

For us to gain a sound understanding of the elements that make up a book, it is importance to thoroughly discuss three vital aspects. One; the actual contents of said book, two: how the book is bound and the physicality of it and finally looking at the history of the book including its ownership. By carefully analysing a specific book picked from the Roderic Bowen Archives, we will be able to gain a full picture of the life of this certain book.

Bibliographical Description

The book in question is noted to having the class mark PH, which is referenced to being given by Thomas Philips, alongside the number 04732. The title of this book is as follows:

COLLEGIO | SANCTI DAVIDIS, | APUD LLANBEDR IN COMITATU CERETICO, |
D.D.D THOMAS PHILLIPS, | DE BRUNSWICK SQUARE APUD LONDIDENSES,
ARMIGER, | 1837.

Although in most cases book dating from the sixteenth century will have a colophon, but in this particular case there is none. Typically, books that were created between the 15th and 18th century are folded in a certain format, and each piece of paper used is folded a certain number of times which are known as 'gatherings'. In this instance this book was folded 4 times, meaning it is in an 8^o or octavo format. To determine the collation of books from this time period, we must look at the specific letter, number or symbol which can be found at the bottom of every gathering and collect how many are present in each gathering to form a statement of signing. It is quiet common for the book makers to use an alphabetical sequence when marking down the signatures, typically these are A-Z but normally the letters J,V and W are not present. For this book, the statement of signing is †³,††²,A-T⁸, -V⁸,Y⁸. It is also important to look at the pagination or page markings of this book, these are normally printed in roman numerals. In this case the pagination is i-cixxxv, 1-175. In most cases printed books from this period will have a handful of illustrations depending on the nature of the book; this book has one woodcut engraving on page 1. The image itself, seen in figure 1, has a mythological feel to it; it encompasses of two potentially mythical creatures holding a shield with a potential crest in the middle. This crest could relate to the owner of the book or who made it, but this is not clear.

The Physicality of the books and its binding

Another aspect that is vital to discuss is the way the book is bound and the physicality of it. Physically this book measures to be approximately 135mm in height and 29mm in width. This book is notably identical to Phi 03108, which is noted by Allan B.Barton , MA, PhD as being used to make a limp vellum binding (Barton n.d.). So from this we can concur that Phi 04732 would have been made out of this same material. In terms of the decoration, the front of this books is covered in recycled medieval manuscript which has been pasted down on both sides of the interior boards as well as the exterior. When looking at the edges of the book, we can see that there has been no edge treatment and is plain, discoloured and not in good condition. There are pastedowns on the interior covers of the book, which again is recycled manuscript material that has been

used on the exterior of this book. The book itself is not in good condition; the spine itself is peeling off and coming away from the book and as a result we are able to see the sewing supports and the animal based glue that would have held the book together (Barton n.d.). There is also elements of water damage which can be seen by looking at the pages of the book, which have almost all be torn in some way.

Evidence of the book's ownership and provenance

We are able to gain an insight into who originally owned books and who has owned the book after the original owner by looking at certain aspects. It is first important to note that in relation to this particular book there is no clear indication who specially owned it in the past. Firstly there is no indication of a bookplate on the interior of this book but perhaps the printed image of page 1 of this book could be a coat of arms or crest to represent the person who either created this book or who the books was made for, although there is no indication of if this is accurate. There is also no obvious signatures which might have given an indication of who owned this book previously. In many cases there are often small marks left by whoever owned the book at the time, and are often interesting to look at. In this case there is a specific 'doodle' that is very interesting which can be seen in figure 2. This ink marking, which is placed on the bottom left hand side of the page, is very peculiar and seems very out of place to be in this specific book and is more than likely to just be a simple doodle. Although this does not give us an indication of who used it, we are able to assume that perhaps this book would have been used as a spare pieces of paper for people to write or draw whatever they wish.

Images

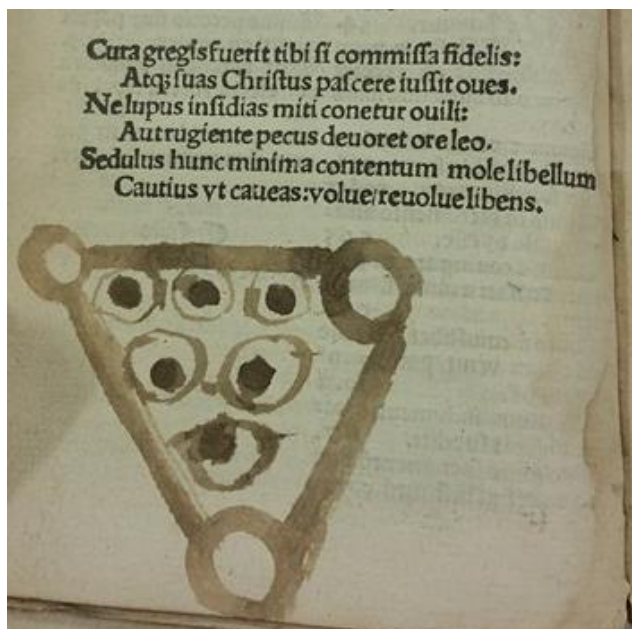


Figure 1 showing ink drawing, after Billington 2018.



Figure 2 showing printed illustration, after Billington 2018.

References

Barton, A. n.d. *Bookbinding: A visual guide to the process, terminology and elements of design*. Lampeter, University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Billington, R. 2018. Image showing illustration in book.

Billington, R. 2018. Images showing ink drawing in book.