

Jesus College Old Library: resources for the history of science

Basic information can be found at:

<http://www.jesus.cam.ac.uk/college/life-jesus/old-library>

The main Old Library collection has a section containing works on mathematics and mathematical sciences, a section grouping works on life sciences with voyages and travels, and elsewhere a few medical titles. Another section includes books on military subjects from the library of John Clarke, (d. 1778?).

There is one relevant incunable: *Julii Firmici Astronomicarum libri octo integri* (Venice, 1499) - this includes an early edition of Manilius' *Astronomica*. Other holdings include: early *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* (1665-84); Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* (1665) and *Posthumous Works* (1705); the second edition of Isaac Newton's *Principia* (1713) and first Latin edition of his *Opticks* (1706); John Flamsteed's *A Doctrine of the Sphere* (1680) and a fine copy of Johannes Kepler's *Tabulae Rudolphinae* (1627) presented to the college by Flamsteed.

Other collections are housed in the Old Library Annexe. They include the Malthus Collection (some two thousand volumes), which derives from the library assembled by Daniel Malthus (the father of T. R. "Population" Malthus, 1766-1834) and by other family members. It is fairly typical of the content of an educated gentleman's library of the 18th and early 19th century, with scientific subjects lightly represented. It includes a set of the *Bridgewater Treatises* (1833-40), and two botanical volumes once owned and annotated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as well as Robert Malthus's own publications. A printed catalogue of this collection was published by Pergamon (New York) in 1983.

The college's collection of medieval manuscripts is also described in an old printed catalogue, ed. by M. R. James (1895). Medicine and astronomy are among the subjects treated, though the bulk of the material is theological.

The Jesuan Collection contains published works of present and former members of the college. The authors represented include three Astronomers Royal (Flamsteed, Spencer Jones, and Professor Sir Martin Rees), and several 20th-century experts in life sciences. More unusually, publications by Edward Daniel Clarke (1769-1822) include syllabuses for his lectures as Professor of Mineralogy at Cambridge.

The main Old Library Collection and medieval manuscripts have not as yet been catalogued online (with the exception of the Malthus collection, and the majority of the Jesuan Collection) Please e-mail for further details.

Enquiries should be directed to the Keeper or Assistant Keeper, preferably by email to old-library@jesus.cam.ac.uk.

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