

Treasures of the Old Library

Christ's College, University of Cambridge



The Old Library at Christ's College, Cambridge houses 50,000 rare manuscripts and printed books, dating from the 11th century to the present day.



You can explore some of our treasures in the images that follow ...



Foundation of the collections



College Donations Book (17th century)

Started in 1623, the College Donations Book records important gifts to the Library until the late 1670s.

It includes details of the 39 texts given by Lady Margaret Beaufort, who founded the College in 1505.





College Donations Book (17th century)

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Ex bono Beatilsima Memoria



Medieval manuscripts



Evangelia Graece [Greek Gospels] (11th century)

This copy of the Gospels written in Greek dates from the 11th century, and is the Library's oldest item.

Written on vellum (animal skin) in double columns throughout, the manuscript is decorated with coarsely-drawn and coloured initials.





Peter of Poitiers, Compendium in genealogia Christi (ca. 1210-1230)

This compendium of Christ's genealogy was compiled by Peter of Poitiers, Chancellor of the University of Paris from 1193 to 1205.

A series of illustrations were included to help students to memorise this digest of biblical and secular history.

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English Book of Hours (14th century)

A Book of Hours is an illuminated Christian devotional book that was popular in Northern Europe during the Middle Ages.

It is an abridgement of the breviary, a liturgical book that contains the Liturgy of Hours recited in monasteries.

The format was developed for lay people who wished to incorporate elements of monasticism into their devotional life.

This Book of Hours is thought to date from ca. 1300-1305, and to originate in the Fens.

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English Book of Hours (14th century)











French Book of Hours (15th century)

This beautifullyillustrated vellum Book of Hours originates from the Diocese of Nantes, Brittany, ca. 1430-1440. It includes sixteen fullpage illustrations and elaborate floriated borders.











Polychronicon (15th century)

The *Polychronicon* is considered to be one of the greatest works of medieval history.

The text itself is known in over one hundred manuscripts, of which the Christ's copy is a particularly fine example.

Written in double columns of 44 lines each, this manuscript contains fine floriated borders and initials with considerable use of burnished gold decoration.





Polychronicon (15th century)

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Incunabula (books printed before 1501)



Euclid, *Elementa* (Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1482)

Euclid's *Elementa* is a mathematical and geometric treatise written by the Greek mathematician Euclid in Alexandria in 300 BC.

It is one of the very earliest mathematical works to have been printed.

In this first edition, the printer Erhard Ratdolt solved the problem of printing geometric diagrams.

Christ's College, Inc.1.5





Euclid, *Elements* (Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 1482)



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Christ's College, Inc.1.5



Hartmann Schedel, Liber Chronicarum, or, Nuremberg Chronicle (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493)

One of the best-known incunabula, the *Nuremberg Chronicle* is a medieval-style universal chronicle, relating history from creation to the present day.

The *Chronicle* is recognisable for its lavish illustrations, containing over a thousand prints designed by the Nuremberg artists Michael Wohlgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurff.

Christ's College, Inc.2.6

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Hartmann Schedel, *Nuremberg Chronicle* (Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493)







Christ's College, Inc.2.6



16th-century printed books

Erasmus of Rotterdam (ed.) Novum Testamentum (Basel: Froben, 1519)

This 1519 New Testament is unusual since it is one of only three known copies printed on vellum rather than paper.

Prepared by Erasmus of Rotterdam, this important edition is thought to have been used by Martin Luther in the making of his own German translation of the Bible.

Christ's College, CC.3.3





New Testament (Basel: Froben, 1519)





Christ's College, CC.3.3



Nicolaus Copernicus, *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* (Nuremberg: Johannes Petreius, 1543)

On the revolutions of the heavenly spheres is the seminal work of the Renaissance astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543).

It offers a heliocentric model of the universe in contrast to Ptolemy's geocentric system, which had been widely accepted since ancient times.

The book was first printed in 1543 by Johannes Petreius, who was renowned for the high quality of his output.

Christ's College, CC.5.3

NICOLAI CO PERNICI TORINENSIS DE REVOLUTIONIEUS ORBI um cocleffium, Libri VI.

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Norimbergæ apud loh. Petreium, Anno M. D. XLIII.



Copernicus, De revolutionibus (1543)

NICOLAI COPERNICI

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NICOLAI COPERNICI

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Christ's College, CC.5.3



Felix Platter, *De corporis humani* (Basel: Froben, 1583)

Felix Platter (1536-1614) was one of the foremost pathologists of his time and chief physician in Basel until his death.

