

The Topographical Collections of Henry Hinton (1749-1816) and James Hunt (1795-1857)

By MARY CLAPINSON

MATERIAL concerning the parish churches of Oxfordshire and Berkshire in the 17th and 18th centuries has been found, for the most part, in the collections of such well known antiquaries as Elias Ashmole, Anthony Wood, Matthew Hutton and Richard Rawlinson. It has not hitherto been recognized that much of the information available in them was supplemented in the collections of two little known Oxford citizens, Henry Hinton, an ironmonger, and James Hunt, a chemist. The reason for this is that their collections were sold to Sir Thomas Phillipps in 1819 and 1820,¹ and since that date have remained out of circulation. They recently appeared in the saleroom² and the Bodleian Library, with the help of the Friends of the Bodleian, has fortunately been able to collect most of them.³

Little is known about Henry Hinton, who compiled the major part of the collections. He was born at Kingston Bagpuize, Berks., in 1749, the son of John and Rebecca Hinton.⁴ He was evidently apprenticed to an ironmonger, Richard Weston, and took over his late master's shop in Cornmarket, opposite the Star Inn, in 1777.⁵ From his retirement in 1803, until his death in 1816, he 'amused himself in collecting portraits to illustrate Grainger's History of England' and was 'indefatigable in his researches to collect materials for a History of Oxfordshire and Berkshire'.⁶ From a letter written by Hinton, probably in 1810, to a friend in London, it is clear that he lived near the canal wharf and planned to move to a house in Broad Street, 'it's the place and parish I like, and Mr. Fletcher⁷ being landlord . . . I hope to be soon there, and if well hope to see more pleasure and quiet than I now find in the most noisy part of Oxford, equal to Thames Street London, by the increase of the wharf'.⁸

The basis of Hinton's work for his Oxfordshire and Berkshire collections was his visits to the parish churches in the area. There are seven small books of topographical notes,⁹ which contain mainly church notes, dated 1805-15, and are

¹ Phillipps MSS. 2, 7 [193], 2397, 18639, 19983.

² Sotheby Catalogue, *Bibliotheca Phillippica*, New Series, Third Part, 26 June 1967, lots 723, 725-7A. The Library had bought three volumes of Berkshire collections (MSS. Top. Berks. c. 49-51, formerly Phillipps MS. 24118) at a Hodgson sale, 30 Jan. 1959, lot 628. At the time it was not recognized that they were part of Hinton's collections.

³ MSS. Don. b. 14; c. 90-1, 97-8; d. 138-42, 148-9; e. 107-14.

⁴ Kingston Bagpuize, Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1663-1807. A microfilm copy of this is in the Bodleian, MS. Film Dep. 683.

⁵ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 16 August 1777.

⁶ Obituary notice in Alderman William Fletcher's 'Diary of Events, 1739-1817', MS. Top. Oxon. d. 247, fol. 176.

⁷ Alderman William Fletcher, Mayor of Oxford in 1796, died 1826, aged 88.

⁸ Vet. A 5 d. 1126/1, p. 504.

⁹ MSS. Don. d. 140-3; e. 111-14.

occasionally illustrated with sketches of the churches, monuments and coats of arms. Two quarto volumes for Oxfordshire¹⁰ represent a later stage of Hinton's work. They include more finished drawings of churches, with more orderly notes, copies of monumental inscriptions and extracts from the manuscripts of the 17th century antiquaries, Matthew Hutton and Anthony Wood. The three Berkshire volumes bought in 1960¹¹ are similarly arranged, but include more drawings and fewer notes, the earliest of them dated 1800.

Further evidence of Hinton's work is to be found in a collection of brass rubbings among the miscellaneous papers of Sir Thomas Phillipps, given to the Bodleian Library by Messrs. Philip and Lionel Robinson. The rubbings are of brasses in thirty-one Berkshire churches, and it is clear from the labelled folders that there were once similar rubbings from Oxfordshire churches. Most of them are annotated by Hinton with the exact date on which he made them, between 1803 and 1815. Occasionally he remarks that the brass is a 'loose plate' and explains where he found it. His knowledge of Ashmole's work is evident from a few notes such as that on a Blewbury brass that 'the daughters mentioned by Ashmole are lost' and another 'those mentioned by Ashmole ? removed'.

