Manuscript and archive resources for HPS (medieval and early modern)

1. Medieval manuscripts in CUL

See <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/manuscripts-university-archives/subject-guides/medieval-manuscripts>

Generally speaking the Luard catalogue of the mid-19th century is weak on identifying texts of science and medicine. CUL has good holdings in medieval medicine, astrology/astronomy, alchemy, bestiaries and herbals.

The detailed guide to finding aids (via the link ‘online’) gives useful context to the building up of the CUL collections and lists some important resources (ie *Dated and Datable Manuscripts in Cambridge*; Corpus of British Library Catalogues volume for Cambridge; Sharpe, *Handlist of the Latin writers of Great Britain and Ireland before 1540*; language catalogues for Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman, Middle English; illuminated manuscripts).

Recent additions of medieval manuscripts (up to 2010) can be found where it asks you to click ‘here’, and items 20, 73, 77, 78 and 82 on that list are of particular medical and scientific interest.

1. Incipits

The best way to identify medieval texts is often by incipit (first words of the text) and this is seen to great effect in Lynn Thorndike and Pearl Kibre, *A catalogue of incipits of mediaeval scientific writings in Latin* (1963), which has many listings for Cambridge manuscripts.

The electronic version of this work (eTK) allows for more sophisticated subject searching and can also be searched under ‘Cambridge’ in conjuction with author, title or subject. It is available at <http://www.medievalacademy.org/?page=DigitalTools>, follow the link for “Voigts-Kurtz Search Program for eTK and eVK2 at the U. of Missouri-Kansas City”.

eVK2 is the equivalent database for scientific and medical texts in Middle English. It has the advantage over eTK in being effectively a complete listing of manuscripts containing ME texts (whereas eTK is selective, rather than complete).

Volumes in the series of *Index of Middle English Prose* for CUL and for Cambridge college libraries are also indexed by incipit. The separate volumes can be identified at <https://boydellandbrewer.com/series/index-of-middle-english-prose.html> and contain good indexes for science and medicine in these collections. There is also a comprehensive index for vols. I-XX in the series. All are available in the Dept of MSS at CUL.

1. Medieval manuscripts in Cambridge college libraries

Cambridge college libraries have catalogues made by M. R. James (early 20th cent.) of their medieval manuscripts, and some colleges have updated versions available on their library websites (ie St John’s and Trinity). The Pepys Library at Magdalene (by R. McKitterick and R. Beadle) and Peterhouse (by R. Thomson) have modern catalogues.

Trinity, Gonville & Caius, St John’s and Corpus Christi have particularly strong holdings in science and medicine, but all of the older libraries (and not forgetting the Fitzwilliam Museum, which has its own catalogues) have some important manuscripts.

College library holdings are included in the ongoing series of *Illuminated Manuscripts in Cambridge* (2009-), edited by Nigel Morgan and Stella Panayatova, including manuscripts of medicine and science and encylopedias.

1. Digitised early manuscripts

Digitised versions of a few medieval manuscripts can be found via CUL’s Digital Library ([https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/](https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/%20) ) or college library websites. Only Corpus Christi College has completely digitised its collection, with accompanying metadata: <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/actions/page.do?forward=home> )

1. Alchemical manuscripts

Anke Timmermann, “Alchemy in Cambridge: an annotated catalogue of texts and illustrations in Cambridge repositories”, *Nuncius* 30.2 (2015), 345-511 is very useful. See also *Catalogue of Latin and vernacular alchemical manuscripts in Great Britain and Ireland dating from before the XVI century*, by Dorothea Waley Singer; assisted by Annie Anderson (1928-31), which has a manuscript index.

1. Janus

Janus: “The main purpose is to make it easier for researchers with remote access to locate information about archival collections held within Cambridge; details include catalogues of the archival holdings of each participating institution, together with repository information and contact details. These catalogues are individually browsable on the website and there is also the capacity for searching across the catalogues of all contributing repositories. Some collections are only described as a whole; but in the case of larger archives, these catalogues may extend down to individual documents”.

Explanations as to how to search and browse the various catalogues can be found at <https://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id=Webpages%2FPublic%2Fsearch>

1. Newton papers

See <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/manuscripts-university-archives/significant-archival-collections/papers-sir>

The most important collections are in CUL (<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/newton>

but King’s College (alchemy, biography, theology, Mint), Trinity College, and the Fitzwilliam also have significant holdings. The two digital projects, [Newton Project](http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/) and [Chymistry of Isaac Newton](http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/newton/), provide the best descriptions of items in these other collections.

1. Macclesfield Collection

See <https://janus.lib.cam.ac.uk/db/node.xsp?id=EAD%2FGBR%2F0012%2FMS%20Add.9597>

“The Macclesfield Collection principally comprises the archives of John Collins (1625-1683) and William Jones (1675-1749). As well as being mathematicians in their own right, both men corresponded with leading scientific figures of their day and so the collection includes autograph material by Isaac Newton, Edmond Halley, Henry Briggs, Roger Cotes, Henry Oldenburg and Robert Hooke”.

1. Natural history resources

See Gavin Bridson, *Natural history manuscript resources in the British Isles* (1980) under Cambridge.

1. Commonplace books

A number of commonplace books in Cambridge collections have been digitised at <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/194168>

They contain varying amounts of scientific material between the 15th and 18th centuries.

1. Early modern lecture notes and similar

Some are listed at <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/manuscripts-university-archives/subject-guides/scientific-manuscripts>

under “Natural Philosophy”. Others can be traced through W.T. Costello *The scholastic curriculum at early seventeenth-century Cambridge* (1958), which has a useful bibliography of manuscripts, and Mordechai Feingold, *The mathematicians' apprenticeship: science, universities and society in England, 1560-1640* (1984).

St John’s College is unusual in having a good list of post-medieval manuscripts, including medicine and natural philosophy, at <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/library/special_collections/manuscripts/post_medieval/>