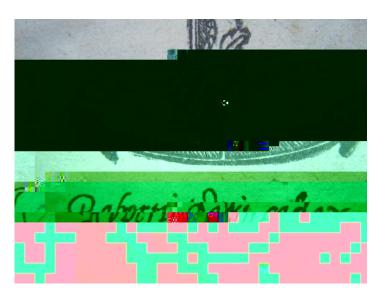


New College Library for that (and subsequent) years. They are clearly dated 1650 (LC/2), 1654 (LC/3), 1729 (LC/10) and 1754 (LC/OS/1). Both the 1650 and the larger, much more extensive, catalogue from 1654 list two titles by Apuleius, an ®pera published in Venice in 1493 and Paureus Asinus cum annot. Beroaldi prom Venice in 1510. The 1654 book adds copies of De virtutibus Herbarum variously 1529, 1543 and 1547. The entries in the 1729 catalogue exactly match those in 1654, only the shelfmarks have changed.

The pages of the even larger, and generally more unwieldy, 1754 book are divided in two, the original entries in this catalogue arranged down the inner column; the outer was left blank for the recording of later additions. The main Apuleius entries match those from 1654 and 1729 but in the outer column, alongside these originals, is the later addition: Apuleius Operal accedit Alcinoi ad Platonis dogmata introductio, 12mo. Aldus Nwith shelfmark V.2.16.

Initially, there are two plain inscriptions, quite possibly in the same hand, one on the reverse of the title page reading: Anno Dmi. 1559Nand the other at the top of the first page of the preface: Diber N[?]eoh[n?]. 1558. [indecipherable]N It is, however, not possible to say who this scribe may have been.



New College Library, Oxford, BT1.135.16

The signature of Robert Dow (1553-1588) appears in two places, including the title page. He was the eldest of five sons born to Lettice Bull and Robert Dow (1523-1612). His father was a citizen of London and member of h\Y'A YfW\Ubh'H\Uncfq\vec{N7} ca d\Ubm\delta one of the twelve City Livery companies dating from medieval times (otherwise known as the Guilds). As collector of tonnage and poundage (customs duties and taxes levied on imports and exports) for the port of London, Robert Dow senior was a man of some influence. Robert junior may well have attended the A YFWLUbh'HUmcfqNGWlcc`fl.]g'hk c'noi b[Yf'Vfch\Yfg'>c\b'UbX'<YbfmX]XE'Vi h'h\YfY']g'bc'Z]fa evidence for this as full registration records were not kept until Robert senior instigated the g/Ncc\nj/DfcVUnjcb6cc_g]b%\$+"8ckkUnjUddUfYbhmUXa]hhYXhc7cfdiq7\f]qh]bCIZcfXion 14 January 1574 for his B.A. degree (his supplication was 12 October 1573), the evidence for this coming from three letters he wrote to the Lord <][\"HfYUgi fYf`fUbX`9`]nUVYn\"=Nj\W]YZ'UXj]qcf2" Lord Burghley in 1573, and marked Exponiae in Collegio Corporis Christin Dow was attempting hc [U]b g ddcfh Zcf \]g UXa]hhbW hc 5 \Gei g Nhc gh XmV]] \Lambda k /h]g X]X bch \LddYb Vi h on 28 November 1575, he was elected to a Probationary Fellowship there. At the same time he was teaching calligraphy, with Robert Sidney, brother of Sir Philip Sidney and future Earl of Leicester, among his pupils. On 14 January 1577 he was finally admitted to All Sou'q U'6.A. student of laws. Dow supplicated for a B.C.L. degree in March 1582 and was admitted the following April. : fca 'B cj Ya VYf'%),) 'i bh] 'C VhcVYf'%), + \Y'k lg'6i fgllf'cZ'@lk g'lh'5 ``Gci `g\vec{v}<]g 'lhYf'lWh]j]h]Yg' included a contribution to a collection of verse in honour of Sir Philip Sidney and a trip to Poland, dcgg|V'mcb'Vig|bYggifY'UYX'hc'\]giZUN\YfNgia YfWbtile interests. Robert Dow died, aged 35, on 10 November 1588. An inventory of his belongings, which was presented at a meeting of the 7\LbW^cfNj7cifn]bClZcfXcb+AUfW\%, - ž]bWiXYXcjYf" \$\$Vcc_gamongst which were his set of music partbooks which are now resident at Christ Church College and regarded as an important source of Elizabethan music. The inventory probably also included the book currently under discussion.

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^{1:} cf Z fh\Yf |bZcfa Uhcb cb h\YA YfWUbhHUncfq\vec{N}7 ca dUbm see < http://www.merchant-taylors.co.uk >.