From drafts of prefaces and of title pages in his notebooks,¹² it is clear that Hinton's intention was not only to collect information about the local history of Oxfordshire and Berkshire, but also to arrange and publish his collections. He saw himself as one of a long succession of local men who had tried to preserve a record of the antiquities of the two counties. Too many of them 'had the same ambition to collect and the same misfortune never to methodise or publish'.¹³ He gives an interesting picture of the extent of his interests and of the problems facing him :

'To collect and arrange the evidences of local History is at all times a work of labor and patient enquirey, but if the task should be protracted to a period when ancient families are become extinct ; when manerial records are lost, or dispersed, and parochial, or Ecclesiastical Monuments are mouldring by decay, the investigation will be more difficult. Of the fatigues attending a work of this kind, none are sensible but those who are engaged in it. Thought and reflection, researches, and reviews, multiply on every side, and the burthen increases on the weary bearer . . . But Oxfordshire has not yet found an able Historian, and as every day will cut off some source of information and when a few years shall have elapsed where shall we find the evidences of families who are now scarcely remembered, where trace the site of Abbies or Mansions now yeilding to time, or the more powerful effect of modern improvement ; and as Agriculture is rapidly increasing all the remains of the Roman Roads, Barrows, entrenchments, etc., are leveling by the Plough.'¹⁴

¹⁰ MSS. Don. c. 90-1.

¹¹ See above, p. 215, n. 2.

¹² MSS. Don. d. 143, fol. 1 ; c. 114, fols. 73-4 ; c. 113, fol. 28 v.

¹³ MS. Don. d. 143, fol. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Hinton's collections for the City and University of Oxford (two notebooks¹⁵ and two volumes of miscellaneous drawings and prints¹⁶) show his particular interest in engravings and engraved portraits. They include lists of the engravers and subjects of the Almanacs, lists of engravings of Oxford buildings and of Oxford men, and lists of anecdotes and portraits of such Oxford worthies as Mother Louse of Louse Hall, John Barefoot, letter carrier to the University, and Knack Wheeler, newscriber. His own copy of Gutch's 1786 edition of Wood¹⁷ is interleaved with engravings or copies of portraits, and annotated with anecdotes of Oxford men. Two more copies of the same work, both grangerized by Hinton, are also in the Bodleian. One,¹⁸ given to the Library in 1938, had belonged to the Rev. W. Dyke, vice-principal of Jesus College from 1844 to 1862, before it was bought by Falconer Madan in 1881, but no clue to its earlier history survives. The additional engravings, drawings and notes are similar to those in Hinton's own copy, but less detailed. The lists of University officers continue to 1811 only, compared with 1815 in his own. The provenance of the third,¹⁹ which has fewer additional engravings and little annotation, is unclear, but it seems to have been compiled for a friend in London.

For the last few years of his life, Hinton was acquainted with James Hunt, who bought Hinton's collections from his sister and executor, Mary Wernham, in 1816. Hunt was born in Cholsey, Berks., in 1795, the son of John and Martha Hunt,²⁰ and probably came to Oxford in about 1809. He was apprenticed to John Hollings Allen, chemist and druggist, whose shop in the High Street he took over in 1816.²¹ In the same year he married Elizabeth Hartin of Merton, Oxon.,²² and was admitted freeman of the City on the termination of his apprenticeship.²³

Hunt's interest in local history can be traced back, in his notebooks, to his seventeenth year. We have small books,²⁴ dated 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815, which contain notes on Oxfordshire and Berkshire churches which are very closely related to the notes of Hinton on the same churches. In his account of Godstow, Hunt writes, in the rather solemn language of the time, 'I visited this antiquated spot in company with my intelligent and valued friend H. H.'²⁵ Hunt was then 20, Hinton 66. In a letter to Sir Thomas Phillipps, Hunt wrote of himself as 'a constant acquaintance and I believe most intimate friend'²⁶ of Hinton for the last seven years of Hinton's life. This takes us back to 1809 when Hunt would have been fourteen.

