarto, volume one hundred and thirteen, possibly for its relevance to the Oath of Allegiance; Osorius' *Discourse of Civil and Christian Nobility*, London 1576 is tract one of quarto, volume fifteen; Thomas Swadlin's *The Jesuite the Chief State Heretick in the World or, The Venetian Quarrel digested into a Dialogue*, London 1647, is number two of octavo, volume twelve purchased after the death of both Donne and Ashley; these may indicate an ongoing commitment; Anthony Cade's *Justification of the Church of England Against the Roman Enchantments of being Subject to the Pope of Rome* [1630] is again the sole entry of quarto, volume fifty six; and Warmingtton's (William Catholick Priest) *Moderate Defence of the Oath of Allegiance against the Pope's Breeves Per Su.* 1612, number twenty of quarto, volume one hundred and fourteen, perhaps makes the point best. Ecclesiastical Law remains a specialism of the Middle Temple at the present day.

- 6) There is an alternative possibility that Ashley himself was the unidentified figure who, in Healy's words, gave Donne "the run of such a controversial library".
- 7) What survives in the Middle Temple Library Rare Books Room today would seem a small fraction of Ashley's original bequest or of those of

Ashley's books still present in 1880. However other books from the original bequest may be amongst the "over 13,000 pre-1850 books, of which a high proportion would be sixteenth and seventeenth-century publications", of the Senior Librarian's letter.

- 8) A complementary issue which this enquiry has not resolved is Donne's evident use of Gabriel Vásquez and Juan Azor [Azorius], authors that appear not to be represented in Worsley, yet Healy assures us that Donne drew upon them heavily (pages 116 and 161). Perhaps Donne accessed these writers through an Anglican ecclesiastical library and perhaps it is in such a library, where it survives, that evidence of Donne's use will be found.

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The Robert Ashley Founding Bequest to the Middle Temple Library...

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