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#### WHEN WAS CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL'S MEDIEVAL LIBRARY BUILDING DEMOLISHED?

As a major Benedictine house, the priory of Christ Church Canterbury was a considerable user of books. Lanfranc's rebuilding in the 1070s did not include a library; it is assumed that books were kept in cupboards in the cloister, as was normal in a monastery. By the late-twelfth century, a more commodious book store had been provided in the closed-off passageway leading out from the cloisters to which an upper floor was added in the early fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> By the mid fourteenth century many books had left Canterbury to stock libraries in its daughter houses, especially at Canterbury College in Oxford where Canterbury monks went to study at the university. Eventually a library building was constructed to house the books which remained. It was founded and funded by Archbishop Chichele by an agreement made with the Prior and Chapter in 1432 and seems to have been completed in the mid 1440s.<sup>2</sup> Its location was above the Prior's chapel on the spot where its seventeenth-century replacement is now to be found.

This library remained in use in the late Middle Ages and after the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII. It is described in detail by Margaret Sparks in her book on the buildings of the cathedral precincts.<sup>3</sup> William Somner refers to its location over the Dean's chapel (formerly the Prior's) in his *Antiquities of Canterbury* in 1640:

Over this Chapell is the Church-library ... being built ... by Archbishop Chichley, and borrowed from the Chapell, or superadded to it.<sup>4</sup>

Somner goes on to lament the loss of the greater part of the books in the library since the Reformation:

It was by the founder and others well stored with books, but in mans memory shamefully robbed and spoiled of them all, an act much prejudiciall and very injurious both to posterity, and the Common-wealth of letters.

He notes that 'the present Churchmen hath begun to replenish it', referring to the initiative of Dean Isaac Bargrave in 1628 to stimulate the re-establishment of the

library and to urge gifts for it which would be recorded in the new Benefactors' Book.<sup>5</sup>

This revival in the fortunes of the library was about to be curtailed by the events of the English Civil War and the abolition of the Church of England. In April 1649, Trustees for Deans and Chapters had been set up by the 'Act for the abolishing of Deans, Deans and Chapters, Canons, Prebends, and other officers or titles belonging to any Cathedral or Collegiate Church or Chapel in England and Wales, and for the employment of their revenues'.<sup>6</sup> The main purpose of the Act was 'to sell the Lands of the Deans and Chapters, for the paying of publique Debts; and for the raising of Three hundred thousand pounds, for the present supply of the pressing necessities of this Commonwealth'. The Act covered buildings as well as estates:

the said Surveyors are hereby authorized to demand, require, receive, and put into safe custody, the Charters, Deeds, Books, Accompts, Rolls, Writings and Evidences that concern the premises or any part thereof; to the end the same may be put into such place as the said Trustees or any five or more of them shall appoint.<sup>7</sup>

Having been authorised in this way, the Trustees in March 1650 issued an order to Captain Sherman in Canterbury to have the Cathedral Library catalogued and the books sent off to the Trustees' office in Gurney House in London.<sup>8</sup>

At a meeting of the trustees for deanes and chapteres Londo[n] the 6th of march 1650  
Ordered that Captne Sherman doe make a catalogue of all the Bookes in the liberarie at Canterburie and that hee take Care for the spedie sendinge of them to Gurny House in the ould Jurie London

The order was signed by the requisite five Trustees: 'Johnstoun' [John Stone], 'Mar Hildersom' [Mark Hildesley], 'Collonell Roulfe' [William Rolf], 'Georg Langham' [George Langham] and 'William Wyberd'.<sup>9</sup>

The Cathedral's estate records were also seized and taken to Gurney House.<sup>10</sup> The catalogue of the Library which had been ordered was duly drawn up in 1650,<sup>11</sup> although the books were not immediately sent off to London: it appears that government agents in Kent were being uncooperative. On 3 April 1651, one year after the original order to ship the books to London, the Trustees wrote to the Committee for Compounding to protest about obstructiveness on the part of the Committee's agents in Kent:

Trustees for sale of Dean and Chapters' lands to the Committee for Compounding. Being obliged by our trust to secure the libraries of the late deans and chapters, we directed the removal of those at Canterbury, as in other places, to London, for disposal by Parliament, and to be kept from the embezzlement threatening them by the decay of the place where they were. Some of your sub-commissioners having interposed, we desire you to prohibit any further interruption in the removal of the books.<sup>12</sup>

The Committee for Compounding followed this up on 18 April 1651:

Committee for Compounding to the Commissioners for Sequestrations, co. Kent. The Trustees for sale of Dean and Chapter lands inform us that you withstand their

order directing the disposal of the library belonging to the late Dean and Chapter of Canterbury to Mr. Griffith, minister of the Charter House, London. We desire you to deliver the said library to Mr. Griffith, or his assignee, by catalogue, to be indented, one part thereof left with you, and the catalogue returned to us.<sup>13</sup>

The present author's interpretation of these documents is that the books did indeed remain in Canterbury following the Trustees' order to Captain Sherman and the drawing up of the catalogue in March 1650 and that it took a further instruction from London a year later to ensure their delivery, though it is not clear that a two-part copy of the catalogue was prepared as requested. The date of carriage of the books to London was May 1651 as noted by Sheila Hingley: 'They went by road and then by river to London, in four barrels, a hamper and a box'.<sup>14</sup> It is possible to deduce from this that the medieval library was still standing in mid 1651.

Following the restoration of the monarchy and the Church of England in 1660, the Cathedral's archival documents had been retrieved from Gurney House. The medieval library had definitely been demolished by this time, as William Somner lamented its fate in that year:

The Deanes privat Chapell, and a faire and goodly Library over it, quite demolished, the Bookes and other furniture of it sold away.<sup>15</sup>

He makes no mention of the survival of the books and was presumably still unaware of the decision by the Committee for Compounding in 1650/1651 to award them to Mr Griffiths at the Charterhouse in London. The Chichele library, together with the Dean's chapel below it, must have been demolished at some point after mid-1651. Nevertheless, it can be shown that both were probably still standing two or three years later.

The year 1655 saw the publication of the *Monasticon Anglicanum* by Roger Dodsworth and William Dugdale, with significant contributions by William Somner.<sup>16</sup> Somner's friend Meric Casaubon was also involved in this project, being paid 5 shillings in November 1652 for making a fair copy of 'a quire except 3 pages', and 7 shillings for correcting proofs for the *Monasticon*.<sup>17</sup> The dedicatory poems by local Canterbury figures inserted into the preliminaries give equal praise to Dodsworth, Dugdale and Somner as authors of the *Monasticon*.<sup>18</sup>

Among the four engraved plates illustrating Canterbury Cathedral is a ground plan which shows many of the adjacent monastic buildings, including the location of the Chichele library. The library is marked with the number 37; the key at the foot of the plate explains this as *Decani nup[er], Prioris olim, Capella, cum Librario sup[er] edificato* [recently the Dean's chapel, formerly the Prior's, with the Library built over it]. This suggests that the chapel and the library might still have been in place at the time that the plate was commissioned and its caption engraved.

Evidence from William Dugdale's correspondence, as printed by William Hamper, enables us to be more precise about the dates for the survival of the medieval library. William Somner proves to be a significant figure in this.

It is not surprising that Somner was a collaborator of Dugdale, who already knew him at the time of the publication of the *Antiquities of Canterbury* in 1640. Hamper records that Dugdale recommended Somner to Sir Symonds D'Ewes in 1639/40.<sup>19</sup>

In the preliminary letter to his *Warwickshire* (1656), Dugdale acknowledges among other earlier antiquarian works ‘the *Antiquities of Canterbury* by my speciall friend Mr William Somner’.<sup>20</sup> Somner continued to collaborate with Dugdale, sending corrections to the ‘Preface’ of *Warwickshire* in a letter of 7 March 1655/56 together with a letter from Meric Casaubon.<sup>21</sup> Both Dugdale and Somner were of course also active in the field of Anglo-Saxon lexicography.<sup>22</sup>

The history of the plates for the *Monasticon* is discussed in detail by Marion Roberts.<sup>23</sup> Most of the plates were engraved by the English engraver Daniel King. The Canterbury ground plan was the work of the superior artist Wenceslas Hollar. More significantly, the four Canterbury plates were commissioned by Dugdale through the good offices of William Somner in Canterbury. Roberts identifies the artist who made the drawings for these plates as Thomas Johnson of Canterbury, a member of the London Painter-Stainers Company.<sup>24</sup>

William Somner worked closely with William Dugdale on the final stages of preparation of the *Monasticon* for the press, including drafting captions for the completed plates in late 1654.<sup>25</sup> He was the one person who would know (and care) about the safe keeping of the Chapter Library and who was still resident in Canterbury. This seems to indicate that he knew that the Library was still standing not only at the time of the drawing and engraving of the plates, but also at the time of their going to press.