This work on anatomy for medical students is lavishly illustrated with watercolours and handcoloured woodcuts.

Christ's College, CC.5.6





Felix Platter, *De corporis humani* (Basel: Froben, 1583)





Christ's College, CC.5.6



Ulisse Aldrovandi, *Ornithologiae, hoc est de avibus historia* (Bologna, 1599)

Ornithologiae is the first of a series of books produced by the Italian naturalist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), which together make up his monumental *Natural History*.

The copies at Christ's are in fine armorial bindings which proclaim in gold letters that the donor was Sir Thomas Widdrington, Chief Baron of the Exchequer, an office he held from 1658 to 1660.

Christ's College, L.8.18





Ulisse Aldrovandi, Ornithologiae (Bologna, 1599)





Christ's College, L.8.18



17th- and 18th-century books



Anon., Scala Magna [Coptic manuscript] (1632)

Completed in 1632, this codex is an account of the Coptic language in Arabic, with both languages presented in tandem.

At one time it was thought to have been lost at sea, explaining the visible water damage.

Christ's College, MS 29.2.4





Fazli Khuzani of Isfahan, Afzal-al-tavarikh ('Most excellent of histories') (ca. 1630s)

Lying incorrectly catalogued for nearly 150 years, this Persian manuscript was thought to be a standard copy of a well-known history.

However, in the 1990s, new research revealed that it was the missing third volume of a chronicle covering the reign of the celebrated Safavid ruler, Shah Abbas (1587-1629).

It was produced in India by a prominent contemporary Persian bureaucrat, Fazli Khuzani of Isfahan.



Christ's College, MS DD.5.6



John Milton, *Paradise lost. A poem written in ten books*. First edition (London: [S. Simmons], 1667)

Paradise lost was the *magnum opus* of John Milton, one of Christ's College's most famous alumni.

Christ's holds in its collection six of the 1,300 copies of the first edition of *Paradise lost*, printed between 1667 and 1669.

This copy bears the second recorded title-page variant. Note the surprising lack of prominence given to John Milton's name.

This suggests a wariness on the publisher's part at drawing too much attention to an author whose outspoken republican sympathies were wellknown.

Christ's College, EE.4.7





Legal documents relating to Milton's *Paradise lost*, London, 26 April 1669 and 21 December 1680

By early 1669 most, if not all, of the 1,300 copies of the first edition of *Paradise lost* had sold.

In line with the contract which Milton had initially signed, this entitled him to the payment of a further sum of £5. The upper image is a receipt for this payment dating from April 1669.

The lower image is dated 1680, six years after Milton's death. It records his widow, Elizabeth, formally releasing her rights over the poem to the publisher Simmons in return for a payment of £8.

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John Locke *Two treatises of government* (London: Awnsham and Churchill, 1698)

This 1698 edition of John Locke's *Two treatises of government* is distinctive because it contains annotations in Locke's own hand.

It is also one of 48 books given to the Library by Thomas Hollis (1720-1774), a wealthy philanthropist who described himself as a "republican."

Christ's College, BB.3.7.a




The most delectable history of Reynard the Fox (London: Edward Brewster, 1701)

The fable of Reynard the Fox is an example of a "beast-epic," in which human society is satirised in an anthropomorphised animal kingdom, principally in order to draw edifying moral lessons.

Many of the delightful woodcuts accompanying the text were modelled on blocks originally produced by Caxton's associate Wynkyn de Worde.

Christ's College, Rouse 5.4





The most delectable history of Reynard the Fox (London: Edward Brewster, 1701)





Christ's College, Rouse 5.4



Anon., A short narrative of the horrid massacre in Boston (Boston: Edes and Gill; London: W. Bingley, 1770)

On 5 March 1770, British troops quartered in Boston opened fire on a local crowd which had turned out to taunt and pelt them with stones.

This pamphlet was written by three inhabitants of Boston commissioned to compile and present the facts of the case.

An elaborate fold-out engraving (pictured far right) accompanies the text.



THE FRUITS ARBITRARY POWER : OF the BLOODY MASSACRI Perpetrated in King-ffreet, Bofton, by a Party of the XXIXth Regt hich Meff, Sam, Gray, Sam, Maverick, James Caldwell, Criffous Attucks, 1



Christ's College, BB.4.3.a



William Paley, Extracts from lectures on divinity delivered to the junior bachelors of Christ's College (1775-6)

One of the eighteenth century's leading theologians and moralists, William Paley graduated from Christ's as Senior Wrangler in 1763, before returning three years later as a Fellow.

