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THE LIBRARY OF  
ISAAC NEWTON

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THE LIBRARY OF  
ISAAC NEWTON

## FOREWORD

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‘Some books’, wrote Francis Bacon, ‘are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.’ And yet others, one might add, suffer the fate of never being put to the mouth at all. But for whatever complexity of reasons and circumstances one forms a collection of books of one’s own, the quality and range of content in a man’s personal library must broadly reflect the depth and extent and variety of his intellectual interests and pleasures, and individual works within it may by their rarity, annotation, or known context cast their unique light upon facets of his thought and character. That has long been acknowledged as a truism in the areas of literary and general historical scholarship, where the value of approaching a person’s mind and indeed imagination through the books which he or she has read, or had opportunity to read by possessing them, is well appreciated. In the specialist field of historical bibliography there has come to be a whole new scholarly art and science whereby one seeks to ‘feel’, through the touchstone of his books, the intellectual attitudes and predilections of their owner, extrapolating the care and forethought with which he has chosen and handled them and stored them away on his shelves into wider comment upon the habits and idiosyncracies of his mental activity and awareness. In the relatively youthful discipline of scientific history the lesson has taken longer to learn. Even so, the gathering flood of publication of the book holdings of many scientific worthies of the past is a mark of the increasing interest there is in such once ignored documentary records. And indeed, even at the lowest level, how revealing to compare the libraries of a Robert Hooke and a John Flamsteed, seeing how many works they owned in common in such unexpected subjects as pure mathematics and the Latin classics, as well as noting their differences! A whole generation of students of the multifold genius of that greatest of all English mathematical scientists, Isaac Newton, has hitherto been served by the publication in 1931 of Colonel de Villamil’s transcriptions of the list of books in his library at his death which was made for their purchaser John Huggins, and of the more complete catalogue of these compiled some thirty years afterwards by James Musgrave. Particularly

## FOREWORD

since the generous gift by the Pilgrim Trust to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1943 of the remnant (nearly half) of Newton's books which had not then been dispersed by piecemeal sale, 'de Villamil' has been a valued if far from wholly trustworthy tool of research; no serious Newton scholar would be without his personal copy, suitably corrected and marked up with present locations and call-numbers of those items which interest him. But de Villamil, for all his unflagging enthusiasm and the guiding mentor's hand of the learned Henry Zeitlinger of Sotheran's, was neither trained bibliographer nor experienced historian of Newton's period. The time is long overdue for his pioneering efforts to be given firmer foundation, the deficiencies of his lists repaired, their inadequate titles elaborated, present locations of books (as these are known) cited, the library as a unit set in the broad context of Newton's intellectual experience, and its general character outlined. In his present work Mr John Harrison does this with efficiency and despatch, and much, much more.

To the many who have had contact with him either personally or professionally Mr Harrison needs no introduction. He has spent his life working in one of the world's great institutional collections of books, the Library of Newton's own University of Cambridge, where he is now Senior Under-Librarian in charge of cataloguing. Beyond such confines most will know him for his careful, infinitely painstaking catalogue of *The Library of John Locke* which he first brought out a dozen years ago in collaboration with Mr Peter Laslett – being responsible, in the latter's generous words, for 'all the really difficult and exacting things'. Here now he brings to fruition his ambition to be a parallel authority upon the greatest of Locke's acquaintances: one who was (if I may betray my own partisanship) yet more catholic in his intellectual interests. During the half-dozen years Mr Harrison has laboured to produce this new catalogue it has been my onlooker's pleasure and privilege to watch from close by as he pursued his intricate detective work in identifying and collating individual titles in the Huggins and Musgrave lists, tracking copy after copy of the books themselves down to their present locations in public and private ownership, and gleaning all he can of their condition, pedigree, annotation, and such singularities as the 'dog-earing' of page corners which is so often found in books which Newton read. His hunt and his other corroborative foot-sloggings have, entirely at his own expense (how refreshing to be reminded that scholarship does not of necessity demand either sponsorship or subvention!), taken him all over this country and to the United States, and are still not ended – cannot be ended till he has satisfied himself of the fate of every last one of the books which Newton once possessed. The fruits of that investigation, insofar as they have accrued to date, are set out by him in the detailed catalogue which follows. Its enduring usefulness as a tool of bibliographical reference and research I need not emphasize. The professional scholar and librarian has in it an authoritative, precisely