¹⁵ MSS. Don. d. 138-9.

¹⁶ MSS. Don. c. 97-8.

¹⁷ MSS. Don. d. 148-9.

¹⁸ MSS. Top. Oxon. d. 340-1.

¹⁹ Vet. A 5 d. 1126/1-2.

²⁰ Cholsey, Register of Baptisms and Burials, 1792-1812. A microfilm copy of this is in the Bodleian, MS. Film Dep. 682.

²¹ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 11 May 1816.

²² Marriage bond and affidavit, MS. Archd. papers Oxon., c. 603, fols. 82-3.

²³ Oxford City Records, Hanasters, 1780-1824, L. 5.6.

²⁴ MSS. Don. c. 107-10.

²⁵ MS. Don. e. 110, fol. 14.

²⁶ Letter to Sir Thomas Phillipps, 21 November 1819.

Hunt, as we have seen, bought Hinton's collections and incorporated them in his own. To Hinton's ten small notebooks²⁷ he added four.²⁸ A few additions were made to the two large volumes for Oxfordshire²⁹ and another one was compiled.³⁰ The three similar volumes for Berkshire³¹ were begun by Hinton, but several of the later drawings and a few notes were added by Hunt. Two volumes of miscellaneous drawings and prints relating to Oxford city and university,³² probably bound up by Phillipps, are for the most part Hinton's work, though a few notes by Hunt are included.

Hunt's correspondence with Sir Thomas Phillipps (twenty-two of his letters from 1818 to 1820 survive amongst the Phillipps correspondence, generously given to the Bodleian Library by Messrs. Philip and Lionel Robinson) gives a more detailed picture of his antiquarian work in Oxford at that time than is apparent in his collections. When an apprentice he probably spent some of his leisure time accompanying the elderly Hinton on his visits to parish churches. After Hinton's death he continued his efforts to 'illustrate the topography and preserve the antiquities'³³ of Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Hunt was well aware of the shortcomings of his education and his consequent inability 'to do justice to the wide field'³⁴ he was attempting to cover. William Nelson Clarke,³⁵ then an undergraduate of 21 at Christ Church, remarks on Hunt's limitations in a letter to Sir Thomas Phillipps:³⁶ 'I called on Mr. Hunt soon after, and he received me with great civility, and produced all his collections, which entirely shew him a man of taste and ability'. Clarke, who was already working on a history of Berkshire, was relieved to find that Hunt's interests did not clash with his own, for 'he is almost entirely limited to Architectural Antiquities; for wonderful as it appears to me, he is quite ignorant of heraldry and genealogy, two very necessary sciences to the historical Antiquary'.

The demands of business and a growing family³⁷ severely restricted Hunt's leisure. Increasing expenditure forced him to offer his Oxfordshire collections for sale in July 1818. He described them to Phillipps as 'reduced drawings from rubbed off impressions of about nine tenths of the Brass Plates in the County, Univ. and City—a few good drawings by Buckler of Churches etc.³⁸ and some very humble ones of my own, a large quantity of Monumental inscriptions and inscriptions from many of the Bells in the county, with some engravings of

²⁷ MSS. Don. d. 138-43; e. 111-14.

²⁸ MSS. Don. c. 107-10.

²⁹ MSS. Don. c. 90-1.

³⁰ MS. Don. b. 14.

³¹ MSS. Top. Berks., c. 49-51.

³² MSS. Don. c. 97-8.

³³ An undated letter to Phillipps, probably late May 1820.

³⁴ Letter to Phillipps, 16 July 1818, MS. Top. Berks., c. 49, fols. 12-13.

³⁵ His Berkshire collections are in the Bodleian, S.C. 25492-509, MSS. Top. Berks. b. 2, 4, 5; c. 1, 4-8; d. 4-5; e. 2-6; f. 2-3.

³⁶ Letter to Phillipps, 6 April [1820?].