Marion Roberts makes it clear that the decision to include plates in the *Monasticon* was a late one. She notes that Dugdale’s 1653 correspondence includes frequent references to plates for his *Warwickshire*, ‘there are no references to the plates for the *Monasticon* before 1654’.<sup>26</sup> The text of the book had been ready to print as early as 1650 but Dodsworth and Dugdale were advised that conditions were unsuitable for the publication of such a specialist work. It may be that the decision to include plates was intended to increase the book’s saleability. Patrons were sought to finance individual plates, which would carry their coats of arms. On 13 March 1654, Somner wrote to Dugdale about the corrected proof of ‘o[ur] Cathedral’s groundplott’ which Sir Thomas Peyton had promised to pay for. He sends the drawing of the ‘frontispiece’ of the Cathedral done by Mr Johnson, for which he has paid 10 shillings. Somner had recruited Sir Anthony Aucher and Sir Thomas Peyton to pay five pounds each for their plates, which covered costs and allowed a little profit to subsidise other aspects of the venture.<sup>27</sup> In November of the same year Somner wrote to Dugdale with further comments about the text of the *Monasticon*.<sup>28</sup>

The Latin key to the ‘ground plot’ drawn by Thomas Johnson was no doubt prepared by William Somner or at least done with his oversight and approval. The wording *Decani nup[er], Prioris olim, Capella, cum Librario sup[er] ædificato* suggests a building which was still standing. If we can assume that he would have labelled the Dean’s chapel and library as demolished if it were no longer standing, it is possible to suggest that the building was still intact in late 1654 when Somner wrote to Dugdale with comments about the preface. It would not have been too late even at that date to have the key re-engraved with minor corrections.

It seems possible that the chapel and library were only demolished in the mid to late 1650s, just a few years before the restoration of the monarchy and the return of the Church of England and its dignitaries. The Dean and Chapter were able to have

their books returned from London in 1661, though they had to pay compensation to Mr Griffiths at the Charterhouse.<sup>29</sup> The clerk at Gurney House who made the arrangements wrote at the foot of the 1650 inventory ‘Pray place your books whear you had them’,<sup>30</sup> presumably not realising that the library no longer existed.

In spite of all their other commitments at that time, the Dean and Chapter set to work to replace their library on the same footings as its predecessor. The building costs were borne by a bequest of £500 from Archbishop Juxon and the fittings from a gift from Bishop Warner of Rochester, a former canon of Canterbury. The building work was supervised by William Somner’s brother John.<sup>31</sup> By 1666 the new library was ready, the books had been rescued from the Charterhouse and the task of enhancing its holdings commenced.

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<sup>1</sup> T. Tatton-Brown, ‘The medieval library at Canterbury Cathedral’, *Canterbury Cathedral Chronicle* (82, 1988), pp. 35-42.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Sparks, *Canterbury Cathedral Precincts: A Historical Survey* (Dean and Chapter of Canterbury: 2007), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38.

<sup>4</sup> A new biography of William Somner has been written by David Wright. See, ‘The Life of William Somner of Canterbury (1606-1669), Parts I and II, in *Archaeologia Cantiana*, vols 140 (2019), 13-36 and 141 (2020), 25-46.

<sup>5</sup> William Somner, *The Antiquities of Canterbury* (London: 1640), p. 174.

<sup>6</sup> *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1600*, ed. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (3 vols; London: 1911), ii, 82.

<sup>7</sup> *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1600*, Trustees for Dean and Chapter Lands to take over muniments, ii, p. 83 (1649, Apr. 30), p. 201 (July 31): and provide for their safe custody, p. 86.

<sup>8</sup> David Shaw, ‘The Chapter Library of Canterbury Cathedral during the Parliamentary Interregnum’, *Canterbury Cathedral Chronicle* (Canterbury: 2013), pp. 26-29.

<sup>9</sup> Canterbury Cathedral Archives CCA DCc-LA/1/5.

<sup>10</sup> Nigel Ramsay, ‘The Cathedral Archives and Library’, in *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (OUP, 1995), p. 382.

<sup>11</sup> Canterbury Cathedral Archives CCA DCc-LA/6.

<sup>12</sup> *Calendar, Committee for Compounding*, part 1, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London, 1889), I, p. 429.

<sup>13</sup> *Calendar, Committee for Compounding*, part 1, p. 435.