documented record of Newton's known holdings of books, listing and identifying their titles, and in the case of that majority of these whose originals have been traced adding a wealth of ancillary information in concisely coded form. To a yet wider circle of casual consultants and booklovers, from antiquarian booksellers to private owners and prospective purchasers of rare books, it will serve as an eye-opening bible, allowing them for the first time to distinguish the works with authentic Newtonian association from the chaff of the many spurious 'books from Newton's library' with which the market is so often filled. As one who has himself a few times in his life had the joy of finding an unidentified volume with the Huggins and Musgrave bookplates within, let me hope with Mr Harrison that his catalogue will flush out into public light some good many more of the thousand or so of Newton's books which at present still lurk in the limbo whither they were dispersed after the 1920 Thame Park sale.

There will of course be very few who will read Mr Harrison's catalogue through, item by item, with clerkish delight in its precision. He himself would, I know, prefer me to stress the broader themes which he treats in his splendid introductory essay, placing the books in their contemporary context, sketching in lightly but expertly the background of Newton's contacts with his contemporaries and of the practices of the late-seventeenth-century printing and publishing world, and also tracing the separate history of what happened to Newton's collection of books in the two and a half centuries after he died. His discussions there of Newton's habits and preferences in reading and buying books, his seemingly carefree lack of system in shelving them (or even putting marks of his ownership within), and his usual way of annotating their content on separate sheets of paper bring vividly to life the user rather than the lover of books in themselves which was Newton. One can learn a great deal merely from looking at Mr Harrison's tabular analyses of the works in Newton's library by topic, provenance, and year of publication; and also rightly be put on one's guard against any simplistic supposition that any such unweighted book numbers are an exact index of relative significance. The subtleties of the novel sidelight which he throws in so many unexpected ways on Newton's developing mind in reaction to reading the printed works available to him are well worth studying in themselves, in divorce from his itemization of their titles. The cliché of being a mine of information here regains its freshness with so rich an exploitation of Newtonian lore.

To say more would be to steal Mr Harrison's thunder. Let him forthwith, with my commendation and my blessing, speak for himself.

D. T. WHITESIDE

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This book has been more than five years in the making, and were I to delay its publication yet longer it is possible that some additional details about Newton's books would be forthcoming. But the author has eventually to decide when the moment has arrived to number the catalogue entries, to work out and analyse totals and percentages, and to present his findings. The material which I have been able to discover and the steady flow of information which I have been fortunate enough to receive, both here in Cambridge and from many parts of the world, have now virtually come to an end. Yet I am, of course, aware of the possibility that someone, somewhere, will unearth a cache of Newton's books. Should this happen I hope that this volume will have had some part in tracking down and authenticating such items.

Among the unexpected pleasures encountered in compiling this catalogue have been the kindness and the help which I have received from many people, most of them previously unknown to me. This list is a long one and includes librarians, booksellers, several distinguished Newton scholars, and others. If I name only some of them I trust that the rest will accept this warm expression of gratitude.

I owe a great deal to my friend Peter Laslett, since it was due to his prompting that I turned (though not for ever) from Locke to Newton. He continued to urge and encourage me to work systematically on the latter's library, even after I knew quite well that I had become a Newton addict!