³⁷ Six children of James and Elizabeth Hunt were baptised at St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, 1817-25, MS. Top. Oxon. c. 170.

³⁸ The J. C. Buckler drawings of churches in the Oxfordshire volumes (MSS. Don. b. 14; c. 90-1) are, except for a water-colour of Bampton church, unfinished pencil and wash drawings.

buildings now no more'.³⁹ Phillipps eventually bought the collection for £157 10s. in March 1819.

Hunt was, however, able to continue his work on the churches of his home county, Berkshire, for a little longer. In November 1818 he described one of his tours to Phillipps: 'Since I heard from you last, I have made what to me was a large tour. I have cleared the whole Eastern part of Berks. In company with Mr. Buckler Junr. I visited 21 villages in 6 days and made 100 drawings comprising all the churches, almost all the fonts, tombs, manor-houses etc. that came in the route'.⁴⁰ Most of the drawings by J. C. Buckler in these collections are of Berkshire. They are dated 1818 and 1819 and some are probably those done during his tour with Hunt. By November 1818, Hunt's visits, even to Berkshire churches, were curtailed by the pressures of business. In December of the same year he had been obliged to part with his assistant and was 'wholly confined to the shop' with 'little or no chance of seeing even the outside of this delightful city for the next ten or twelve month'.⁴¹

During the next year, Hunt's letters keep Phillipps informed about antiquarian books available in Oxford and in October he mentions a visit to Phillipps's Worcestershire home, Middle Hill. He was delighted with 'the distinguishing appellation' of 'the Berkshire Antiquary'⁴² that Phillipps had given him in one letter; but by May 1820 he had to abandon his antiquarian pursuits. His financial position was desperate. He needed £200 immediately, to enable him to continue in business and had no hope of getting any of the £1,300 owed to him. The only way 'to avoid much unpleasantness and difficulty'⁴³ was to sell his Berkshire collections for £206. He wrote to Phillipps announcing his intention: 'You may easily conceive the mortification attendant on such a step with a person whose feelings are so entirely devoted to the study of antiquities—but I have a higher duty to perform—'tis not myself alone that I have to provide for and therefore it is that I am compelled to give up and altogether to part with the delightful remembrances, the result of many very many happy hours in collecting. Into whatever hands they may hereafter fall I shall never cease to regret being deprived of them.'⁴⁴ Phillipps at first suggested that his friend William Nelson Clarke, of Ardington, Berks., might be interested in the collections, but eventually bought them himself in June.

There is little evidence to suggest that Hunt continued his antiquarian work after 1820. At some time between 1826 and 1830 he changed his trade to that of accountant and by 1832 had moved to Broad Street. From 1821 he was a member of the City's Common Council and in 1840 was elected sheriff for the City. In 1841 he was re-elected to that office 'which he has filled with so much credit to himself, so satisfactorily to the city and with so much real service to the free-men'.⁴⁵ He retired from the Council in November 1845 and moved to Chapel

³⁹ Letter to Phillipps, 16 July 1818, MS. Top. Berks. c. 49, fols. 12-13.

⁴⁰ Letter to Phillipps, 13 November 1818.

⁴¹ Letter to Phillipps, 14 December [1818].

⁴² Letter to Phillipps, postmarked 12 November 1819.

⁴³ Undated letter to Phillipps, probably late May 1820.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 30 October 1841.

Hill, Chipping Norton, on his appointment as Poor Law Auditor for the Oxfordshire and Warwickshire districts. He died at Warwick, in December 1857, after he had been injured in a railway accident near Charlbury on 18 December.⁴⁶

When Sir Thomas Phillipps bought the Oxfordshire collections from Hunt in 1819, he was already interested in the history of the county. He had circulated inquiries to the nobility, gentry and clergy, 'with a view to completing, from their Answers, an Account of the Antiquities and Natural History of the County.'⁴⁷ The inquiries requested much detailed information and the response was not enthusiastic.⁴⁸ Phillipps intended to publish Hinton's collections. He annotated a letter from Thomas Sharp, 'Answered 15 Nov. 1819 stating that I had purchased Mr. Hinton's collections and was about to publish them in the state I bought them'. He asked Hunt for anecdotes of the ironmonger's life, presumably for a preface to the work.⁴⁹