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Research by David Mateer³ has indicated it was Tomson (Thomson, Thompson or Tompson) who owned the Christ Church partbooks, which have the initials £G.T.Ñcb h\Y'Wcj Yfgz LZhYf 8 ck fg death. Born in 1553, biographers conflict over the name and profession of his father (Giles or Edward Tomson, who was respectively either a London grocer or a mercer). Whereas there is gca Y'Xci Vh'Lg hc k \Yh\Yf F cVYfh 8 ck 'LhYbXYX'h\Y'A YfWLbh'HLmcfgÑGW.cc z;]'Yg'Hca gcb certainly did, being admitted on 3 March 1564. He entered University College, Oxford in 1571, graduating B.A. in 1575 and M.A. three years later. Like Dow, he was elected to a Fellowship at 5``Gci `gŊb'%, \$zhJ_]b[`\]g'6'8 "]b'% - \$`LbX'8 "8 "]b'% \$& Having been appointed one of Queen 9`]nUYh\Ñg'WLd`U]bg in the late 1590s, he became Dean of Windsor in 1603, a position he held until his death in 1612. For the last year of his life he was also Bishop of Gloucester, having been consecrated on 9 June 1611.4

As Dow and Tomson were WbhYa dcfUfm: Y`ck g'UbX'Wt`YU[i Yg'Uh5 ``Gci `g\fUbX'k]h\'U dcgg]V'Y' a i h'U' WbbYWJcb'h\fci [\'h\Y' A YfW\Ubh H\mcfg\fQ\Kcc`, not to mention being of around the same age), it does seem quite probable that they knew each other. The assumption is h\Ungca Y'cZF cVYfh8 ck \(\text{\textit{y}}\) possessions were acquired by;]'Yg'Hca gcb'\UhYf'8 ck \(\text{\text{\text{y}}}\) XYUh\]b'\(\text{\text{y}}\), and, presumably, after the inventory was produced in 1589. It is known that two books which formerly belonged to Dow passed to the Library of St. Georg\f\(\text{\text{y}}\) T\Ud\'\]b'\(\text{\text{y}}\) and that the partbooks include music written by John Baldwin, a singing-a Ub'cZ'Gh''; Ycf[Yh\f\) a direct consequence, it is believed, cZ'Hca gcb\(\text{\text{y}}\)Uddc]bha Ybhas Dean of Windsor.

The presence on the New College Apuleius of the full signatures (as opposed to merely initials) of both Dow and Tomson mean that it is reasonable to say that it also passed to Tomson Lhh Y gla Y ha Y '' < ck Yj Yfži b`]_Y h Y dUft V cc_g Lb X h Y V cc_g]b Gh; Ycf[Yh y h YfY]g bch]b[on the New College volume to indicate it ever went to a Windsor ownership. Perhaps Giles Tomson kept it for his own personal library and passed it on or sold it separately. His will, proved in July 1612, indicates that he passed to the Chapter Clerk Gregory Baker Ball my songe books Nand made him one of the executors of his estate. In turn, when Baker died in December 1637, his son Giles was made his executor and received Ball my song bookes and other bookes not particulerly given before N Did this include the Apuleius or had it already passed on to another owner? It could Yj Yb VY gdYW LhYX h X X 0 g A

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The other name found on the Apuleius is Thomas Bramston. Research brings two names to the attention of anyone searching for New College-related alumni: Thomas Berney Bramston (1733-1813) of Skreens, Essex and Thomas Gardiner Bramston (1770-1831) also of Skreens, Essex.

As a point of interest, it should also be noted that the manor of SChos

autobiography of the second Sir John Bramston, he appears to have been in this position by 1690. He was apparently a frequent visitor to his Zh\Yf\[\textit{M}]Zh\] m\Yg\L\Y\UnG_f\Ybg\"In later life, he became MP for Maldon in 1712, remaining in the post until about 1727 when it appears his cousin and namesake Thomas Bramston of Skreens, took over the seat. This latter Thomas, who seems to have been born in around 1690, inherited the manor of Skreens in 1722. While not outside the bounds of possibility, it would appear to be too late for him to be considered a candidate for authorship of the signature. He was, however, the grandfather of Thomas Gardiner Bramston.

New College Library, Oxford, BT1.135.16

With the style of handwriting of the signature believed to date from no later than the mid-seventeenth century, does the fact that Thomas Bramston of Waterhouse was not born until 1658 rule him out as a possible candidate? Evidence has been found that suggests this may *not* be the case. A published reproduction⁷ of a Petition for Reprieve dated 1682, around the time Thomas seemingly became a clerk in Chancery, reveals a distinctive ligature between the letters BNand BNin the word BhallNon the last official line. This detail is very similar to that displayed between the letters BNand BNin ThomasNsurname. This suggests that writing styles may linger in use longer than might be expected, especially when taking into consideration the legal or official nature of the gi VYWNJK cf_lb['Ybj]fcba Ybhfcf'Yj Yb']b'H\ca Ug\Wyyz\g\g\Z\a] m\VU\V[fci bX\c)

It is conceivably possible that Thomas Bramston of Waterhouse came into the possession of the book that is now Ne

The above summary is speculative, but Robert Dow and Giles Tomson, at least, are linked from evidence left elsewhere in Oxford. FcVYfh 8 ck & Zuher and his contemporary John Bramston were both professionally involved in London trade and commerce (Bramston being a mercer); their sons, Robert and Roger respectively, both studied law, with Roger Bramston being the father of the first Sir John. The study and practice of the law was therefore common to Robert Dow and to several generations of Bramston. The New College connection with not only the parish of Roxwell, where the Bramston family estate was located, but also specifically two subsequent members of the Bramston family is undeniable and appears unlikely to be coincidental. Amongst documents in the college archives for Roxwell is a set of correspondence about exchanges of land with Mr Bramston and T.J. HearnÑdated 1851-52, &Mr BramstonÑprobably VY]b['H\ca Ug'; UfX]bYf\vec{N}gcb and inheritor, Thomas William. Why was the donation or gift left unrecorded at New College? Perhaps it was nothing more than a simple oversight purely a case of human error, one book missed amongst the many. The truth