From the world of librarianship I wish to acknowledge the assistance I have had from colleagues in the University Library, Cambridge: A. J. C. Bainton, Peter Fox, Peter Gautrey, Wilfrid Lockwood, John Oates, and George Rawlings (who took the photographs). Elsewhere in Cambridge, Dr Philip Gaskell, Trevor Kaye, and other members of the staff of Trinity College Library have all most generously smoothed my path, while the Master and Fellows of the College permitted me to reproduce the items shown in the plates of this book. Peter Croft, Librarian of King's College, has not only provided ready access to the Keynes Collection there but has also given me the benefit of his knowledge of the London second-hand book market. From



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

the United States I wish to record the valued assistance I have had from Miss Dorsey Fiske, Mrs Virginia Harrison, formerly Curator of the Newton Collection at Babson College, Massachusetts, Dr Kenneth A. Lohf of Columbia University, and Dr John Neu of the University of Wisconsin – Madison. In addition to these, several other librarians of American institutions have replied promptly and patiently to my enquiries.

I have benefited much from the vast experience of the book trade of Dr H. A. Feisenberger of Sotheby's, David Low of Emmington, Chinnor, and Jacob Zeitlin of Los Angeles. Sir Geoffrey Keynes kindly gave me permission to read and to quote from his brother's unpublished papers, as well as showing me the two Newton items he owns. The Rector of Chinnor, the Rev. R. W. Horner, readily made available the Registers of his Parish for my examination.

From the world of Newton scholarship, Professor Bernard Cohen, Professor B. J. T. Dobbs of Northwestern University, Dr Karin Figala of the Technische Universität, Munich, Dr John Rogers of Keele University, and Dr Peter Spargo of the University of Cape Town have all given me freely of their knowledge and advice on particular aspects of Newtonian study.

But my greatest indebtedness by far is to Dr D. T. Whiteside. Although we were on little more than nodding terms when I first began to gather material for this book, no one could have been kinder or more generous with his time. He made available to me his unparalleled knowledge of matters Newtonian to be drawn upon, widely and regularly. And I did. He read my introductory essay in draft, corrected errors of fact, made suggestions for improving its content and style, pointed out further areas for investigation. In addition (and equally important to me), Tom Whiteside's invaluable help and guidance firmly restrained my early tendency to jump to speculative conclusions or to offer facile hypotheses without supporting evidence. For any blemishes that remain the responsibility rests squarely with me.

J.H.

*University Library, Cambridge*  
*23 November 1977*

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## ISAAC NEWTON: USER OF BOOKS

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If the level of a man's reputation and importance in the scientific and intellectual thought of his time were reflected in the size of his library, then the total of 2100 volumes which Isaac Newton owned when he died is a lower total than might have been anticipated. But Newton acquired his books, insofar as they were not gifts and presentations, in order to read them, not just to own them. The delights of mere collecting did not appeal to him. His library was a set of working books most of which he came to know well and in some cases use extensively: the well-thumbed books are evidence of this. For Newton everything had its place in a regulated state of apparent disorder and so presumably he saw no advantage in making extensive book-lists or catalogues – nor in asking anyone else to compile them for him. Among the vast amount of manuscript material left behind by Newton only two short book-lists of any significance in his hand have come to light.<sup>1</sup>

John Dee, Samuel Pepys, John Evelyn, John Locke, or other 'professional' book-collectors may have regarded their personal libraries partially as showpieces: Newton did not. Misleading references have been made elsewhere by booksellers and others to Newton's shelf-marks. None of the books from his library which I have examined so far carries a shelf-mark in Newton's writing, nor one written in the book by anyone else during Newton's lifetime.<sup>2</sup> If he wished to consult a book he knew just where to lay his hands on it. Problems of shelf-space or book-storage leave no mark in his papers. If he had any difficulty in finding room for his books, either in Trinity College, Cambridge or later in London he apparently did not consider that it called for any written comment. In his correspondence Newton wrote about individual authors and their works, sometimes generous in his appreciation, and sometimes expressing his gratitude for presentation copies. In a long letter to Henry Oldenburg dated 23 June 1673 Newton described his copy of Huygens's *Horologium oscillatorium*, 1673 (no. 820 in the catalogue below)

<sup>1</sup> Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS New College 361 (Ekins Papers), Vol. II, fol. 47 (see p. 9 below), and Babson MS 418 (see pp. 41–2 below).

