

The Bodleian Library and its Incunabula

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The Bodleian's Acquisition of Incunabula

As a result of 400 years of purchases and donations, the Bodleian now has 5,600 incunable editions in its holdings, some in multiple copies, with the total number of incunabula in excess of 7,000. However, it should be stressed at the outset that the Library's collection of incunabula is essentially a product of nineteenth-century acquisitions, building on the collection acquired by the Library from its foundation.¹

It is quite likely that the old University Library acquired some incunabula before it was finally dispersed in the 1550s. However, it is impossible to be certain about this: no incunabula from the old library have been identified, nor do any catalogues of this library survive.²

Incunabula were among the first books presented to the Bodleian Library (by Sir Thomas Bodley's 'Store of Honourable Friends'),³ and among the earliest purchases made for it using money given by benefactors. The 'Honourable Friends' consisted of several different groups. There were the aristocrats and courtiers in whose circle Bodley would have moved when serving Queen Elizabeth, men such as the Chancellor of the University, Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, later Earl of Dorset; George Carey, Lord Hunsdon; Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex; John, Lord Lumley; and Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, later Earl of Devon. There were also senior churchmen, such as Toby Matthew, Bishop of Durham; John Langworthe, Archdeacon of Wells; James Cottington, Archdeacon of Surrey; and Alexander Nowell, Dean of St Paul's, London. Another group included civil servants and administrators, Bodley's former colleagues in the Elizabethan regime, men such as Sir John Fortescue, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Sir Francis Vere. Then there were 'local' figures, either members of the university (such as the sometime Vice-Chancellor, Dr Thomas Thornton, John Hawley, Principal of Gloucester Hall, and William Gent, also of Gloucester Hall), or members of the landed gentry of Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties (men such as Anthony Morgan, of Aynho, in Northamptonshire, Sir George Shirley of Astwell,

¹ The author is greatly indebted to the following colleagues for reading drafts of this introduction, and for their comments and suggestions: Mary Clapinson, Cristina Dondi, Geoff Groom, Andrew Honey, Clive Hurst, Martin Kauffmann, Elizabeth Mathew, Nigel Palmer, Julian Roberts, Tim Rogers, and Carolinne White; he is also grateful to Francis Sheppard for information about his father, L. A. Sheppard; the author himself remains solely responsible for any errors, and for the views expressed.

² On the old university library and its collections see William Dunn Macray, *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1984), 3-13; David Rogers, *The Bodleian Library and its Treasures 1320-1700* (Nuffield, 1991), 8-20; *Duke Humfrey's Library & the Divinity School 1488-1988: An Exhibition at the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1988); Stanley Gillam, *The Divinity School and Duke Humfrey's Library at Oxford* (Oxford, 1988); N. R. Ker, 'The Provision of Books', in *The Collegiate University*, ed. James McConica, The History of the University of Oxford, 3 (Oxford, 1986), 465-6; M. B. Parkes, 'The Provision of Books', in *Late Medieval Oxford*, ed. J. I. Catto and Ralph Evans, The History of the University of Oxford, 2 (Oxford, 1992), 471-80; although no actual catalogues survive, there are lists extant of manuscripts given to the University by Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester.

³ Thomas Bodley, *The Life of Sir Thomas Bodley . . . Written by Himself* (Oxford, 1647), 15.

also in Northamptonshire, and one woman, Alice Chamberlaine, of Shirburn). The donations of these and other individuals, whether of incunabula or money from which incunabula were then purchased, were recorded in the Library's 'Benefactors' Register', as part of the record of all such gifts to the Bodleian.⁴ From this list of names, it is immediately apparent that, whilst many of them would be regarded as being firm adherents of the Protestant faith, there were several whose religious sympathies leaned more towards Catholicism, for example, Alice Chamberlaine, George Shirley, and, in all probability, the two members of Gloucester Hall, a known stronghold of the old religion. The enthusiasm of adherents of the old religion to contribute material to Bodley's new library (which was once considered by historians to have been a 'bulwark of extreme Protestantism') has been noted elsewhere in the context of donations of manuscripts.⁵ Some books from the institutional representatives of the old religion, namely the English monasteries, also found their way into the Bodleian: incunabula with medieval English monastic provenances entered the Bodleian's collection throughout the first 150 years of its history, but not in any great quantity. This is not simply because of the lack of continuity of the University Library between the medieval and post-dissolution periods: even in Cambridge University Library, where there was no similar hiatus, there were still relatively few incunabula added to the collection during the sixteenth century.⁶ In passing, this glance at the previous history of Bodleian incunabula may be extended further: among the books presented to the Library by the Earl of Essex were those formerly in the library of Fernão Mascarenhas, Bishop of Faro and Grand Inquisitor, which Essex removed from the episcopal library during one of his buccaneering raids in 1596. This collection and many books formerly in German religious houses and later acquired for the Bodleian by the agents of Archbishop Laud (see below) serve as a reminder that the dispersal of books between institutions and individuals has not always been a peaceful one.⁷

The Bodleian's single major source of incunabula during the seventeenth century was the library of John Selden (1584-1654). Selden was a lawyer, antiquary, Member of Parliament, and book collector, whose splendid collection of some 8,000 volumes remains one of the most significant ever given to the Bodleian, in terms of both its size and its breadth, showing the range of Selden's own interests in law, languages, history, and antiquities. The collection included both eastern and western manuscripts (which were bequeathed to the Bodleian), and printed books (which were subsequently assigned to the Library by his executors). However, with the exception of early English imprints, it is unlikely that Selden collected incunabula for their age or rarity, and the majority of his more than 100 incunabula fall within the range of his general academic interests.⁸

⁴ On the information which can be gained from the Register, and the problems of using it, with particular relation to the Bodleian's incunabula, see Kristian Jensen, 'Problems of Provenance: Incunabula in the Bodleian Library's Benefactors' Register 1600-1602', in *Incunabula: Studies in Fifteenth-Century Printed Books Presented to Lotte Hellinga*, ed. M. Davies (London, 1999), 559-602, with references; see also Provenance Index; Rogers, *Treasures, ad indicem*, illustrates the upper cover at 26, and a page from the register at 27. For a general overview of benefactors' registers in Oxford, see Jonathan B. Bengtson, 'Benefaction Registers in Oxford Libraries', *Library History*, 16 (2000), 143-52, with a brief consideration of the Bodleian register at 143-4.

⁵ Alan Coates, *English Medieval Books: The Reading Abbey Collections from Foundation to Dispersal* (Oxford, 1999), 141-2.

⁶ Incunabula in the Bodleian with British monastic provenances have been discussed by Alan Coates and Kristian Jensen, 'The Bodleian Library's Acquisition of Incunabula with English and Scottish Medieval Monastic Provenances', in *Books and Collectors 1200-1700: Essays Presented to Andrew Watson*, ed. James P. Carley and Colin G. C. Tite (London, 1997), 237-59.

⁷ See Mascarenhas and Essex in the Provenance Index, with references provided there.

⁸ See the Provenance Index for further references.

At this stage, such books were acquired as part of the Library's general acquisitions policy, not as specimens of early printing: indeed, it was not really until the eighteenth century that incunabula became the subjects of such an interest.⁹

Another important donation to the Library, that of William Laud (1573-1645), Archbishop of Canterbury, adviser to King Charles I, and Chancellor of the University of Oxford, contained a small number of incunabula. Three of these came from Würzburg, having been alienated from their original homes during the Swedish occupation, and were then bought by Laud's agents; books from Würzburg were probably on sale generally through the London book-trade, and were also acquired by other purchasers such as Richard Holdsworth.¹⁰ At the very end of the seventeenth century the Bodleian acquired, from the widow of Edward Bernard (1638-1697), Savilian Professor of Astronomy (1673-91), those of his printed books not already in the Library, including copies of 40 incunable editions. A list of these acquisitions was subsequently drawn up by the young Humfrey Wanley, who spent five years as an extra assistant at the Bodleian before becoming librarian to Robert Harley.¹¹ Bernard, the successor to Christopher Wren as Savilian Professor, was not only a distinguished mathematician, but was also renowned as a philologist; in addition, he had a fine library containing many early editions of classical texts, and was editor-in-chief of a catalogue of manuscripts in English and Irish collections.¹²

The eighteenth century, often reckoned to be a time of indolence within the University, saw no major acquisitions of incunabula until the last years of the period, although there were some incunables in three separate bequests. In 1735 the Bodleian acquired the bequest of Thomas Tanner (1674-1735), Bishop of St Asaph, and former Fellow of All Souls and Canon of Christ Church. His collection of printed books, which was especially rich in rare examples of English fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century printing, was put together to support his bibliographical work, the *Bibliotheca Britannico-Hibernica*, eventually published by David Wilkins in 1748. Nathaniel Crynes (1686-1745), Fellow of St John's College, Oxford, also left a large collection of books to the Library, including incunabula. The third large bequest containing incunables was that of Richard Rawlinson (1690-1755), the non-juring bishop. His very extensive library included books formerly belonging to his brother, Thomas, another distinguished book collector.¹³

Most of the early acquisitions of incunabula were donations or bequests, as noted above, rather than purchases (the books of Edward Bernard were a rare exception). This had not a little to do with the Library's increasingly difficult financial position from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards. The Founder's original endowment, which included properties in Distaff Lane, London (near St Paul's Cathedral) and land at Cookham, near Maidenhead in Berkshire, had been intended

⁹ Lotte Hellinga, 'Incunabula 1442-1492: From Type to Text', in *The Book Encompassed: Studies in 20th-century Bibliography*, ed. Peter Davison (Cambridge, 1992), 107-15, at 110.

¹⁰ The author is grateful to Julian Roberts for this information.

¹¹ For Wanley see *DNB*; Rogers, *Treasures*, 170-2; S. G. Gillam and R. W. Hunt, 'The Curators of the Library and Humphrey Wanley', *BLR* 5,2 (1954), 85-98; Humfrey Wanley, *Letters of Humfrey Wanley, Palaeographer, Anglo-Saxonist, Librarian 1672-1726*, ed. P. L. Heyworth (Oxford, 1989), *ad indicem*.

¹² For Laud and Bernard see Provenance Index, with references.