There are signs that Phillipps was less pleased with his second purchase, the Berkshire collections. Six letters from Hunt at the end of their surviving correspondence concern payment for the collections, which he had not received by the end of July 1820. In one he regrets 'any dissatisfaction' that Phillipps may feel and assures him of his willingness to buy back the collections when his financial position improves. In 1837 Phillipps complained to Thomas Thorpe, the London bookseller, that he had been obliged to buy two Oxfordshire volumes which he considered already belonged to him under his agreement with 'that scoundrel Hunt of Oxford'.⁵⁰ Later notes and engravings in the collections show that Phillipps continued to add to them. He was still concerned with them in his last will of 2 February 1872, when he entreated John Hayden Cardew to 'undertake the continuation of Anthony A Wood's and Hinton's Collections for Oxfordshire Inscriptions and brasses'.⁵¹

The interest of Hinton's and Hunt's collections is enhanced by the inclusion of numerous drawings by J. C. Buckler. They contain most of the known Buckler drawings of Berkshire. The notes and drawings of Hinton and Hunt in themselves fill a significant gap in our knowledge of local topography in their time. They include information about many 18th and early 19th century monumental inscriptions and other church furnishings, which are just as likely to have disappeared in the 19th century restorations as earlier ones recorded by the more famous antiquaries, Wood and Rawlinson for Oxfordshire, and Ashmole for Berkshire.

The cost of the plates accompanying this article was met by a generous donation from the Greening Lamborn Trust.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2 January 1858. (I am indebted to Mr. Malcolm Graham for this reference, and to Alderman P. S. Spokes for information from his family pedigree and from his notes on James Hunt, his great great uncle.)

⁴⁷ A copy of the 'Inquiries' is in MS. Don. c. 98, fol. 1.

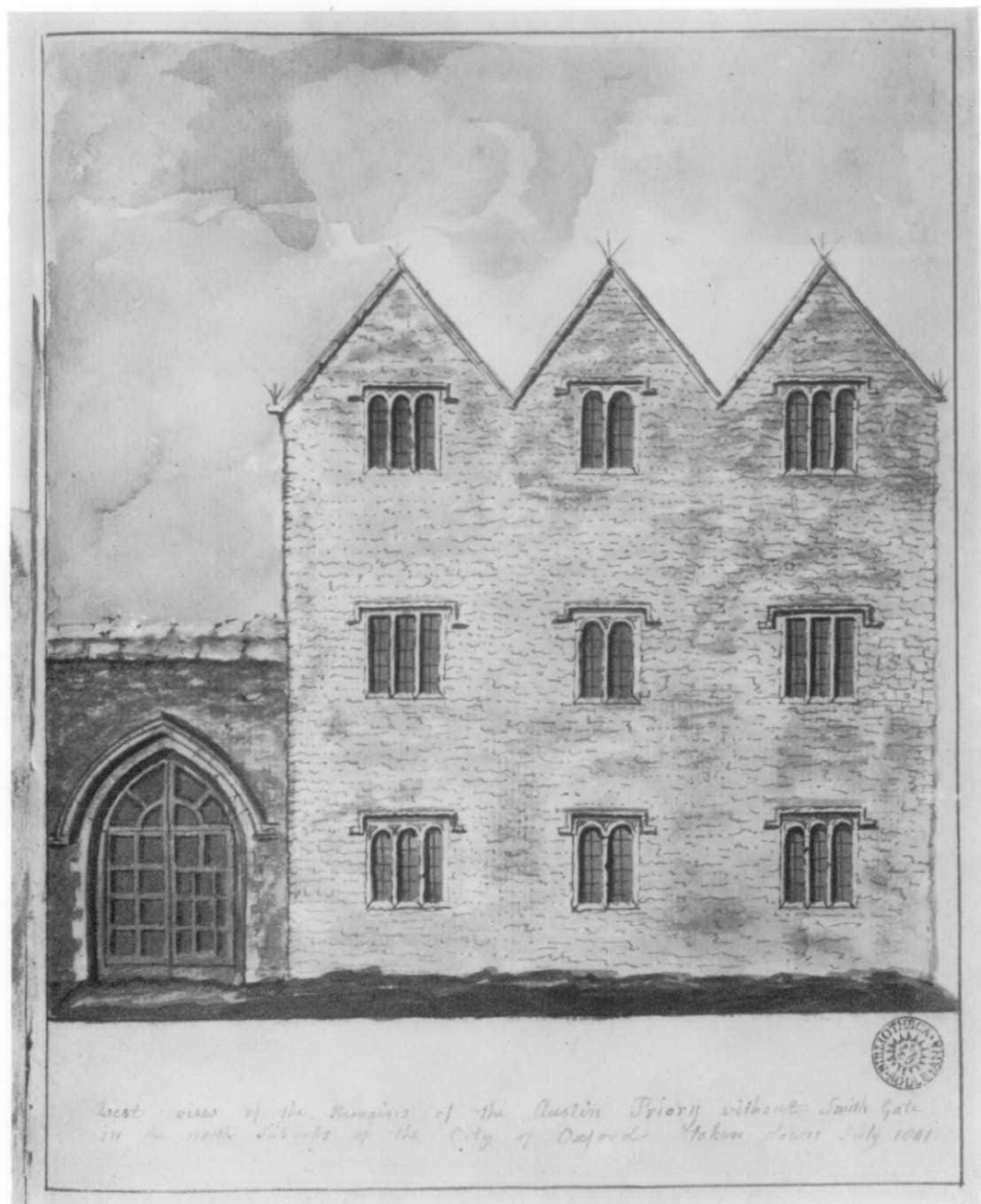
⁴⁸ Cf. A. N. L. Munby, *Phillipps Studies* (Cambridge, 1954), iii, 5.