<sup>2</sup> For the shelf-marks in Newton's books see pp. 38–41 below.

as 'M. Hugens kind present . . . full of very subtile and useful speculations very worthy of ye Author',<sup>1</sup> and on 17 September of the same year he wrote to John Collins, thanking him 'for ye little but ingenious tract of P. Pardies',<sup>2</sup> showing his judgement of *La statique* . . . 1673 (no. 1245). Such expressions of opinion, however, refer to individual authors or books, and not to their relationship with other works in his library.

Most young people are anxious to demonstrate their ownership of a book by writing their names inside the front cover at the earliest opportunity, and many of these inscriptions tend to be fuller and sometimes more pompous than those used later in life. So it was with Newton. His 1653 Greek Testament (no. 199), now in Trinity College, Cambridge, bears the inscription of the serious-minded eighteen-year-old 'Isaac Newton hujus libri verus est possessor. Pretium – 0–3–0. <sup>£ s d</sup> Aprilis 3 die An° Dni 1661'. There are two candidates for the claim to bear the earliest known Newton signature on a printed book. His copy of Sabinus's *P. Ovidii Metamorphosis* . . . 1593 (no. 1224), now in the Newton Collection at Babson College, Massachusetts, carries the legend 'Isaci Newtoni liber Octobris 15 1659. prætium –0–1–6', while his 1560 Pindar (no. 1317), now in King's College, Cambridge, has on the verso of the title-page 'Isaacus Newton hunc librum possidet. Pret. 8<sup>d</sup>. 1659'. Whether the Pindar inscription preceded the Ovid one in time can only be conjecture, but both certainly came from the pen of a sixteen-year-old proud of the ownership of his books.

When Newton wished to indicate his ownership of a book he would usually, though not invariably, write his name in the book, sometimes adding the price he paid (or a donor's name), occasionally also the date of acquisition – early habits of which he soon tired, as the summary below shows. The Newton books in Trinity (862 volumes) and elsewhere, together with others not so far located but described in detail by Heinrich Zeitlinger in his Sotheran catalogues,<sup>3</sup> altogether 953 of the overall total of 2100, show the following:

	Total
Newton's signature with price and date	8
(Dates: 1659, 15 October 1659, 29 March 1661, 3 April 1661, 1680, 1682 (three separate works). See respectively nos. 1317, 1224, 1264, 199, 552, 1102, 1515, 1579.)	

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Newton, *Correspondence*, ed. H. W. Turnbull, J. F. Scott, A. R. Hall and L. Tilling (vols. 1–7, Cambridge, 1959–77), I, 290. (Later references to this edition read: Newton, *Correspondence*, followed by the editor(s) of the volume cited.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 307. See also Isaac Newton, *Mathematical papers*, ed. D. T. Whiteside (vols. 1–, Cambridge, 1967–), III, 391. (Later references to this work read: Newton, *Math. papers.*)

<sup>3</sup> Henry Sotheran & Co., *Bibliotheca chemico-mathematica*, ed. H. Zeitlinger and H. C. Sotheran (2 vols. and Suppl. 1–2, London, 1921–37). (Later references to this work read: Sotheran, *Bibl.*)