¹³ For Tanner, Crynes, and Rawlinson see the Provenance Index, with references given there; for all the named collections of printed books in the Library see also *A Directory of Rare Book and Special Collections in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland*, ed. B. C. Bloomfield and Karen Potts, 2nd edn (London, 1997), 493-520, now available in the Rare Books Section's part of the Bodleian's website, at <http://www.bodley.ox.ac.uk/dept/scwmss/rarebooks/index.html>.

to provide the Library with enough money for book purchases. However, the Bodleian was soon to face financial problems largely because the loan to King Charles I of £500 in 1642 was never repaid (it was still being recorded in Library Accounts as an unpaid debt as late as 1782). In addition, there were unpaid rents on the Distaff Lane properties, from which money was just beginning to come in after the Civil War, when the Great Fire of London destroyed the properties in London, with the result that income from rent was seriously interrupted for some years.¹⁴ Apart from particular University grants for special purchases, the Library was obliged to rely on only one other regular source of money for book purchases, namely the £5 rent from land in the village of Wick Rissington, near Bourton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire, which had been purchased by the Library in 1633, from the £100 given by Margaret Brooke.¹⁵ In the early years of the eighteenth century the position seemed to have improved, largely through an increase in fines on the Library's estates,¹⁶ but, by the middle of the century, the original Bodleian endowment was being used almost in its entirety to pay for the running of the Library, and there was little money left for the purchase of new books. Indeed, by the 1730s, only about £7 per annum was being spent on books. The situation improved a little in 1750, when money left to the Library in a trust fund in 1721 by Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, finally became available, thus guaranteeing a sum of £10 annually for the purchase of books. The deficiencies in the Bodleian's collections became ever more apparent, and drew considerable criticism but initially no extra financial support. Eventually, a proposal promoted by William Scott (later Lord Stowell), the Camden Professor of Ancient History, led to the transfer of certain University fees to the Library, thereby vastly increasing the book-purchasing budget from £15 in 1780 to £451 in 1781.¹⁷ Although this did allow gaps to be filled, there were still critical remarks about book selection being 'neither rational nor efficient'. One especially fierce attack, from the incoming Reader in Chemistry, Thomas Lovell Beddoes, in 1787, in his *Memorial concerning the State of the Bodleian Library*, led the Curators of the Bodleian to institute new procedures, whereby they would meet regularly to order the purchase of books, and examine booksellers' catalogues.¹⁸

Thus, by 1789, the Library was well placed to respond to the wonderful opportunity which the Pinelli and Crevenna sales presented. The acquisitions made at these sales were the first great purchases after the years of relative stagnation.¹⁹ For the Bodleian, the Pinelli sale was a particular landmark in the development of its collections in that it saw the beginning of a concerted policy of

¹⁴ See I. G. Philip and Paul Morgan, 'Libraries, Books, and Printing', in *Seventeenth-Century Oxford*, ed. Nicholas Tyacke, The History of the University of Oxford, 4 (Oxford, 1997), 659-85, at 665-7 on purchasing in general and the funds available.

¹⁵ Ian Philip, *The Bodleian Library in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Lyell Lectures, Oxford, 1980-1 (Oxford, 1983), 55-6; Alan Coates, 'The Bodleian's Incunabula in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: Their Acquisition, Cataloguing and Housing', *BLR* 15,2 (1995), 108-18, at 108-9.

¹⁶ I. G. Philip, 'Libraries and the University Press', in *The Eighteenth Century*, ed. L. S. Sutherland and L. G. Mitchell, The History of the University of Oxford, 5 (Oxford, 1986), 729-30.

¹⁷ Coates, 'Bodleian's Incunabula', 109, with references given there.

¹⁸ It is not clear whether this procedure had lapsed by the time of Nicholson's tenure of the Librarianship, but, in 1888, it was decided that the Curators would meet weekly to discuss the list of proposed purchases drawn up by the Librarian; this scheme seems to have been abandoned virtually as soon as it was instituted; see Sir Edmund Craster, *History of the Bodleian Library 1845-1945* (Oxford, 1952, repr. 1981), 175; it had, of course, been the procedure laid down originally: see Philip and Morgan, 'Libraries, Books, and Printing', 665.

¹⁹ For more background to the Pinelli and Crevenna sales see Ian Philip, 'The Background to Bodleian Purchases of Incunabula at the Pinelli and Crevenna Sales 1789-90', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society*, 7 (1979), 369-75; Philip, *Bodleian Library*, 103-8; Philip, 'Libraries and the University Press', 741-5.

purchasing first or early editions of the Latin and Greek classical authors, Aldines, and early editions of the Bible. Two of the Curators, John Randolph, Regius Professor of Divinity, and William Jackson, Regius Professor of Greek, were commissioned to decide on purchases to be made at the sale, and to arrange for bids to be placed. Their selections were presumably influenced by the recent decision to make the newly established 'Auctarium' (to be discussed further below) the repository for the Library's classical and biblical manuscripts and fifteenth-century editions; there, they would be ready for collation, as part of the preparation of new editions which would then be published by the University Press (in addition to being Curators of the Bodleian, both Jackson and Randolph were also Delegates of the Press).

Maffeo Pinelli (1735-1785) had been the hereditary director of the official Venetian press.²⁰ He had inherited what has been described as 'one of the great libraries of classical literature in fine Italian printing'.²¹ After his death, his books were bought by the London bookseller, James Edwards, and sold at auction in 1789. The bidding (undertaken by the London bookseller Peter Elmsley, on the Library's behalf) was highly successful, and the Bodleian acquired 79 incunables (costing £538), out of a total purchase at the sale of £1080. However, this left the Bodleian's account considerably in deficit. By the time the Library published its statement of account on 1 December, the deficit was still standing at some £484. The Curators issued a notice to all members of the University notifying them of the Library's intention 'to borrow either from Colleges or Individuals such Sums of Money, as they may be disposed to offer'.²² Despite the conflict between the Curators (who wished to see money spent on 'new books') and Heads of Houses who were more interested in longer opening hours and better services, the appeal was answered handsomely, to the tune of £1600.²³ Having acquired so many magnificent books at Pinelli's sale, the Library then set about having them rebound suitably. The Bodleian commissioned two German binders working in London, Heinrich Walther and Christian Samuel Kalthoeber, to bind books in plain red morocco. Most were also stamped on both covers with the gilt Bodleian stamp, which had been specially engraved for the purpose in 1789.²⁴ It is worth noting in passing that rebinding in this lavish style and on such a grand scale was very much an isolated occurrence in the history of the Library.²⁵

²⁰ For references to Pinelli and Crevenna as collectors see the Provenance Index.

²¹ Philip, 'Purchases of Incunabula', 370.

²² See Philip, *Bodleian Library*, 109; the notice is printed partially there, and fully in Philip, 'Purchases of Incunabula', 372, where the enthusiasm of the Curators for the purchases is stressed; on the sale in general see Philip, *Bodleian Library*, 108-10.

²³ For a list of subscribers see Philip, 'Purchases of Incunabula', 372. The principal contributors included Christ Church, All Souls, Magdalen, and The Queen's Colleges, William Scott, the Bishop of Salisbury, and several Students of Christ Church.

²⁴ On Walther and Kalthoeber and their work for the Bodleian see Kristian Jensen, 'Heinrich Walther, Christian Samuel Kalthoeber and Other London Binders', *Bibliothek und Wissenschaft*, 29 (1996), 292-311. The author is grateful to Andrew Honey, whose work (in progress) has identified several different styles of gilt stamp used by the Library: of these, two appear on books bound by Walther and Kalthoeber, and another two date perhaps from the 1820s.

²⁵ The difference in approach between the Bodleian and the British Museum regarding the rebinding of collections, within a period of fifty years of the Pinelli and Crevenna sales, is shown by the following extract from a letter from Sir Frederic Madden to Sir Thomas Phillipps, dated 4 April 1834: 'I am quite vexed at Douce's disposition of his collections. To leave them to the Bodleian is to throw them down a bottomless pit! They will there be neither catalogued, bound or preserved, but suffer to sleep on with the Gough, Rawlinson and Tanner collections undisturbed' [Bodleian Library, MS Phillipps-Robinson b. 128, fol. 23, quoted in *The Douce Legacy: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Bequest of Francis Douce (1757-1834)* (Oxford, 1984), 17]. The author is grateful to Andrew Honey for this comparison.

The other large sale in 1789 was that of the library of Pietro-Antonio Bolongaro-Crevenna (1735-1792). Crevenna came from Italy, but subsequently became a trader in snuff in Amsterdam, and put together a splendid library, which he intended to use as material for a work on the history of printing (a project begun but never finished). The bulk of the collection was sold in 1789, with Crevenna choosing to retain some of his books for his continued use. The Crevenna sale is interesting from a Bodleian perspective because the Library continued the process, started at the Pinelli sale, of buying early editions of classical texts, and indeed bought even more heavily. Thomas Payne, the London bookseller, acted for the Bodleian at the sale, and the Library spent £1152 on the purchase of 93 incunables. They included two items which were by far the most expensive of all the purchases in this period: Gulielmus Durandus, *Rationale divinatorum officiorum* (Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, 1459) for £80 10s. 0d.; and *Biblia Latina* (Mainz: Peter Schoeffer, 1461), for the extravagant sum of £127 15s. 0d. (by way of comparison, in 1793 the Library bought its copy of the ‘Gutenberg Bible’ from the collection of Cardinal Loménie de Brienne for only £100). Such was the expense that the Library was faced with a debt of more than £1500: the fact that there were no more ‘opportunities of considerable consequence’ for acquisition, coupled with careful financial management and further donations, particularly during 1791-2, allowed the debts to be cleared by 1795.²⁶

The Library’s purchases at these two sales were made for academic reasons in the main, but the way they were subsequently bound mirrored the taste of another group of collectors, namely the great aristocratic and gentleman bibliophiles of the period, such as the Duke of Roxburghe (1740-1804), Lord Spencer (1758-1834), and Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, 3rd Baronet (1771-1823), who were acquiring similar books and often binding them even more lavishly, not only for the purpose of study, but also to impress their friends. George John, 2nd Earl Spencer’s distinguished collection of incunables and early editions included many Italian books acquired when he bought the whole of the library of the Duca di Cassano. Spencer sold duplicates from his collections on various occasions during the 1820s, and the Bodleian bought items from these sales. The collection formed by Sykes at his home, Sledmere House, near Driffield in East Yorkshire, was housed in a splendid library room, which reflected the quality of the collection: it was strong in incunabula, and the Bodleian purchased extensively at his sale in 1824.²⁷

Not all of the Library’s acquisitions during the nineteenth century were by purchase. Richard Gough (1735-1809) bequeathed large numbers of his books. His collection of pre-Reformation service books was outstanding, as also was his collection of geographical and topographical material.²⁸

In 1834 Francis Douce (1757-1834), collector, antiquarian, and former Keeper of Manuscripts in the British Museum, died and left his books to the Bodleian. Douce’s enormous bequest was one of the largest and most important ever to come to the Bodleian. It consisted of more than 19,000 printed volumes, including 479 incunables, and contained examples of virtually every sort of printed book from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. In addition, the bequest also

²⁶ The contributors on this occasion included Corpus Christi and University Colleges, and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York; on the sale see Philip, ‘Purchases of Incunabula’, 373-4, with the benefactors listed at 374, also Philip, *Bodleian Library*, 110-11.

²⁷ For Roxburghe, Spencer, Sykes, and Cassano see the Provenance Index.