<sup>14</sup> Sheila Hingley, ‘Cathedral Libraries: The Great Survivors’, in *CULIB – Cambridge University Libraries Information Bulletin* (Issue 63, Michaelmas 2008). See also, Margaret Sparks and Karen Brayshaw, *A History of the Library at Canterbury Cathedral* (Canterbury: Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, 2011), p. 10 and note 16.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted from J. Craigie Robertson, ‘The condition of Canterbury Cathedral at the Restoration in A.D. 1660’, *Archaeologia Cantiana* (x, 1876), 93-98: 95.

<sup>16</sup> Roger Dodsworth and William Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, Vol. 1 (London: 1655). ESTC R225645. For Somner’s contribution to the work, see also Wright, 2019, 29-30.

<sup>17</sup> William Hamper (ed.), *The life, diary, and correspondence of Sir William Dugdale* (London: 1827), p. 294, note; see also Dugdale’s Diary for 8 Nov 1652, Hamper, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> This is a single leaf inserted between gatherings d and e in the preliminaries. The catchword on the verso of leaf d4 makes it clear that it was added after the printing of the other two gatherings. The authors of the poems are Frederick Primrose, a Canterbury doctor of medicine; Edward Browne, headmaster of the King’s School; John Boys of Hoth Court; Richard Fogg of Dane Court; and a poem in fake medieval English by Joshua Childrey, at that time a schoolmaster in Faversham.

<sup>19</sup> Hamper, p. 197.

<sup>20</sup> William Dugdale, *The antiquities of Warwickshire illustrated* (London: 1656), a3r.

<sup>21</sup> Hamper, pp. 304-305.

<sup>22</sup> Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (OUP: 1995), p. 246.

<sup>23</sup> Marion Roberts, *Dugdale and Hollar: History Illustrated* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2002).

<sup>24</sup> Roberts, p. 113.

<sup>25</sup> Hamper, pp. 282 (10 November 1654), 288 (13 March 1654 [1655 n.s.?). Somner's contributions are singled out for praise in Sir John Marsham's preface to the *Monasticon* ('Propylaion', d3r).

<sup>26</sup> Roberts, p. 51.

<sup>27</sup> Hamper, p. 288.

<sup>28</sup> Hamper, p. 282 (10 November 1654).

<sup>29</sup> Sparks and Brayshaw, p. 10.

<sup>30</sup> Canterbury Cathedral Archives CCA DCc-LA/1/6v.

<sup>31</sup> Sparks and Brayshaw, p. 11.

## THE 'HALES PALACE' ESTATE MAP (1715) RECOVERED TO CANTERBURY

Canterbury deserves its prominent place in the early history of map-making. The mid twelfth-century *Waterworks Drawing* included within the *Eadwine Psalter* (Trinity College Cambridge R.17.1) is of great importance in this context. This extraordinary plan of Canterbury Cathedral and its precincts showing their water supply, with an accompanying sketch showing its source, was drawn in the city. It is an exceptionally rare example of a medieval map of a locality, and one of only two examples of plans of water supplies surviving from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Its importance for the study of the cathedral and city is well established.<sup>2</sup> The draughtsman of the *Waterworks Drawing* is not known, although Francis Woodman has suggested it could have been the monk Gervase of Canterbury.<sup>3</sup>

Also not known are the draughtsmen of two very fine parchment maps dating from the beginning and middle of the seventeenth century, which form part of the city's archive. The earlier (reference CCA-Map 57) shows the boundaries of the city, while the latter (reference CCA-Map 123) shows the city in extraordinary detail in about 1640; while this item has been extensively referred to in studies of the city, as a map it awaits further scholarship.

In the seventeenth century, Canterbury developed a 'school' of surveying, specialising in the production of estate maps. This included William Boycot and his son Thomas, from Fordwich, who were active between about 1615 and 1679. It is thought that Thomas Boycot may have trained Thomas Hill of Canterbury, thus passing the skills to another local family.<sup>4</sup> Thomas Hill was active between 1674 and c.1702; his son Jared (baptised 1687) became a mapmaker, as did Francis Hill (died 1711), who was probably Thomas's brother. Recognising a particular need for accurate surveys of its estates after the Restoration, the cathedral's Dean and Chapter employed the services of all three members of the family, particularly Jared. There are ten maps by Jared Hill in the cathedral's own archive.

One of the happier moments of the bleak year of 2020 was the acquisition for the archive of the City of Canterbury of an estate map by Jared Hill dating from