Required to lecture on ethics, metaphysics, and theology, Paley swiftly acquired a reputation for his highly engaging teaching style.

This manuscript, believed to be in Paley's hand, contains extracts from a series of lectures which he delivered on divinity.

Christ's College, Box 36



Extract. Lectures on Divinit usto College Cambr



William Paley, Extracts from lectures on divinity (1775-6)

Form and absurdities, and follies, and foither and 14536 tricks and contrivances of the rest of tranking Extracts how to believe keligion, is to believe and know no more than what the Cowest person in the street know in the main and believes as well as we do. from the it is setting ourselves upon a level with Carpenter and Jaytons, and farmers and mechanics with Lectures on Divinity methodists, and our lonnen. and country gransome. Thereas to see into it and thos' it, to get as it wire delivered, to the perind the Scenes, and see brankind playing one another off. is infinitely gratifying to the mind M.B. These two principles of Vice and Vanity Junior Bachelors may and it is believed often do. aut imperceptile and are the cause of infitelity, when the infise himself is not aware of it . -3 day Rashnels .-Christs Gollege, Cambridge A Carge tribe of infidels are your girdy havte young fellows, who without information or enquiry about the matter take up Safiselity all of a suba upon the first difficulty they need with upon a since William Paley Mit Objection or two they happen to hear, I a videculous string perhaps of a forged miracle. without at all attending to the distinguishing circumstances) and 1975 and 1996. when one they have wowed their distrilief of

Christ's College, Box 36



19th century and beyond



Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The modern Prometheus* (London: Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones, 1818)

This first edition of *Frankenstein* was published on New Year's Day in 1818.

Only 500 copies were printed.

Its division into three volumes was the standard "triple decker" format for 19th-century first editions.

Christ's College, CC.4.19





Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (London, 1818)

FRANKENSTEIN;

OR,

THE MODERN PROMETHEUS.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay To mould me man? Did I solicit thee From darkness to promote me?—— Paradise Lost.

VOL. I.

London : Printed for Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor, & Jones, Finsbury square.

1818.

FRANKENSTEIN

OR, THE MODERN PROMETHEUS.

LETTER I. To Mrs. SAVILLE, England.

St. Petersburgh, Dec. 11th, 17-. You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday; and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare, and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

l am already far north of London; and as I walk in the streets of Peters-VOL. I. B

Christ's College, CC.4.19



Charles Darwin, On the origin of species (London: John Murray, 1859)

The naturalist and biologist Charles Darwin (1809-1882) is one of the College's most famous alumni.

We are fortunate to hold several copies of the first edition of his most famous work, *On the origin of species*.

Printed in 1859 and selling out almost immediately, it outlines the theory of evolution by natural selection.

Christ's College, BB.5.5.a







Charles Darwin, Letter to William Darwin Fox, 30 June 1828

In addition to numerous first editions of his works, the College also holds a series of Charles Darwin's letters to his cousin William Darwin Fox.

The beautifully drawn beetles in this letter were probably sketched by Darwin's sister Caroline.

Christ's College, MS Fox 116





Charles Darwin, Letter to William Darwin Fox, 30 June 1828



In this letter, Charles Darwin comments that the insect in real life "is more beautiful than the drawing."

Christ's College, MS Fox 116



Charles Lesingham Smith's Private Diary, 1871

The Library of former Fellow Charles Lesingham Smith was bequeathed to the College in 1878.

It included about a thousand mathematical books, and a number of manuscripts.

In the early 1930s, his private diary for 1871 turned up in a second-hand bookshop in Australia.

It was purchased for the price of seven pence halfpenny.

Christ's College, Box 44.i



And things conducerse to the decent ministrations This Ande. At the afternoom service there was a my large congregation, many labouring men be. "phered whom I did not know: all were wonhighly attentive, weren the boys behaved well rather think thip torown keeps them was state of we they like her at the might school, & doublike to offend her.