²⁸ For Gough see the Provenance Index.

included some 420 manuscripts, of which two-thirds are medieval or sixteenth-century. The sheer extent and range of the collection becomes immediately apparent when the other items he bequeathed to the Bodleian are considered, namely the prints, drawings, and coins (now mostly housed in the Ashmolean Museum).²⁹ Douce's collection is important not just for its size, but also for the content: his incunables alone, for example, filled many gaps in the Bodleian's collections. For, unlike other great contemporary collectors (such as those mentioned above), Douce did not focus on early editions of the classics and Aldines, but rather collected literature in the vernacular, unfashionable medieval texts, fables and romances, sermons and preaching manuals, grammars and schoolbooks, which were not the type of material the Library had purchased at, for example, the Pinelli or Crevenna sales.³⁰

The Bodleian acquired the bulk of its present collections of incunabula during the nineteenth century. The majority of these books came from Germany and were purchased by the Library, rather than acquired by gift or bequest. Central to the success of all purchases of incunabula by the Library for about half the nineteenth century was the determination and interest of Bulkeley Bandinel, Bodley's Librarian from 1813 to 1860. Bandinel was a curious mixture: the Wykehamist who went on to be chaplain on board *HMS Victory*, the active and discerning librarian and bibliophile who was nominated, unopposed, to follow his own godfather, John Price, as Bodley's Librarian, in a somewhat nepotistic succession. He has been described as probably the 'most outstandingly acquisitive of any Bodley's Librarian'; and it was said, when he died, that 'to the very last he knew the size, appearance, and position of every volume in the library'.³¹ He was especially knowledgeable about printed books in general, and incunabula and *editiones principes* in particular. Bandinel's general purchasing policy was wide-ranging, but he was to continue the practice of his predecessor of buying books printed on parchment, *editiones principes* of the classics, and Aldines; he also aimed to build up a fully representative collection of early printed editions of the Bible. This collecting strategy was motivated both by the climate of contemporary learned taste and by the classical curriculum of the University. Indeed, Bodley's Librarian, with the active support of the Curators, seems to have allotted a large share of the money available for purchasing books to increasing the size of the incunable collection: during Bandinel's tenure of office more than 2,200 incunabula were acquired by purchase, bequest, or donation.³² In the later part of his tenure of office, Bandinel was able to buy incunabula in bulk from the sales of Munich duplicates, as will be seen below.³³

²⁹ Douce's personal papers were bequeathed to the British Museum on condition that they were not to be opened until 1 January 1900. They were given to the Bodleian by the Trustees of the Museum in 1933 (see Mary Clapinson and T. D. Rogers, *Summary Catalogue of Post-Medieval Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library, Oxford: Acquisitions 1916-1975 (SC 37300-55936)* (Oxford, 1991), I p. 166); the author is grateful to Mary Clapinson for providing this reference.

³⁰ For Douce see the Provenance Index and references given there.

³¹ On Bandinel see *DNB*, also Craster, especially 27-30; for the two quotations see Jensen, 'Bodleian Library', 273, and Craster 29.

³² *The Douce Legacy: An Exhibition to Commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the Bequest of Francis Douce (1757-1834)* (Oxford, 1984), 81. For the figures for acquisitions see I. G. Philip, 'The Bodleian Library', in *Nineteenth-Century Oxford, Part I*, ed. M. G. Brock and M. C. Curthoys, The History of the University of Oxford, 6 (Oxford, 1997), 585-97, at 590-1, where Philip breaks down the acquisitions into decades: 1820-30: 265 incunables; 1830-40: 1009, including 470 from Douce; 1840-60: 982.

³³ Craster 71-2.

The Library benefited greatly from the abundance of high-quality German incunabula on the market: these became available mainly as a result of monastic dissolutions in the Habsburg territories, in present-day Belgium, Austria, and northern Italy, which took place under Emperor Joseph II; the dispersals of large French and Italian collections (due to the Napoleonic Wars); and the secularization of the religious houses in southern Germany.³⁴ The first of these ‘post-Napoleonic’ purchases occurred in 1825, when 26 incunables were purchased from an unidentified source in Hamburg, for a total of £42 1s. 6d. A great many incunabula were subsequently acquired through the disposal of duplicates by the Royal Library in Munich (now the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek); it is estimated that over 400 Bodleian incunabula were once in the Royal Library in Munich.³⁵ They reached the Bodleian in a variety of ways. Some purchases were made at sales: for example, the Library bought many Munich duplicates from two sales at Sotheby’s in 1840 and 1841.³⁶ Other books were acquired from booksellers: in 1837 the Library bought 38 volumes of Munich duplicates from Thomas Rodd, the London bookseller, who invoiced the Library 904 florins (two shillings being the equivalent of one florin) for ‘Books from Munich’.³⁷ And purchases were made directly from the Royal Library itself, such as in 1850, when 320 volumes of incunabula were acquired for £113 19s. 6d. according to that year’s manuscript accounts;³⁸ the books were bought through Abraham Isaac Asher, who negotiated on the Bodleian’s behalf with the Royal Librarian, Philipp von Lichtenthaler. On 19 November 1850 Asher sent the Bodleian Library a list, now lost, of the incunables, marked up with prices. On 14 December the books were shipped to London on the *Jane White*, a sailing vessel, as it cost only half the amount charged for sending goods by steamer.³⁹

Other books from south German religious houses, often Munich duplicates, were sold through the German antiquarian trade and purchased by the Library. For example, in 1858 the Bodleian bought several incunables from the *Catalog einer kostbaren Sammlung von Holztafelldrucken, Pergamentdrucken und anderen typographischen Seltenheiten* of Fidelis Butsch (1805-1879), the Augsburg bookseller. The last bulk purchase of incunabula at a German auction sale took place in 1883, at the sale of the collection of the Charterhouse of Buxheim. At the dissolution in 1803, the books had become the property of the Graf von Ostein; they were sold in 1883 by Hugo, Graf von

³⁴ On the secularization of the religious houses in southern Germany and the process by which books from the libraries of the dissolved houses were brought to the Royal Library in Munich, see *Lebendiges Büchererbe. Säkularisation, Mediatisierung und die Bayerische Staatsbibliothek* (Munich, 2003), especially at pp. 9-53. For the background to monastic dissolutions in general in this period see Derek Beales, *Prosperity and Plunder: European Catholic Monasteries in the Age of Revolution, 1650-1815* (Cambridge, 2003).

³⁵ For the Bodleian’s acquisition of incunabula from Munich, see Bettina Wagner, ‘Wege- und Abwege bayerischer Inkunabeln’, *Wolfenbütteler Notizen zur Buchgeschichte*, 18/19 (1993/4), 93-108, with the English version as ‘Bodleian Incunables from Bavarian Monasteries’, *BLR* 15,2 (1995), 90-107, also Kristian Jensen, ‘The Bodleian Library’, in *A Guide to Collections of Books Printed in German-speaking Countries before 1901 (or in German elsewhere) held by Libraries in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. Graham Jefcoate and others, *Handbuch deutscher historischer Buchbestände in Europa*, 10 (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 2000), 268-303, *passim*, but especially 272-4, 276-9.

³⁶ *A Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Rare and Curious Books . . . The Whole Consigned from Germany* (London: S. Leigh Sotheby, 30 May 1840); and *Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Choice, Rare, & Curious Books, Consigned from Germany* (London: Sotheby, 27 Aug. 1841).

³⁷ See Library Records, Library Bills (1837-8), no. 138.

³⁸ See Library Records b. 3; unfortunately the bills for that year do not survive and it is not possible to identify with certainty which books were acquired. Individual references in the Provenance Index for the Royal Library, Munich, Asher, Rodd, Butsch, Baer, Buxheim, Cohn, and Haugg, etc. should also be consulted.

³⁹ For details of the payments see also Asher’s letters to Bandinel dated 13 Oct. 1849, 26 Oct. 1849, 11 Mar. 1850, and 22 Mar. 1850, in Library Records d. 248, also the letter of 19 Nov. 1850 accompanying the lost list.

Waldbott-Bassenheim.⁴⁰ In the 1880s, extensive purchases were also made from Joseph Baer & Co. in Frankfurt am Main. In 1885 and 1886, 79 and 94 incunabula were acquired, mainly from Butsch, and from Albert Cohn (1827-1905) in Berlin;⁴¹ in 1885-6, Caspar Haugg, another Augsburg bookseller, sold the Library 61 incunabula, many ultimately derived from south German monastic collections.

Numerous incunabula were also bought from the libraries of private collectors all over Europe during the middle years of the nineteenth century. For example, some 560 were acquired at one sale alone, that of the books of Georg Franz Burkhard Kloß (1787-1854), a physician from Frankfurt am Main, in 1835, at which the Bodleian spent £343 3s. 0d. The Kloß collection reflects an interest in the traditional academic disciplines; for the Bodleian it was the source of many of the incunabula editions of canon and civil law, an area which is otherwise less well represented in the collections. Some 50 items were purchased from Johann Heinrich Joseph Niesert (1766-1841), pastor of Velen. In the catalogue it is stated that the sale would take place on 14 March 1843, but, according to a manuscript note by Bulkeley Bandinel in the Bodleian copy of the catalogue, it was delayed and actually took place in July 1843.⁴²

Another continental collector from whose library the Bodleian acquired many books was Dimitrij Petrovich, Count Boutourlin (Buturlin or Boutourline, 1763-1829). Boutourlin was a Russian senator, diplomat, bibliophile, and museum director in Saint Petersburg, who has frequently been confused with his kinsman and namesake, the soldier Dimitrij Petrovič Buturlin (1790-1849). Boutourlin the collector died in Florence, having created two libraries. The first was destroyed during Napoleon's invasion of Russia, but it was from the sales of the second, especially strong in Italian editions, that the Bodleian made its many purchases, during the period 1839 to 1841.

A third nineteenth-century collector from whose library the Bodleian purchased books, was the notorious Guglielmo Bruto Icilio Timoleone, Conte Libri Carrucci della Sommaia (1803-1869). Libri was a distinguished scholar and an Italian patriot, but he also stole books from several French libraries.⁴³

Many incunabula were also acquired at the sales of English collectors. The Bodleian purchased extensively at the sale of the library of Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex (1773-1843), an uncle of Queen Victoria. His huge library covered his wide interests, but was especially strong in theology and editions of the Bible. The enormous collection of Richard Heber (1773-1833), the landowner, Member of Parliament, and bibliophile, was sold at auction in London in the years 1834-7. Heber had collected in all areas close to the traditional academic disciplines, with a preponderance of theological material: 359 of his incunabula are now in the Bodleian. More incunabula, 102 of them, were acquired from the collection of the mysterious J. T. Hand (fl. 1834-

⁴⁰ *Catalog der Bibliothek des ehem. Carthäuserklosters Buxheim* (Munich: Behrens, 20 Sept. 1883).

⁴¹ Library Bills (1885), no. 102.

⁴² *Catalogus exquisitae bibliothecae pastoris Niesert Velenae* (Borchen, 1842). For each of the collectors and collections listed here and in the following paragraphs, see the references in the Provenance Index.

⁴³ On Libri see P. Alessandra Maccioni Ruju and Marco Mostert, *The Life and Times of Guglielmo Libri (1802-1869), Scientist, Patriot, Scholar, Journalist and Thief: A Nineteenth-century Story* (Hilversum, 1995), also other references given in the Provenance Index.

1837) at his anonymous sale in 1837.⁴⁴ Given the size of his collection (as indicated by this sale), Hand was a collector of some importance in his time, though it is now considered that the punning armorial book-plate that appears in some of his books is in fact spurious.⁴⁵ Michael Wodhull (1740-1816), the translator of Euripides, had a fine library of the classics, including many incunabula, and this is reflected in the books acquired from his collection by the Bodleian in the early years of the nineteenth century. The whole of his library was not dispersed at that point, and many of his books were retained by his family, and were only sold in the 1880s by his descendant, John Severne, at which time the Bodleian was able to make further purchases, bringing more Wodhull books into the Library. The Bodleian acquired many books from the library of Samuel Butler (1774-1839), Bishop of Lichfield from 1836. Butler not only edited Aeschylus, but was also interested in and published on various aspects of geography, both ancient and modern.