- Newton's signature and date 8  
(All eight books have the same inscription: 'Isaac Newton.  
Trin: Coll: Cant: 1661'. See nos. 181, 335, 609, 629, 793,  
1442, 1559, 1640.)
- Newton's signature with price 15  
(See nos. 55, 76, 337, 347, 377, 557, 589, 770, 839, 1489, 1561,  
1562, 1687, 1714, 1763. Details of the prices are given at these  
entries.)
- Newton's signature showing the book to have been a gift 16  
(The catalogue nos. and donors are 1688 (Étienne Baluze), 122  
(Isaac Barrow), 261, 266, 271, 273 (all from Robert Boyle),  
315 (Thomas Burnet), 678 (John Collins), 605 (Oliver  
Doyley), 822 (Christiaan Huygens), 314 (Richard Mead), 49,  
485, 1115, 1116 (all from Henry More), 1705 (William Walker).  
The inscriptions are reproduced in full at the catalogue  
entries.)
- Newton's signature only<sup>1</sup> 10  
(See nos. 75, 112, 322, 584, 869, 1006, 1106, 1156, 1362, 1574.)
- Price-note and date in Newton's hand but without his signature 2  
(See nos. 764, 1401. The prices and dates are 14s. 6d., 1680 and  
6s. 6d., 1682 respectively.)
- Price-note only 8  
(See nos. 230, 476, 546, 704, 1076, 1206, 1209, 1210. The prices  
paid range from 7s. for no. 1210 to £2. 15s. 0d. for the  
7-volume set of no. 546.)

A survey of the style Newton adopted for his signature on these books may help to clear up some of the confusion now spread by a possible early-nineteenth-century forger.<sup>2</sup> At least four institutional libraries have books which Newton might well have owned – they were published in 1642, 1668, 1678, and 1686 respectively – and they all carry an inscription in the same hand reading 'I. Newton. A.M.' In addition to the fact that the handwriting does not resemble Newton's and that none of the titles appears in the book-list

<sup>1</sup> One further work (no. 869) was described in the catalogue as being 'With the Autograph of Isaac Newton' in the Thame Park sale, 13–15 January 1920 – when possibly as many as 1000 books from Newton's library were sold. The present whereabouts of this book is not known, nor is it traceable in the Sotheran catalogues, and it is not therefore included in the above count. For the Thame Park sale see pp. 48–50 below.

<sup>2</sup> The mathematician and historian of science Augustus De Morgan, writing in 1852–3, reported that 'books are about the world with Newton's signature, known to have been in them before the time at which forgeries commenced'; see his posthumously published *Newton: his friend and his niece* (London, 1885; facs. repr. 1968), p. 153.

and catalogue discussed below, the mere presence of 'A.M.' after his name virtually rules out their being Newton's copies. None of his autograph inscriptions on the books which I have examined show any degree after his name, or an 'R.S.S.' [Regiæ Societatis Socius]. Newton's signature has often, I may add, been confused with that of his distant kinsman Sir John Newton who, when Newton submitted a pedigree to the College of Arms in 1705, made an affidavit in its support.<sup>1</sup> I know of three books<sup>2</sup> bearing John's signature which have been attributed with some confidence to Isaac. Comparison of photocopies of these with that in an autograph letter of Sir John Newton written to Isaac Newton on 13 April 1714<sup>3</sup> clearly demonstrates their common authorship. The use of a personal bookplate had not become a widespread practice among private book-collectors of Newton's time. Pepys had one designed and printed for insertion in his books, but Locke did not. It will not be surprising that Newton, plain man that he was, did not concern himself with such fripperies. In the fifty-seven signatures written by Newton in his books as listed above, 'Isaac' is used twenty-six times, 'Isaacus' twice, 'Isaaco' (as part of an inscription indicating a presentation) once, 'Isaci [Newtoni liber]' once, 'Is.' twenty-five times, 'Is<sup>o</sup>' (part of a note on a presentation) once, and 'I' once. The surname 'Newton' is only Latinized once, in the case shown immediately above.