Her 2" The vinies of yesterday Ito-day came to tay trantament the completion of an administle review on Danonie last Book. It pour out that this ada. Here's good naturalist, he is no readener & his corresponds could his career of Cambridge Stere he tone in capable of taking high honors, & in fact the ume. I have not heard of any Suglish methemotics a adopting his could theory, requiring an about the individed coster of time, for he marks on the matinited coster of time, for he marks on the matinited costers of time, for he marks on the matinited coster of time, here here the his manitain lost his globe, when the planes & his manitain lost this globe, when the planes & his manitain lost this globe, when the planes & his manitain lost this globe, when the planes & his manitain lost this globe, when the planes & his manitain to here homogeneous network his have donce ground for inferring het nedula in the donce ground for inferring het nedula



Aurora Australis (1908-1909)

Aurora Australis was printed in Antarctica "at the sign of the Penguins" during Sir Ernest Shackleton's Nimrod expedition of 1907-9.

The improvised binding consists of two wooden covers fashioned from provision cases.

To pass the time during the long winter months, members of the expedition wrote essays and poems that were printed using a printing press taken along for the purpose.

Christ's College, AA.3.8





Aurora Australis (1908-1909)



Christ's College, AA.3.8



Graham Greene *The end of the affair* (London: William Heinemann, 1951)

This signed first edition of Graham Greene's novel *The end of the affair* was given to the college by Davidson Nicol (1992-1994), to whom the title page is inscribed.

Graduating from Christ's in 1946, Davidson Nicol was a Sierra Leonean academic, diplomat, physician, writer and poet.

Christ's College, Annexe PR6013.E44 E4 1951

For Desiden Need PR 601 THE END OF T AFFAIR GRAHAM GREENE IAM HEINEMANN LTD MELBOURNE :: LONDON :: TORONTO

BOOK ONE

A STORY has no beginning or end: arbitrarily one chooses that moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead. I say "one chooses" with the inaccurate pride of a professional writer who—when he has been seriously noted at all—has been praised for his technical ability, but do I in fact of my own will choose that black wet January night on the Common, in 1946, the sight of Henry Miles slanting across the wide river of

rain, or did these images choose me? It is convenient, it is correct according to the rules of my craft to begin just there, but if I had believed then in a God, I could also have believed in a hand, plucking at my elbow, a suggestion, "Speak to him: he hasn't seen you yet."

For why should I have spoken to him? If hate is not too large a term to use in relation to any human being, I hated Henry—I hated his wife Sarah too. And he, I suppose, came soon after the events of that evening to hate me: as he surely at times must have hated his wife and that other, in whom in those days we were lucky enough not to believe. So this is a record of hate far more than of love, and if I come to say anything in favour of Henry and Sarah I can be trusted: I am writing against the bias because it is my professional pride to prefer

1



W.H.D. Rouse Correspondence (ca. 1880-1950)

W.H.D. Rouse (1863-1950) studied Classics at Christ's and became a Fellow in 1888.

As well as a large number of books and manuscripts, Rouse left the college his collection of correspondence.

This includes a number of letters from famous literary and political figures, including C.S. Lewis, Walter de la Mare, Ezra Pound and H.G. Wells.

Christ's College, Box 200.ix



any Little Saster Berty Dra D! Rouse Thank you for your lette, And come an Ego



Letters to W.H.D. Rouse from Ezra Pound and C.S. Lewis (1935 and 1947)



EZRA POUND OT TIME VIA MARBALA 185 22 STRAPALLO
Dear Doc Rouse : My ble man wut riz among injums. That is , he was the first white child borm in the north of Wisconsin, and had an initian bambinila, and later a haltspreed if not exactly tutor at least Human accompanier. To surgrissed me by saying that the bow was still used, he lot of indians having no guns (or at any rate that is his childs hood memory); and arrows still used for deer and prarie chickens. Now, canibals the old man has heard of. He has been very much interested in Ulysses , the Cyclops , mat's O/K/ that dont worry him , but"that lie ' about the twelve arcshandles , arouses
Gods and so on , he wd. swallow, or at any rate his conversation

REF. 314/47.

anting Screwty Ellen

Magdalen College, Oxford. 22nd.May 1947.

Dear Sir,

Thank you very much for sending me Homer's Words, which I look forward to reading with interest. It was Charles Williams (not Smith) whom I praised, and his preface is in the new <u>World's Classics</u> edition of Milton's poetry.

yours faithfully,

C. S. Leuri

Christ's College, Box 200.ix



Fine bindings

In addition to books of interest for their intellectual content, the Library holds a large number of volumes in fine bindings, of which a small selection is shown here.



Christ's College, DD.3.12



Christ's College, DD.4.16



Christ's College, DD.7.8

Christ's College, L.8.18



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