More incunabula came to the Library in 1860, through an internal university reorganization. The important library of the antiquary and scientist, Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), which had been bequeathed to the University of Oxford and became part of the Museum named in his honour, was transferred to the Bodleian in 1860.⁴⁶ Ashmole's incunabula included many scientific books, reflecting his own interests; some of these books had been acquired from the astrologer William Lilly (1602-1682). A further part of this same reorganization made the Radcliffe Library building (now known as the Radcliffe Camera) part of the Bodleian, although the collections of the Radcliffe Library were to remain independent for nearly 70 years, being transferred to the University Museum in 1861.⁴⁷

The tenure of the Librarianship of E. W. B. Nicholson (Librarian from 1882 to 1912) was marked by great energy in all areas within the Library, and incunabula were not exempt from this.⁴⁸ With regard to acquisitions, Nicholson was very active, and grants were obtained for purchasing rare books and manuscripts. Sir William Anson, the Warden of All Souls, provided £100 anonymously from his own private means. Trinity, Nicholson's own college, provided a series of annual contributions during the presidency of Henry Pelham, from 1898 to 1906: this was made possible by the use of an ingenious device, whereby the College reduced the salary of Pelham, who was a pluralist (in addition to being President, he was also Camden Professor of Ancient History), and gave £150 per year to the Bodleian instead. When the College discontinued the payments on Pelham's death in 1907, the Bodleian felt the effect keenly, as there was no similar funding to take its place.⁴⁹ As has been seen above, many incunabula were purchased from German booksellers during Nicholson's period of office. Unfortunately, not all of his initiatives were so successful. An attempt in 1891 to buy Earl Spencer's library at Althorp, including the famed Caxton collection, built up by George John, 2nd Earl Spencer, failed through a shortage of funds: Spencer had

⁴⁴ *Catalogue of a Valuable Collection of Books, the Property of a Gentleman* (London: S. Leigh Sotheby, 10 [12] May 1837).

⁴⁵ The present author is extremely grateful to Robert Noel, Lancaster Herald, for checking the records of the College of Arms in London to discover if Hand was entitled to bear this coat of arms.

⁴⁶ A. G. MacGregor, 'The Ashmolean Museum', in *Nineteenth-century Oxford*, ed. Brock and Curthoys, 598-610, at 602.

⁴⁷ H. C. Harley, 'Note: The Radcliffe Science Library', in *Nineteenth-century Oxford*, ed. Brock and Curthoys, 692-3, at 692.

⁴⁸ For Nicholson see *DNB*; K. J. Manley, 'E. W. B. Nicholson (1849-1912) and his Importance to Librarianship', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1977; also the Provenance Index.

⁴⁹ Manley, 'E. W. B. Nicholson', 79; Craster 160, 176, 197.

indicated to Edward Maunde Thompson at the British Museum that he wished to sell 57 Caxtons to a British library, and the price asked was £15,510. Maunde Thompson proposed a joint offer by the British Museum, the Bodleian, and Cambridge University Library, given that each library wanted some, but not all, of the books; the unwanted duplicates could then be disposed of at a public sale. However, when the Curators approached Hebdomadal Council for a grant of £2500, Council declined to provide the money; Cambridge University dropped out of the arrangement as well; and Spencer was disinclined to see his books being sold at a public sale, which would have allowed private collectors to buy them. The plan was thus abandoned. Mrs Rylands subsequently purchased the entire Althorp library for a quarter of a million pounds, and it later became the core of the John Rylands Library at Manchester.⁵⁰ Nicholson was somewhat resistant to paying large sums, even for incunabula, for, as he noted in his 'Statements of the Needs of the University' in 1902, 'there is no reason why the Library, already so rich in Incunabula and unique printed books, should give fabulous sums to outbid the combination of ignorance and wealth which at present governs their sale price'. In spite of this, purchases in some years were extensive: for example, the 94 incunabula purchased in 1886 from Butsch and Cohn.⁵¹

In 1914 the Bywater collection was received, with a total of 210 incunabula, the bequest of Ingram Bywater (1840-1914), formerly Sub-Librarian in the Bodleian (1879-90) and Regius Professor of Greek. His collection was especially strong not only in incunabula of classical texts, but also in material from the sixteenth century. Another important collection acquired during the first half of the twentieth century came to the Library in instalments. This was the library of Paget Jackson Toynbee (1855-1932), who made donations in 1912, 1913, 1915, 1917, and 1923, and bequeathed other books in 1932. Although Toynbee was known as a Dante scholar, the collection is also especially strong in the works of Petrarch.⁵²

As has been seen above, the Radcliffe Library's collections, including its incunabula, had been transferred to the University Museum in 1861. Following a further piece of university reorganization in 1927, they were integrated with those of the Bodleian.⁵³ The acquisition of these incunables was a very welcome addition to the Bodleian's collections, as were those from the Radcliffe Observatory (from the Rigaud collection), which were transferred to the Bodleian in 1935.⁵⁴

Another interesting feature of incunable acquisition has been the custom among some large libraries of exchanging what were considered duplicate editions of incunabula. The British Museum Library (now the British Library) and the Bodleian engaged in such an exchange in 1912-13. Detailed records of the books involved are kept in the Library's archive: these include the lists of books drawn up, for the Bodleian by G. D. Amery, and for the British Museum by A. W. Pollard, and correspondence relating to the exchange.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Manley, 'E. W. B. Nicholson', 168; Craster 176-7; the correspondence and papers relating to the negotiations are kept in the Library archives (Library Records c. 1228).

⁵¹ Manley, 'E. W. B. Nicholson', 157, with notes about the purchases at 156-7, and the 1886 figure at 160.

⁵² For Bywater and Toynbee see the Provenance Index.

⁵³ Giles Barber, 'Libraries', in *The Twentieth Century*, ed. Brian Harrison, The History of the University of Oxford, 8 (Oxford, 1994), 471-84, at 473.

⁵⁴ For the Radcliffe Library collections see Craster 252, 285; for the Observatory and Rigaud collections see Craster 186; see also the Provenance Index for further references.

⁵⁵ Library Records c. 1054.

The largest recent acquisition of incunabula by the Bodleian is the Broxbourne collection, which contains some 190 incunabula, part of the library of the bibliophile and collector, Albert Ehrman (1890-1969). Ehrman's collection included many incunabula with fine contemporary bindings, and a large number of broadsides, such as indulgences and notices. Material selected from the collection was presented to the Bodleian in 1978, through the Friends of the National Libraries, by John Ehrman, in memory of his parents. The most recent bequest of all containing incunabula has been that of Dr Brian Lawn in 2001. Lawn, a general practitioner in Barnes, London, put together a fine library of rare books, including incunabula, and eastern and western manuscripts. He bought these books as working material for his researches: his particular interest was in medieval problem literature, and he published various works on this subject from the 1960s through to the 1990s. More than half of Lawn's 23 incunables contained editions not already represented in the Bodleian's collections.

Although with much reduced funds, the Library maintains a continuing policy of collecting incunables. This is done by purchasing to fill gaps in the collection (the output of particular printing workshops, or particular texts not hitherto represented in the Library's collections), at sales such as that of Solomon Pottesman in 1979; and also by accepting bequests, such as that of Lawn, and smaller, individual donations, such as those of M. R. Tomkinson and Francis Norris.⁵⁶

The Cataloguing of Incunabula in the Bodleian

Initially, the Bodleian, along with other libraries and individuals, did not consider incunables as being 'collectors' items'. They were simply acquired as being the most up-to-date copies of the texts needed by the scholars reading in the Library. This meant that, when it came to cataloguing and housing, incunables were treated in common with the rest of the printed stock of the Library. From the point of view of cataloguing, this meant that they were listed in the catalogues drawn up by Thomas Bodley's first Librarian, Thomas James: in the unpublished, manuscript catalogue of 1602-3, and then in the Library's first published catalogue of 1605 (*Catalogus librorum Bibliothecae publicae quam vir ornatissimus Thomas Bodleius eques auratus in Academia Oxoniensi nuper instituit* (Oxford, 1605, reprinted as *The First Printed Catalogue of the Bodleian Library: A Facsimile* (Oxford, 1986), which was, in effect, a shelflist). Its successor of 1620 was a true 'author' catalogue (*Catalogus universalis librorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* (Oxford, 1620)), and was itself later reissued with an appendix by John Rous in 1635. Incunables continued to be listed in the later published catalogues, including those of Thomas Hyde in 1674 (*Catalogus impressorum librorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae in Academia Oxoniensi* (Oxford, 1674)), and Robert Fysher in 1738 (*Catalogus impressorum librorum* (Oxford, 1738)), and, indeed, in all the general catalogues of the Library's printed books since that date (*Catalogus librorum impressorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae*, 3 vols ([Oxford], 1843),⁵⁷ *Catalogus . . . librorum quibus aucta est*

⁵⁶ For these collectors see the Provenance Index.

⁵⁷ Craster 23 notes that the 1843 catalogue 'was eight years out of date at the time of its appearance, and staff were already at work on a supplementary volume which should contain accessions from 1835'. This accounts for what may seem some slightly strange references in the present catalogue to incunables being acquired by 1835, but with a reference to the 1843 catalogue.

Bibliotheca MDCCCXXXV-MDCCCXLVII (Oxford, 1851), the ‘Pre-1920’ catalogue, and Oxford University’s online catalogue, OLIS).⁵⁸

With the acquisition of the Pinelli and Crevenna collections, the trend turned from acquiring incunabula solely for their textual content to acquiring them both for their content and for their historical importance as examples of the development of printing. This, in its turn, led to a change of approach with regard to cataloguing such books, and the belief that there needed to be separate catalogues for these and other important printed books. The first of these catalogues was the *Notitia editionum quoad libros Hebr. Gr. et Lat. quae vel primariae vel saec. XV impressae, vel Aldinae, in Bibliotheca Bodleiana adservantur*, issued by the Clarendon Press in 1795. As its title indicates, it was a brief list of *editiones principes* of the classical texts and the Aldines then in the Library, including the recently acquired Pinelli and Crevenna books. It was an anonymous list, with no compilers being named, but it has long been ascribed to John Randolph, Regius Professor of Divinity, and William Jackson, Regius Professor of Greek, the two Library Curators who, it will be recalled, were influential in the acquisition of the Pinelli books. Unfortunately it is, at least by the terms of a modern catalogue, of relatively little use, since it does not actually include any shelfmarks, although there are some bibliographical references, for example, to Maittaire’s *Annales typographici*.⁵⁹

It seems that Bandinel and his Sub-Librarian, Henry Cotton, intended to produce a catalogue of *editiones principes* and incunables. This project was not carried out, perhaps because Cotton left the Bodleian in 1822 to become Archdeacon of Cashel.⁶⁰ An alphabetical list in manuscript was prepared by Bandinel in 1826, and this was printed in a small octavo format, with a proof copy surviving as *Catalogus Editionum Principum vel saec. XV in Bibliotheca Bodleiana* in the Library Archive. The date of the printing, 1827, is known because the proof includes books purchased in 1826, but those from 1827 have been added in manuscript. It is not known why this catalogue was not taken to completion.⁶¹

In 1866, Henry Bradshaw, the Librarian of Cambridge University Library, spent 15 hours drawing up a list of English incunables and fragments in the Bodleian, while he was on a visit from Cambridge; he then made additions to this list during a subsequent visit in 1868. Two years later, in 1870, he sent it to H. O. Coxe, Bandinel’s successor as Bodley’s Librarian (1860-81), with some

⁵⁸ On the printed catalogues see Ian Philip, *The Bodleian Library in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford, 1983), 11-15 (1605 catalogue), 31-2 (1620 catalogue), 50-1 (1674 catalogue), 89-90 (1738); also G. W. Wheeler, *The Earliest Catalogues of the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1928), 34-52 (1605 catalogue), 68-80 (1620 catalogue); G. W. Wheeler, ‘Bodleian Catalogues of the Seventeenth Century’, *BQR* 1 (1914-16), 228-32; for the 1602/3 manuscript catalogue, now MS. Rawl. Q. e. 31, see Wheeler, *Earliest Catalogues*, 10-20; for the Pre-1920 catalogue see *The Bodleian Library Pre-1920 Catalogue of Printed Books on Compact Disc* (Oxford, 1993), 5-6.