There are few regular purchasers of second-hand books who do not derive much satisfaction from the thought that occasionally they pick up a bargain. Newton was no exception. While most of the books referred to above as listing the prices he paid have that price recorded by him without further comment, in the case of two works Newton was sufficiently pleased with the purchase to add a comment upon it. In his copy of Richer, *Historia Conciliorum generalium* . . . 1680 (no. 1401) Newton wrote '1682. pret. 6<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup>, valet 10<sup>s</sup>', while in Elmacinus, *Historia Saracenica* . . . 1625 (no. 552) he added 'E libris Is. Newton 1680, Pret 9<sup>s</sup>, valet 25<sup>s</sup>' – an even greater bargain. On the title-page, this latter work has scored through 'Trin: Coll. Cant. A<sup>o</sup> Dñi 1668. Ex dono Mgr̃ Thomæ Gale huius Collegij Socij'. John Laughton, Librarian of Trinity 1679–83, and subsequently University Librarian, was willing to sell this particular book to a Fellow of the College because the library had

<sup>1</sup> C. W. Foster, 'Sir Isaac Newton's family', *Reports and papers of the Architectural Societies of the County of Lincoln, County of York* [etc.], xxxix (1928), 10, 62. In an earlier letter of April 1707 to Sir John, Isaac styled himself 'Your affectionate Kinsman and most humble Servant' (Newton, *Correspondence*, ed. J. F. Scott, iv (1967), 488–9). For further information on the Newton family see Newton, *Correspondence*, ed. A. R. Hall and L. Tilling, vii (1977), 485–8; Appendix II, 'Newton's genealogy'.

<sup>2</sup> I gratefully acknowledge the kindness and courtesy of the librarians at the Babson College, Columbia University, and Pierpont Morgan Libraries in providing me with Xerox copies of the title-pages which carry these signatures.

<sup>3</sup> Cambridge University Library, MS.Add.3968(41), fol. 113/14, printed in Newton, *Correspondence*, ed. A. R. Hall and L. Tilling, vi (1976), 100.

received another copy in 1679.<sup>1</sup> Newton took a close interest in the library at Trinity. In 1675, 1679, and 1681 he presented it with *Sancti Irenaei Adversus Valentini . . . libri V . . . Cum scholiis & annotationibus J. Billii* [etc.], 1675, Huet's *Demonstratio Evangelica*, 1679, and Grew's *Musæum Regalis Societatis*, 1681, as well as a copy of his *Principia* in 1687.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, in 1676 he subscribed £40 towards the new College Library and loaned a further £100 four years later. It is not surprising then, even if these were all the gifts Newton made to it, that the Librarian was prepared to sell the Elmacinus at a favourably cheap price.

In his schooldays Newton had books available for him to read. There was the library of his late stepfather Barnabas Smith with '2 or 300 books in it, chiefly of divinity and old editions of the fathers. . . These books Sir Isaac gave to his relation Dr. Newton of Grantham, who gave some of them to me [William Stukeley], when I went to live there.'<sup>3</sup> Such other boyhood books as Newton had he also gave away in later life. While he was a pupil at the King's School at Grantham, Newton lodged with an apothecary named Clark and here he had the opportunity of reading the books that were in the house as well as pursuing his interests in making mechanical models.<sup>4</sup> In addition he might also, while at school, have climbed the narrow stairs up to the chained library at St Wulfram's Church in the cramped little room over its south porch to escape the rush and noise of the country town around and to read in comparative quiet. This, Grantham's original public library (established in 1598 and one of the first in England), was accessible to all burgesses and residents of the town. Since the church is only a hundred yards or so from the grammar school, Newton would have passed it every time he went to school and home again to his lodgings next to the George Inn. Of the library's early holdings there still exist some three hundred volumes (almost all, predictably, on theological subjects).<sup>5</sup>

The size of Newton's own library while he was at Trinity College from 1661 to 1696 is not known, and although only a rough guess can be made

<sup>1</sup> The Trinity Catalogue of 1667 (Add.MS.a.101) does not contain a copy of no. 552. The copy which Newton acquired is in the shelf-list of the 1670-90 Catalogue (Add.MS.a.104) at B.α.17: the '17' is deleted and the entry annotated 'Vid. Dup.'. The second copy, still in Trinity Library (W.17.45<sup>2</sup>), was bequeathed to the College by James Dupont, who died in 1679.