⁵⁹ For the 1795 catalogue see Macray 276. This history of cataloguing incunabula has been summarized in Coates, ‘Bodleian’s Incunabula’, 108-18, at 114. For Jackson and Randolph see *DNB*, also Philip, ‘Bodleian Purchases’.

⁶⁰ For Cotton see Macray, *ad indicem*, and especially 295, also *DNB*, and, most recently, Paul Morgan, ‘Henry Cotton and W. H. Allnutt: Two Pioneer Book-trade Historians’, in *The Human Face of the Book Trade: Print Culture and its Creators*, ed. Peter Isaac and Barry McKay (Winchester, 1999), 1-11, at 2-5. A copy of the *Notitia*, interleaved and annotated by Bandinel apparently in c.1813, is kept in the Library archives (Library Records e. 297).

⁶¹ Bandinel’s manuscript and proof-copy are kept as Library Records d. 602-3, with another manuscript list of fifteenth-century books and *editiones principes* at Library Records e. 298; for this and the projected catalogue, see Coates, ‘Bodleian’s Incunabula’, 114 and note 26, referring to Macray 295-6 and Craster 28, 178.

remarks ‘that reflected on the care that Oxford librarians took of their typographical treasures’ and suggested that Coxe print it. Coxe sent it back, with the words ‘You must not expect me to thong the whip wherewith we may be lashed.’ Bradshaw became very angry, tore up the list, and threw it on the fire! He did not keep a copy.⁶²

Twenty years later, in 1886, Coxe’s successor as Bodley’s Librarian, E. W. B. Nicholson, engaged Edward Gordon Duff, who was then an undergraduate at Wadham College, to draw up a catalogue of incunables. By the time he went down from Oxford in 1888, he had reached the letter ‘J’. The project lay dormant till 1891 when Robert Proctor, then an undergraduate at Corpus Christi College, took it up. Proctor managed to complete it by the time he left Oxford to go to the British Museum in 1893: he listed 4,832 incunables, 605 duplicates, and 172 fragments, and produced a list of fifteenth-century printers.⁶³ Much discussion followed between Nicholson and the Curators over the publication of the catalogue: Nicholson was keen to publish the list of printers, but this was blocked by two of the Curators, Andrew Clark and Ingram Bywater. Proctor then proposed that Kegan Paul should publish a short-title index. However, the entries were to be very heavily abbreviated: Duff indicated that he would object to the publication of the entries he had prepared (up to the letter ‘J’) without careful revision; and Nicholson saw that such a listing would have made it impossible for him to produce a more detailed catalogue in the future. So the idea of publishing with Kegan Paul was abandoned, although Proctor was persuaded to compile his *Index of Early Printed Books in the British Museum, with Notes of those in the Bodleian* in 1898, which listed 4,762 incunabula in the Bodleian.⁶⁴

Some collections did, of course, arrive in the Library accompanied by catalogues or handlists, provided by their donors or the donors’ executors. An example of this is the Selden collection, of which the Library now has three copies of the manuscript catalogue drawn up for his executors. Further, later instances include the books purchased from Alessandro, Count Mortara, in 1852 (*Biblioteca Italica ossia catalogo de’ testi a stampa citati nel vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, e di altri libri italiani pregevoli e rari già posseduti dal C. A. M. ed ora passati in proprietà della Biblioteca Bodleiana* (Oxford, 1852)), and the bequest of Ingram Bywater in 1914

⁶² Craster 178; G. W. Prothero, *A Memoir of Henry Bradshaw* (London, 1888), 203-5; on Bradshaw see also, and most recently, Paul Needham, *The Bradshaw Method: Henry Bradshaw’s Contribution to Bibliography*, Hanes Foundation Lecture, 7, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill, NC, 1988). For Coxe see *DNB*.

⁶³ Manley, ‘E. W. B. Nicholson’, 132, where he records that Gordon Duff was not at first impressed by Proctor: ‘He ought to do good work, only he wants shaking up a bit, he is too much Madan’s style.’ On Proctor see also *DNB*; Robert Proctor, *Bibliographical Essays, with a memoir by Alfred W. Pollard* (London, 1905); Barry C. Johnson, *Lost in the Alps: A Portrait of Robert Proctor, the “Great Bibliographer” and of his Career in the British Museum* (London, 1985). A two-volume conspectus, compiled by Proctor in 1893, of numbers of Hain’s *Repertorium* in the Bodleian, survives in the Library archives (Library Records e. 397-8), along with a set of incunable statistics (listed in ‘Proctor order’) from the same year (Library Records e. 396). There is, also, in the British Library, an interesting set of six manuscript notebooks compiled by Proctor during the period 1891-3: the first four complete the alphabetical sequence of Duff’s catalogue (in short-title format, with Bodleian shelfmarks) from K to Z, and list Hebraica and fragments; the fifth book contains appendices, including recent accessions, and lists the locations within the Library of the various shelfmarks used for incunabula; the sixth volume contains references to the general incunable catalogues of Hain and Campbell, an index of Bodleian incunable shelfmarks, and a list of authors of incunabula in the Bodleian collections, but not recorded by Hain; the author is extremely grateful to John Goldfinch (Head of Incunabula, British Library) for drawing these notebooks to his attention.

⁶⁴ Manley, ‘E. W. B. Nicholson’, especially at 132 for a discussion of the arguments between the various parties over the publication; Coates, ‘Bodleian’s Incunabula’, 114 and notes 28-9, drawing on Craster 178 and Manley; correspondence relating to this matter is kept in the Library archives (Library Records d. 973).

(*Elenchus librorum vetustiorum apud ** hospitantium* ([Oxford], 1911)), which was privately printed for Bywater's own use and for private circulation only).⁶⁵

For the first part of the twentieth century, there were apparently no further initiatives to produce an incunable catalogue. Falconer Madan, Bodley's Librarian from 1912 to 1919, and Nicholson's successor, undoubtedly had the relevant expertise and interest. Although he began as a palaeographer and attained distinction in that field (being University Lecturer in the subject from 1889 to 1913), he was also an expert bibliographer: this was shown by his *Oxford Books*, published in three volumes in 1895, 1912, and 1931, which was a full-scale bibliography of books printed in Oxford. In addition, he was, himself, a collector. It seems clear that, by the time he became Librarian, he was too heavily involved in the administration of the Library, and was, in any case, in office as Librarian for only a short period.⁶⁶ The academic interests of his immediate successors, Sir Arthur Cowley (Bodley's Librarian from 1919 to 1931) and Sir Edmund Craster (Bodley's Librarian from 1931 to 1945) lay in other areas: Cowley was an eminent Orientalist, while Craster was a distinguished medieval historian and a scholar of medieval manuscripts. Responsibility for the Library's early printed books probably lay with G. D. Amery, who was clearly involved in the preparation of various lists of incunabula, including, in 1912-13, the list of duplicate incunables to be exchanged with the British Museum Library, and, in 1920, a set of statistics of those incunables mentioned by Proctor; his initials can be found in some incunabula noting, for example, where pastedowns have been removed.⁶⁷ Craster's successor, H. R. Creswick, had been trained in printed books at Cambridge, where he was Assistant Under-Librarian in charge of incunabula and early printed books in the University Library, and had done work for the *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*; had he stayed, it is possible that he would have instituted a new catalogue of incunables. After only two years as Bodley's Librarian, he returned to Cambridge in 1947.⁶⁸ During this period, responsibility for the cataloguing and purchasing of early printed books, presumably including incunabula, fell to C. J. Hindle. Hindle had joined the Bodleian staff in 1924 and retired in 1963. Others had also undertaken various tasks: for example, a manuscript conspectus of incunable shelfmarks and Proctor numbers had been compiled by F. O. Underhill in 1915.⁶⁹

In 1947 David Rogers (1917-1995) was appointed to the staff of the Bodleian, as a part-time assistant. Rogers was a graduate of New College, Oxford, who had been commissioned in the Royal Artillery during World War II and had served in India. He then returned to Oxford to undertake research for a D.Phil. on 'English Catholics and the Printing Press at Home and Abroad, 1558-1640', under the supervision of Strickland Gibson: this was to be the first Oxford D.Phil. thesis on a bibliographical subject. The study of recusant literature was to remain his lifelong

⁶⁵ The Selden catalogues are now kept as MSS. Selden Supra 111, Broxbourne 84.10, and Add. C. 40; for the *Elenchus* see W. W. Jackson, *Ingram Bywater: The Memoir of an Oxford Scholar 1840-1914* (Oxford, 1917), 173, and 'The Bywater Collection', *BQR* 1,4 (1915), 80; for Selden, Mortara, and Bywater see also the Provenance Index.

⁶⁶ See Craster, *ad indicem*, and especially 276; *Who's Who*.

⁶⁷ Both lists are in the Library archives, the exchange list at Library Records c. 1054, and the statistics at Library Records c. 1229.

⁶⁸ For Cowley see *DNB*, and T. W. A[l]len, 'Arthur Ernest Cowley 1861-1931', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 19 (1933), 351-9; on Craster see G. R. Driver, 'Herbert Henry Edmund Craster', *BLR* 2,24 (1946), 142-3, E. F. Jacob, 'Edmund Craster', *BLR* 6,4 (1960), 529-36, and Alan Bell, 'Sir Edmund Craster', *BLR* 18,2 (2003), 98-107; on Creswick see 'Notes and News: Appointments of Additional Officers', *BLR* 1,1 (1938), 23, 'Notes and News: The New Librarian', *BLR* 2,23 (1945), 119, and 'Notes and News: H. R. Creswick', *BLR* 13,2 (1989), 91.

⁶⁹ 'Notes and News: Mr. C. J. Hindle', *BLR* 7,4 (1964), 172; the conspectus is at Library Records d. 974.

interest, and culminated in what scholars in this field know simply as ‘Allison and Rogers’.⁷⁰ Rogers joined the full-time staff of the Library at the beginning of 1952, on the completion of his doctorate. It appears that part of his ‘job description’, when he was appointed, was to undertake the work needed to produce an incunable catalogue.⁷¹ This was not carried forward, so, by the mid 1950s, a new initiative was taken, and L. A. Sheppard (1890-1985), who had recently retired from the British Museum, became an extra part-time staff member in May 1955 ‘to help in the compilation of a catalogue of incunabula’.⁷²

L. A. (Leslie) Sheppard had been Deputy Keeper in the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum Library before his retirement in 1953. Having studied at St Catharine’s College, Cambridge, he served in the First World War with a Red Cross Unit attached to the Italian Army, and joined the staff of the British Museum in 1919, becoming an Assistant in the Department of Printed Books. His first task in the Museum was to work on the subject index for the Museum Library catalogue, and he then undertook work on the catalogue of scientific serials. In 1929 he was promoted to an Assistant Keepership, and, from about 1929/30, he began to assist Victor Scholderer, the Department’s resident incunabulist; it was under Scholderer’s tutelage that Sheppard learned the skills that were to make him so distinguished. This was clearly his greatest interest, in which he earned his distinction and made his main contribution to scholarship. Nevertheless, even while working on incunabula Sheppard had, initially at least, to undertake various other departmental tasks, including, from 1931, work on the revision of entries for the Museum’s *General Catalogue of Printed Books*: in particular, during 1936/7, the work done on volumes covering the Bible, which was described as a ‘notable achievement’, was largely that of Sheppard himself. During the World War II, Sheppard continued to work on volumes of the incunable catalogue in London, after Scholderer was transferred with parts of the Museum’s collections to the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth.⁷³

In 1945 Sheppard was appointed as the department’s incunabulist in succession to his master, Scholderer, and was promoted to a Deputy Keepership. Sheppard himself retired at the end of 1953, to be succeeded by George Painter. David Rogers, in his appreciation of Sheppard, highlighted Sheppard’s ‘patient skill and accumulated knowledge’, along with his ‘thoroughness and wide learning’, as some of the qualities that made him such a distinguished and scholarly librarian. He was to work extensively on incunabula from many countries, assisting Scholderer in the production

⁷⁰ A. F. Allison and D. M. Rogers, *A Catalogue of Catholic Books in English Printed Abroad or Secretly in England, 1558-1640*, 2 vols, Bibliographical Studies, 3,3-4 (Bognor Regis, 1956), with its updated, second edition as *The Contemporary Printed Literature of the English Counter-Reformation between 1558 and 1640*, 2 vols (Aldershot, 1989-94).

⁷¹ For David Rogers see ‘Notes and News: Dr. D. M. Rogers’, *BLR* 11,5 (1984), 271; Dennis E. Rhodes, ‘A Checklist of the Writings of D. M. Rogers’, *BLR* 11,6 (1985), 382-8; [R. J. Roberts], ‘Notes and News: David Rogers’, *BLR* 15,3 (1995), 143-4, and the edition of *BLR* published as a tribute to him (*BLR* 15,5/6 (1996)), and the various articles included in it, especially those by Anthony Allison, ‘David Rogers (1917-1995): A Memoir and a Tribute’, 342-7, and Clive Hurst, ‘Working with David Rogers’, 500-3; Dennis E. Rhodes, ‘Addenda to “A Checklist of the Writings of David M. Rogers”’, 518-19; obituary by Bent Juel-Jensen in *Independent*, 9 June 1995.

⁷² On Sheppard see David Rogers, ‘Notes and News: L. A. Sheppard’, *BLR* 12,2 (1986), 85-6; Dennis E. Rhodes, ‘Bibliography of Leslie A. Sheppard (1890-1985)’, *BLR* 12,5 (1987), 400-2; *Antiquaries’ Journal*, 66 (1986), 498 (notice of death), 507-8 (obituary notice); *Who’s Who*.

⁷³ For Sheppard’s career at the British Museum see P. R. Harris, *A History of the British Museum Library 1753-1973* (London, 1998), *ad indicem*.

of *BMC* VI,⁷⁴ which appeared in 1930; he also worked on printing from Rouen for *BMC* VIII, which was published in 1949; on *BMC* IX, which was published in 1962, *BMC* X, which appeared in 1971, and parts of *BMC* XII, which was to be published in 1985, all long after he finally retired from the Museum. Sheppard was also active in the wider bibliographical community, serving on the Council of the Bibliographical Society from 1936 to 1946, and contributing articles and reviews to the *Gutenberg Jahrbuch*, *The Library*, and other journals; he was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1943. Another of his scholarly projects was to translate the memoirs of Lorenzo da Ponte, published by Routledge in 1929.⁷⁵

Sheppard's letter of appointment was sent out by Nowell Myres, by then Bodley's Librarian, but the suggestion of his employment must surely have come from L. W. ('Lars') Hanson, the then Keeper of Printed Books (and formerly one of Sheppard's colleagues at the British Museum). David Rogers, in his appreciation, notes that Sheppard's 'letter of acceptance takes up Myres's phrase "to help . . .", but in fact the next sixteen years were to witness the completion of his huge undertaking virtually single-handed.' It is not clear when 'helping' was actually transformed into 'doing the whole catalogue', but that is exactly what happened.

During the period of his appointment (1955 to 1971), Sheppard worked 'quietly in a room on the top floor of the New Library . . . little known even by sight, to most of his fellow Bodleian employees'.⁷⁶ He compiled detailed index slips for every incunable given to him by Rogers for examination; in addition, he also kept a fascinating series of notebooks, in which he recorded useful pieces of information about the incunables he saw.⁷⁷ Throughout these years, the Reports of the Curators contain glimpses of his activities: in the report for 1955/6, it was reported that 'Mr L. A. Sheppard has begun a catalogue of the Library's Incunables'.⁷⁸ In 1964/5, it was noted that the 'end of Italy' was in sight!⁷⁹ In 1965/6, the report recorded that 546 incunables printed in France and French-speaking Switzerland, and 161 printed in Holland, had been completed, and that work on the provenance index was continuing, while in 1967/8 indexing had begun, along with the compilation of concordances.⁸⁰ The report for 1971/2 announced that indexes were being prepared on the Library's computer (presumably in the room in the New Bodleian then known as the 'Terminal Room', which is now known as 'Room 202', the base for the present Incunable Cataloguing Project team). Sheppard seems also to have assisted Rogers with other matters relating to incunabula, including the preparation of an exhibition of German incunables held in the Library in 1960; the lists he made for Rogers are now in the Library archives.⁸¹ In 1971 Sheppard ceased working in the Bodleian, following his move from Oxford to Henley-on-Thames. Although his monumental task had not quite been completed, he left behind a complete slip catalogue, with an index of owners and authors. This was to become seven bound folio volumes of xerographic

⁷⁴ *BMC* is the standard abbreviated form for the catalogue of incunabula in the British Museum (later The British Library); its full title is: *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XVth Century now in the British Museum*.

⁷⁵ Lorenzo da Ponte, *Memoirs of Lorenzo da Ponte, Mozart's Librettist*, with introduction and notes by L. A. Sheppard (London, 1929).

⁷⁶ Curators' Report (1971/2), 54.

⁷⁷ The Library is most grateful to Mr Francis Sheppard for donating these notebooks to the Bodleian; they are now housed in the Library archives.

⁷⁸ Curators' Report (1955/6), 35.

⁷⁹ Curators' Report (1964/5), 15.

⁸⁰ Curators' Report (1965/6), 32; (1967/8), 63.

⁸¹ 'Notes and News: Exhibition of German Incunables', *BLR* 6,5 (1960), 578.

copies, accompanied by indexes of authors and printers, added by John Jolliffe (1929-1985), then Keeper of Catalogues and subsequently Bodley's Librarian.⁸² It is perhaps appropriate here to quote part of the appreciation by David Rogers, which fittingly sums up Sheppard's work:

Sheppard's descriptions, without duplicating particulars already in print, go beyond even the latest British Museum examples, especially concerning the provenance and binding of the Bodleian copies, for which his thoroughness and wide learning frequently enabled him to puzzle out and identify even the most elusive owners. The resulting massive and precious accumulation of facts about this very rich collection is one which no possible union catalogue could ever reveal.⁸³

It is clear that, on his own retirement in 1984, David Rogers had hoped to be able to carry through the necessary revisions to Sheppard's catalogue so as to bring it closer to publication. In a letter to Bodley's Librarian, John Jolliffe, dated 7 September 1984, Rogers wrote:

Since Sheppard completed his work, I estimate that upwards of 200 items have been added to our collections by purchase and gift . . . and these need to be catalogued *more Sheppardiano* and the results (including provenances) intercalated among his slips. Furthermore, as you know, since Sheppard finished, the Sheppard/Proctor order of presses in the Spanish volume of the BMC has been very substantially revised, and the same will be true of the datings in their forthcoming English volume.

My duties over the last several years have effectively precluded me from pursuing these tasks, but I would be happy to offer my services for the necessary updating of Sheppard, as a step toward the eventual publication of his great catalogue.⁸⁴

It is interesting to see that, in his response to Rogers in a letter dated 19 September 1984, Jolliffe viewed the question of producing a catalogue in a rather different light. He clearly wished to adopt a more 'contemporary' approach, by using an alphabetical rather than a 'Proctor' order (an approach derived from the Library's policy under the librarianship of Robert Shackleton (1966-79) that incunabula were acquired not as representatives of printers and presses, but as vehicles for texts).⁸⁵ Instead of publishing Sheppard's catalogue separately, Jolliffe was keen simply to add Sheppard's information to the entries which were already being produced for the Bodleian's Pre-1920 catalogue:

Sheppard, though, is a different matter. As you know, I have felt for some time that *Proctor order* is an idea that has outlived its usefulness and is also not entirely appropriate to a collection as "small" as Bodley's. It was with the idea of getting a skeleton in alphabetical (i.e. Goff-style) order that I asked Ian Robinson to catalogue the incunabula for re-integration in the Pre-1920 catalogue. When he has finished, I

⁸² On Jolliffe see 'Notes and News: Mr. J. W. Jolliffe', *BLR* 11,1 (1982), 1; [Julian Roberts], 'Notes and News: J. W. Jolliffe', *BLR* 12,1 (1985), 1-2.

⁸³ Rogers, 'Sheppard', 86.

⁸⁴ Letter in Rogers's personal file, Bodleian Library.

⁸⁵ The author would like to thank Julian Roberts for this information.

think the additional descriptive material from the Sheppard entries together with binding and provenance information should be added to the brief catalogue entries. I would also like any catalogue of Bodleian incunabula to be complete and, following ULC rather than BMC, to include our Hebrew incunabula.⁸⁶

Ian Robinson had been appointed to the Bodleian staff in 1955 to work on the revision of the Library's Pre-1920 Catalogue. With his background as a classicist, and his wide-ranging knowledge of languages, Robinson was an ideal choice to undertake the integration of the incunables into the Pre-1920 Catalogue. He seems to have begun work on the incunabula at the beginning of 1982, and to have completed the task during the late summer/autumn of 1985.⁸⁷ However, nothing further was done (probably as a result of Jolliffe's illness and early death in 1986) about adding Sheppard's information to the catalogue records created by Robinson.

In 1985 Kristian Jensen, a graduate of Copenhagen University, who had just completed a Ph.D. at the University Institute in Florence, and had held a Research Fellowship at the Warburg Institute in London, was appointed to succeed Rogers as the Bodleian's specialist in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century books. Jensen was keen that the Bodleian should publish a catalogue of its incunables. By the time he was appointed and had had the opportunity to assess what was needed, more than fifteen years had elapsed since Sheppard's last work, and his catalogue was already being overtaken both by new scholarship and a new approach.

It was at this point that Jensen decided that a new catalogue must be undertaken, but one, nevertheless, which would utilize all the hugely impressive work produced by Sheppard. The aim of this new catalogue would be to provide descriptions of all of the Bodleian's incunabula (and there had been important new acquisitions, particularly the Broxbourne collection, since Sheppard's retirement) to the same standard expected for medieval manuscripts. In particular, there would be a more detailed analysis of the contents of each book, which would identify all the works in a given volume, and provide, where possible, references to modern editions; there would also be detailed descriptions of bindings, decoration, and provenances. All this information would be supported by extensive indexes of authorship and provenance. Jensen was clear from the outset that the new catalogue would not aim to replicate typographical information already available in one of the other detailed incunable catalogues, nor would it aim to provide facsimile reproductions. He also decided immediately that the project was going to be too large for him to do on his own, and that he would therefore need to recruit assistants. Given the severe financial stringencies facing the University in general and the Library in particular, such posts obviously could not be funded on the Library's establishment, and it would be necessary to secure 'soft money' to support the appointments. So Jensen put forward a proposal to the Library, to employ two full-time temporary cataloguers for ten years, and then retain one of these cataloguers for a further, eleventh year, to assist him with the final year's editorial work prior to publication. With the assistance of various supporters of the Library, especially Sir Julian and Lady Bullard, and the Library's own development team, he was able to secure funding from the Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, which allowed the Bodleian, late in 1991, to appoint two temporary librarians to assist him, starting in 1992, initially for two years. The people appointed were Bettina Wagner, from the University of Würzburg, and Alan Coates, a graduate of the Universities of Oxford and London. Further funding

⁸⁶ Letter in Rogers's personal file, Bodleian Library.