<sup>2</sup> Trinity College Add.MS.a.106, fol. 13v. See also J. Edleston (ed.), *Correspondence of Sir Isaac Newton and Professor Cotes*. . . (London, 1850), pp. xxvi-xxix *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> W. Stukeley, *Memoirs of Sir Isaac Newton's life*. . . ed. A. Hastings White (London, 1936), p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> For an account of Newton's opportunities for reading as a schoolboy and of his early years in Trinity see D. T. Whiteside, 'Isaac Newton: birth of a mathematician', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, xix (1964), 53-62, esp. 54-5.

<sup>5</sup> Of the volumes still in the library, 85 are yet secured with their original chains, and 153 others bear traces of having once been so fastened, but the rest have been rebound over recent years, so losing all signs of their earlier chaining. See A. A. Markham, *The story of Grantham and its church*, 18th ed. (Gloucester, 1973), pp. 19-20.



there is good reason to think that a very modestly sized personal library might well have satisfied his requirements. He had immediate access to Trinity Library, which over the period of Newton's residence there comprised 3000–4000 volumes.<sup>1</sup> Evidence that Newton used the books in his College Library is to be seen in his Common Place Book now in the Keynes Collection in King's College, Cambridge (K.MS.2). Folio 1 of the manuscript consists mainly of a list of historical authors and their works, and at the side of the entry for five of these writers Newton has added 'Trin. Coll.' and by another, 'Tr. Cl.' In the case of two of these works Trinity shelf-marks are also given, and these marks are still present in the books. Another entry reads 'Trin. Coll. Bib. S.[ub] P.[relo]', showing that the item was not yet catalogued and so had no press-mark at the time. The book in question is known to have been bequeathed to Trinity by James Duport, Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge 1639–54, and later Dean of Peterborough, who died in July 1679, and Newton may have consulted the book before it was catalogued.

Though we do not know exactly where Newton lived before he moved into his rooms north of the Great Gate of Trinity in 1678, it is unlikely that his residence was ever more than a few hundred yards from the Public Library of the University of Cambridge. In the second half of the seventeenth century it had between 10,000 and 12,000 volumes, all of which Newton had the right to consult. In addition, there were other Cambridge colleges whose libraries contained valuable collections. Together these covered virtually the whole range of what scholarly material was then in print.

Even more immediate and important to Newton was his free access to Isaac Barrow's considerable private library. On 27 September 1670, Newton wrote to John Collins, 'I have hitherto deferred writing to you, waiting for Dr Barrows returne from London that I might consult his Library about what you propounded.'<sup>2</sup> Though Barrow and Newton may not have been the close personal friends which tradition has it, they were certainly professional colleagues with a common interest in mathematics and other branches of science, and in theology. The ready use Newton was evidently allowed to make of Barrow's library made it the less necessary for him to build up a library of his own until after the latter's death in May 1677. The contents of Barrow's library are set out in the Bodleian MS.Rawl.D.878, fols. 39–59: 'A Catalogue of the bookes of Dr Isaac Barrow sent to S. S.'<sup>3</sup> by Mr Isaac Newton, Fellow of Trin: Coll: Cambs. July 14. 1677. Obiit Dr Barrow, Maii 4. 1677'.<sup>4</sup> This lists 992 separate titles (1099 volumes), at least 151 of which

<sup>1</sup> P. Gaskell and R. Robson, *The library of Trinity College, Cambridge: a short history* (Cambridge, 1971).

<sup>2</sup> Newton, *Correspondence*, ed. H. W. Turnbull, I (1959), 16.

<sup>3</sup> 'S. S.' may be one or other of the London Stationers Samuel Sprint or Samuel Smith; see Newton, *Math. papers*, III (1969), xiv n. 12.

<sup>4</sup> The catalogue is written in four different hands, none of which is Newton's. Only two of the compilers give place and date of publication of the works.