⁸⁷ The author is grateful to his colleague, Mike Heaney, for information about Robinson and his work.

from the Thyssen Stiftung and from the Kulturstiftung der Länder allowed the extension of the project by instalments, and ultimately, with money from various individual and corporate benefactors (whose generosity is greatly appreciated by the Library), enough financial support was secured by 1999 to allow the project to run for its full planned duration.⁸⁸ To assist the cataloguers in their work, Jensen set up a board of academic advisers. Their role was not only to help with material in those areas the team felt were beyond its expertise, but also, especially in the early stages of the work, to provide guidance on what they thought should be included in a catalogue of this type. The advice of the members of this board has, at all times, been of the greatest possible assistance.⁸⁹

Jensen's plan remained more or less unchanged till the completion of the project, although the personnel of the cataloguing team has changed considerably. Wagner returned to Germany in 1996, to a post in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, where she is now Head of Incunable Cataloguing. Her place was taken by Cristina Dondi, a graduate of the Catholic University of Milan, who was in the process of completing a Ph.D. in the University of London. In 1999, Jensen himself left the Bodleian on his appointment as Head of Incunabula at the British Library in London (and, subsequently, as Head of British and Early Printed Collections), although he continued to act as a consultant to the cataloguing project. After a short interval, Coates was appointed to succeed him, both as the Bodleian's specialist in fifteenth-century books and as head of the project. Coates's place as temporary librarian in the project team was subsequently taken by Helen Dixon, an Oxford graduate then completing her Ph.D at Cambridge. In 2002, both Dondi and Dixon left the project team on being awarded research positions: Dondi was elected to the first Lyell Fellowship in Bibliography in the University of Oxford, with a Fellowship at Lincoln College; and Dixon secured a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Warburg Institute, University of London. Dondi remained an active consultant to the project, but additional help was needed, and was secured with the appointment of two new consultants, Carolinne White (Medieval Latin Dictionary) and Elizabeth Mathew (Early Printed Books Project). They were able to assist Coates and Dondi to bring the project successfully to completion.

The Housing of Incunabula in the Bodleian Library and their Shelfmarks

The first incunables acquired by the Library were simply catalogued among other printed items. Their classification, shelfmarking, and housing were treated in exactly the same way. Bodley decided that the collections in his library would be divided by subject following the arrangement of the four faculties in the University, namely Theology, Law, Medicine, and Arts; and, of course, they were to be housed initially in Duke Humfrey's Library, then the Bodleian's only building.⁹⁰ Theology was to be the foremost of these, as evidenced by the amount of space allocated to it in

⁸⁸ For further details of the project see Kristian Jensen, *Incunabula in the Bodleian Library*, ed. Annegret Stein-Karnbach, Kulturstiftung der Länder Patrimonia, 66 (Berlin, Cologne, and Oxford, 1992); [K. Jensen], 'Notes and News: A Catalogue of the Incunabula in the Bodleian Library', *BLR* 14,3 (1992), 171-3; [K. Jensen], 'Notes and News: Incunabula Conference', *BLR* 14,6 (1994), 458-9; the names of the donors are listed on p. 000.

⁸⁹ The members of the board are listed on p. 000.

⁹⁰ Craster described the room, fittingly for the time of Bodley: 'The room has ever been a haunt of ancient learning, well adapted for study and quiet contemplation in summertime, when honey-questing bees droned lazily in through ivy-framed windows opening on to Exeter College garden, but in winter it could be bitterly cold and became dark as day and year wore on, for all artificial light was strictly forbidden under Sir Thomas Bodley's statute'; Craster 8.

Duke Humfrey's Library: it received nine alcoves, to four and a half for arts, three for law, and two and a half for medicine. Within this system of dividing books by faculty, there was a subdivision by format (folio and quarto), and then a further subdivision by the initial letter of the author's name.⁹¹ Books with these shelfmarks were housed within the body of Duke Humfrey's Library, and then, following the completion of Arts End in 1612, as the name suggests, those with Arts shelfmarks were shelved there instead. This system remained in exclusive use until after the arrival of John Selden's books in 1659. The acquisition of Selden's large library and its housing as a separate collection in what is now called Selden End necessitated the creation of a separate system of shelfmarking. This was to mirror the existing faculty shelfmarks, but, by inserting the abbreviated form of Selden's name, 'Seld.', was to differentiate books in this collection from those in the main sequence.⁹² The faculty system seems to have remained in use for most of the eighteenth century (and, for books in smaller formats, until the 1820s), but it rapidly became impossible for it to be kept up properly, and books were often allocated shelfmarks simply on the basis of where there was most space on the shelves, irrespective of the subject (or the author's name).

Large collections of printed books, including incunabula, and also of manuscripts acquired by the Library, were usually kept together as named collections. The 'Linc.' books left by Thomas Barlow were originally housed in two special wooden galleries constructed over the cases in Duke Humfrey's Library in 1693.⁹³ The Crynes collection was housed in the Picture Gallery (now the Upper Reading Room), in its southern wing.⁹⁴ The Rawlinson collection was shelved in a room in what is now the Lower Reading Room (see below).

The arrival of the Pinelli and Crevenna books was to lead to some changes to this method of housing collections. In 1787 the Library, presumably as part of a general drive to improve its administration – to be seen in conjunction with the desire of the Curators to meet more frequently and to examine catalogues of book sales themselves rather than merely leaving this task to the bookseller acting for the Library – began to clear out and refurnish the old Anatomy School. This room, now (2003) the location of the Library's Main Enquiry Desk, had briefly been used for dissections, but, by the middle of the seventeenth century it was simply a museum of curiosities. The refurnishing, which was to last for two years, was undertaken to the designs of the architect, James Wyatt, and included elegant bookcases with wire fronts.⁹⁵ The room was called the *Bibliothecae Bodleianae Auctarium*, or, in its abbreviated style, the 'Auctarium'.⁹⁶ On 21 January 1789, the Curators resolved that the 'new room be consider'd as an Archive room to the Library for the reception chiefly of MSS. and books of an early date relating to Greek and Latin learning', and that it should 'be also consider'd a collating room, to be reserv'd for the constant use only of persons employ'd in any considerable collation'. Thus, the 'Auctarium' became the repository for

⁹¹ The classification by faculties is discussed in Jensen, 'The Bodleian Library', 279.

⁹² Jensen, 'The Bodleian Library', 295.

⁹³ Craster 138-40, with the galleries mentioned at 138; Rogers, *Treasures*, 165-6. The galleries remained in use until 1877 when the books were removed to the Picture Gallery (now the Upper Reading Room) and the galleries dismantled as part of the repair work undertaken to stop the walls of Duke Humfrey's Library bulging.

⁹⁴ Craster 11.

⁹⁵ Philip, *Bodleian Library*, 111.

⁹⁶ Hunt notes that the room was first referred to as 'B[ibliotheca] N[ova]', and that it was only in 1794 that the decision was made to name it the 'Auctarium' [the Latin word for an addition or augmentation]: *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford: 1: Historical Introduction and Conspectus of Shelf-marks*, ed. R. W. Hunt (Oxford, 1953, repr. 1980), p. xxxix.

classical and biblical manuscripts and early printed editions, including Aldines, which, as noted above, were then used in the preparation of new editions to be published by the University Press. And indeed, the board with the room's former name (and the date 1788) may still be seen today, above the inside of the door by which one enters the Lower Reading Room from the south-west staircase.⁹⁷ Nearly 5,500 items were shelved there, with printed books and manuscripts being given shelfmarks in a totally new sequence, built round the abbreviation 'Auct.', with different sequences of letters being allocated to manuscripts and to printed books. Shelfmarks containing 'Auct. D' to 'Auct. F', and 'Auct. T' and 'Auct. V' are solely for manuscripts (the manuscript sequence was originally intended to run from 'Auct. A' to 'Auct. G'). For the incunabula, 'Auct. K' and 'Auct. L' consist mainly of classical texts, while 'Auct. M' contains Bibles and blockbooks; the contents of 'Auct. N', 'Auct. O', 'Auct. P', and 'Auct. Q' are again mainly classical, but also include some patristic works and occasional medieval texts; 'Auct. R' is the section for Aldines; 'Auct. Y' contains further editions of the Bible, while 'Auct. S' was mainly used for post-incunabula editions.⁹⁸ F. W. Dubber, formerly Superintendent of the Bookstack, left a description of the 'Auctarium', as he remembered it in the years leading up to the Second World War:

[The Auctarium] was lined with bookcases of Georgian period to a height of about two thirds of its walls. For the remainder of the room, the shelving was of a very mixed kind, added as those above the Georgian cases, in comparatively recent times, and largely used for the storage of more recent accessions. Low floor cases, which were very numerous and miscellaneous in style, were of 19th or 20th century addition, such as the North cases. The Georgian wall cases for the most part were built in units of two doors to a section of about four or five feet in width. The make-up of the case was as follows. From the cornice down to the ledge, two doors made as frames holding wires diagonally at frequent intervals, enclosed an average of four or five shelves slid into grooved uprights. The lower part of the case was enclosed by doors of ornamental latticed woodwork. Each case was individually identified by a capital letter at the top, generally accompanied by a Latin inscription describing the contents. Where this letter was used in a shelfmark, the shelves were numbered usually from the lowest upwards, and each individual book on the shelf was separately numbered, e.g. Auct. K [case]. 2 [shelf]. 15 [book]. This and similar methods accounts for many of the shelfmarks still in use. Books in the cupboards below were generally 'Infra', e.g. Auct. K. infra 2.15. Those in cupboards over doorways were 'Supra', and occasionally 'Sub Fenestra' under windows.⁹⁹

The number of incunabula rapidly outgrew the scope of the original system, so further expansion was soon needed. This was achieved by taking over, in 1821, the room beyond the 'Auctarium' (now (2003) the second of the general reference rooms in the Lower Reading Room). This room, formerly the Hebrew School, also sometimes called the School of Rhetoric, had in later years become no more than a drying-room for the University Press. It was then divided into three rooms

⁹⁷ Coates, 'Bodleian's Incunabula', 114, drawing on Craster 13-15, with a diagram illustrating the use of the first-floor rooms at 14, also on Philip, 'Bodleian Purchases', 371; Philip, *Bodleian Library*, 111-12.

⁹⁸ Jensen, 'The Bodleian Library', 285-6.

⁹⁹ F. W. Dubber, 'Bodley Recollections', 11-12; Dubber's account, an unpublished manuscript, is dated Oct. 1965 and was presented to the Library in May 1966; it is interleaved with photographs taken when the first floor of the Old Bodleian Library was used as a bookstack (for which see note 98 below), and is kept in the Library archives (Library Records d. 1750).

by partitions: the first of these was intended to be a room for oriental manuscripts, but from *c.* 1825 it became the home for incunabula and sixteenth-century books which were brought down from Duke Humfrey's Library, so as to create more space there for folio volumes. Craster suggested that these displaced books were seen as a supplement to the classical incunabula already shelved in tier 'Q' of the 'Auctarium', so they were reclassified and given the shelfmarks 'Auct. 1Q' to 'Auct. 7Q'; and the room in which they were housed became known as the 'Q Room'. A closer examination of the books in these sections reveals that the picture is much more complex than this, and that the contents of 'Auct. 1Q' to 'Auct. 7Q' are, in fact, much more diverse than those of 'Auct. Q': for example, 'Auct. 1Q', 'Auct. 2Q', and 'Auct. 4Q' to 'Auct. 7Q' contain many medieval theological and devotional texts, while 'Auct. 7Q' also includes patristic material much of which was, before 1825, shelved in 'Auct. K' and 'Auct. L'; 'Auct. 3Q' is mainly legal texts.¹⁰⁰ Dubber has, again, left a picture of the 'Q' Room:

The Q room . . . was . . . divided by artificial archways and walls, which have now been removed during the construction of modern reading rooms . . . Around the walls of the Q Room, in cases of a pattern somewhat similar to those in the Auctarium, but with latticed wire doors instead of the wooden doors underneath, were shelved fifteenth and sixteenth century theological and classical printed books. There were a few descriptive inscriptions above the cases, but no letters similar to those in the Auctarium, as the whole room, as regards the walls, was shelfmarked from the foundation of the term Auct. Q, e.g. Auct. 2Q. 3. 16, the first figure of which represented a section of 3 cases, the second figure a shelf number, and the third the book number in the particular shelf. Above the door was placed Auct. QQ supra, and below the south window, Auct. Q sub fenestra.¹⁰¹

The second of the three partitioned rooms after the 'Q Room' contained manuscripts and was known as the 'Bodley Room'; some incunabula, mistakenly given 'MS. Bodl.' shelfmarks, were housed there, as was the case for the third room, the 'Laud Room'. Subsequently, as part of one of Nicholson's rearrangements, the 'Laud Room' became the home of Richard Rawlinson's enormous bequest, including his incunables, and the room became the 'Rawlinson Room'.¹⁰² A short but steep flight of stairs led up from the 'Rawlinson Room' to the 'Wood-Ashmole Room' (now one of the staff offices for the Reader Services Department, off the Lower Reading Room). This room housed the material from those collections (including incunabula) after they were moved from the Ashmolean Museum in 1860; at the time it was brought into use, it was simply being used as a lumber room, but had previously been the University Armoury, housing stocks of muskets and halberds.¹⁰³

Beyond the 'Rawlinson Room' was the 'Bywater Room'. A large bequest, such as that of Bywater, posed problems, particularly as it was required that it should be kept together, in this case for at least 21 years following the bequest. 'The collection has been sumptuously housed in handsome

¹⁰⁰ For the general picture, see Coates, 'Bodleian's Incunabula', 114-15, drawing on Craster 15; for the analysis of the shelfmarks, see Jensen, 'The Bodleian Library', 285-6.

¹⁰¹ D[ubber], 'Bodley Recollections', 13-14.

¹⁰² Craster 15; on the rearrangement under Nicholson, see Craster 228; also Dubber, 'Bodley Recollections', 16-17.

¹⁰³ Craster 15, 69; the present Patristics Room includes not only the 'Douce Room' but also the 'Bywater Room', for which there was, clearly, a partition wall, removed in 1939/40 (see 'Notes and News: Extension Work', *BLR* 1,10 (1940), 161-2, at 162).

book-cases, carefully constructed so as to show off the books to best advantage. The room in which they are placed will be known as the Bywater Room.’ By the time Dubber knew the ‘Bywater Room’ it also contained the books left by Bishop Barlow (‘Linc.’); and it had also housed the Godwyn collection, with the result that, for a time, it was also known as the ‘Godwyn Room’.¹⁰⁴

The ‘Auctarium’ and the partitioned Hebrew School formed the south range of the Old Schools Quadrangle in the Bodleian. Moving round to the east, there was the former Astronomy School. This was taken over by the Bodleian in 1828, and from 1834 it became the home of Francis Douce’s bequest (including its incunabula) and was renamed the ‘Douce Room’ – the plaque bearing this name still hangs above the bookcases on the west wall of the room, which is now the Patristics and Theology Reading Room. Dubber’s description is again worth quoting:

‘The arrangement on the shelves was primarily alphabetical, but the books on the wall cases were so graduated that the smallest were at the top of each tier, and the largest at the bottom, thus giving an appearance of distinction and pleasing orderliness to the room. Manuscripts, incunabula, and other rarities occupied cases, all of oak, on the floor, running lengthwise along the room.’¹⁰⁵

At the centre of the eastern range is what is now the Lower Reading Room Reserve counter. This area had initially been the Savile Study, occupied by the Savilian Professors, before becoming part of the Bodleian in 1835. In 1841 its name was changed to the Mason Room, following Robert Mason’s bequest to the Library of £40,000 for the purchase of books.¹⁰⁶ Again, some incunables were housed here. The remainder of the eastern range was taken up with the old Geometry School. It was acquired by the Bodleian in 1828 and became the Oriental Room, and it was here that, among Hebrew manuscripts and books collected by Rabbi David Oppenheimer, were housed the Hebrew incunabula. The only other room on the first floor of the Library to be used to house incunabula was the Gough Room, at the western end of the north range.¹⁰⁷ Other collections were subsequently fitted in to the arrangement.

The first floor of the Library remained in use as a book-stack with books and manuscripts housed in the rooms as described above for approximately a hundred years, with the bulk of the manuscript collections and incunabula housed in the ‘Auctarium’, except for those in the rooms for named collections.¹⁰⁸ There were clearly severe space problems. On Nicholson’s election as Librarian in 1882, it seems that this first-floor accommodation was in poor condition: indeed, one Curator described it as an ‘Augean stable’.¹⁰⁹ Various measures were subsequently taken to improve the storage.¹¹⁰ With the completion of the New Bodleian Library, it was intended that all the

¹⁰⁴ W. W. Jackson, *Ingram Bywater: The Memoir of an Oxford Scholar 1840-1914* (Oxford, 1917), 174; Dubber, ‘Bodley Recollections’, 17; the renaming of the ‘Godwyn Room’ as the ‘Bywater Room’ was but one example of the changes which occasionally took place when new collections were acquired (Dubber, ‘Bodley Recollections’, 15).

¹⁰⁵ Craster 15-17; Dubber, ‘Bodley Recollections’, 18.

¹⁰⁶ Craster 17, 35.

¹⁰⁷ Craster 17-18; Dubber, ‘Bodley Recollections’, 18-20, 23.

¹⁰⁸ The reconfiguration of the first-floor rooms into the Lower Reading Room is recorded in ‘Notes and News: Extension Work’, *BLR* 1,10 (1940), 161-2, at 162.

¹⁰⁹ Manley, ‘E. W. B. Nicholson’, 107; for the reference to the ‘Augean stable’ see Craster 226.

¹¹⁰ See Craster 226-43 on the general state of the buildings, and on the works carried out throughout the Library at this time.

manuscripts and rare books in these first-floor rooms should be transferred to its new bookstack. The beginning of World War II brought about some changes to the overall schedule, but the end result was achieved by 1942.¹¹¹ Following the readjustments at the end of the war, the bulk of the collection of incunabula remained in the New Library bookstack, together with the manuscripts and other special collections, although some were returned to Duke Humfrey's Library. New incunable acquisitions have subsequently been shelved in the New Library stack.

Although this sounds like a rather seamless progression, this is not to say that there were no other plans. For example, E. W. B. Nicholson contemplated rearranging the incunabula 'as will be most instructive to the student of the history of printing', and conceived the idea of bringing together incunabula and books on the history of printing in the room off the Upper Reading Room, which had been the old Curators' Room, and which he had refitted with bookshelves in 1882; he was subsequently to change his mind, and suggested in 1907 that this room should become a study for Bodley's Librarian, a change of use which was eventually undertaken in 1919.¹¹²

Nicholson, in conjunction with Robert Proctor, was also responsible for introducing a new analytical shelfmarking system for incunabula. The system was actually devised by Proctor, and consisted of a shelfmark introduced by the abbreviation 'Inc.', followed by a letter indicating the height of the incunable (this followed what was then standard Bodleian shelfmarking practice) in the form of 'a', 'b', 'c' down to 'g' for the very smallest incunables. This was then followed by a code letter for the country of printing ('G' for Germany, 'I' for Italy, 'F' for France, 'E' for England, 'N' for the Netherlands, etc.). Appended to this country code is a number, referring to the order in time in which printing started in the particular country (where it has not been possible to establish this, a higher number has been used, for example, G97). To illustrate this, Anwykyll's *Compendium totius grammaticae*, printed in Oxford in 1483, bears the following shelfmark: Inc. e. E2.1483.1, as being of 'e' size (7-9 inches), printed in Oxford, the second place in England to adopt printing (E2), and being the first book printed in the city in 1483 (1483.1). It should in passing be noted that Proctor's thinking was clearly running in parallel with that of other scholarly librarians elsewhere. Henry Bradshaw, for example, when Librarian of Cambridge University Library (1867-86), used an undeveloped form of what was later termed the 'Proctor order' to arrange his 'Museum typographicum' in the University Library.¹¹³ Though the 'Proctor order' was impressively detailed and analytical in theory, it had the disadvantage that it allowed size to precede place. It was as Manley has noted, 'a creditable attempt to adopt the latest theories of bibliography'.¹¹⁴ However, from a practical point of view, namely that of being a shelfmark to

¹¹¹ Craster 341; photographs, taken by Oxford University Press in 1939, survive in the Library archives of the principal rooms of what is now the Lower Reading Room, showing them in use as the bookstack. These photographs have recently been supplemented by a donation of further pictures by the late Mr Stanley Gillam, who was on the staff of the Library when they were taken; see 'Photographs of the Old Library', *BLR* 1,6 (1939), 101; Library archives; also Stanley Gillam, 'The Bodleian Library in the Nineteen Thirties', *BLR* 18,1 (2003), 16-30, especially at 24-7, and with a photograph of the Douce Room as it was in 1937 at 25.

¹¹² Coates, 'Bodleian's Incunabula', 115 and note 30, following Craster 248-9; Manley, 'E. W. B. Nicholson', 131-2.

¹¹³ J. C. T. Oates, *A Catalogue of the 15th-century Printed Books in the University Library, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1954), 28; D. J. McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library: A History: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Cambridge, 1986), 735-6. On Proctor's work in relation to that of Bradshaw, see Brett W. Walwyn, 'M. R. James and Changing Methods of Incunable Description', in *The Legacy of M. R. James: Papers from the 1995 Cambridge Symposium*, ed. Lynda Dennison (Donington, 2001), 211-17, especially at 215.

¹¹⁴ Manley, 'E. W. B. Nicholson', 134; a rough draft of the 'Classification of Incunabula', in Proctor's hand, survives in the Library archives (Library Records e. 395).

allow books to be shelved and located easily by staff, it has proved somewhat cumbersome. Nevertheless, new incunables are still given shelfmarks in this section today; the shelfmark 'Arch.' [for 'Archiva'], used for items of special rarity, is also used for incunabula of particular note.