⁴⁹ See above, p. 217 and a letter from Hunt to Phillipps, 21 November 1819.

⁵⁰ Letter to Thorpe, 25 September 1837, in Phillipps's letterbook, 1835-8.

⁵¹ Cf. A. N. L. Munby, *Phillipps Studies* (Cambridge, 1952), ii, 114.

PLATE XXIII



Typical drawing by Henry Hinton (Bodl. MS. Don. c. 97, fol. 43).

Photo : Bodleian Library, Oxford

The Church.

The Church which is a Decent building consists of a nave Chancel, N & S Ailes to the nave, & a N. transept which appears to be the most ancient it contains the bodies of many of the Osbaldestons Herts, the Chancel is a modern building, at the west end is a neat Tower embattled with pinnacles at the corners with fans it contains 6 Bells & a Sancte bell.

1. Robt & James Wells of Aldbourn Wilts fecit 1796.
2. Let us sing merrily A.R. 1714.
3. God preserve the Queen A.R. 1714.
4. Peace & Good Neighbourhood A.R. 1714.
5. Abraham Rudhall Gloucester Bell founder. 1714.
6. Dono dedie. Simon Bar. de Stanton Harcourt Mag.

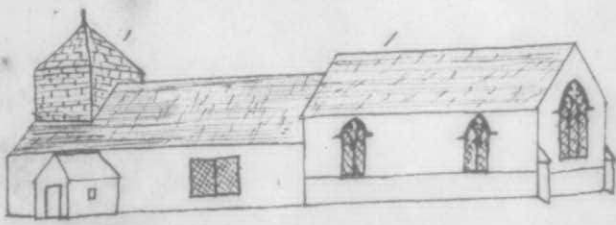
Britan: Cancellarius. 1714.

Sancte Bell. James wells fecit.

These Bells were purchased from Newham Courtney Oxon when the Church was taken down & the village removed about the year 1760.

A. Notes on Chadlington church in the hand of Henry Hinton (Bodl. MS. Don. e. 114, fol. 53).

There is a raised tomb of Brick under the S Wall of the Chancel ^{within} which records the memory of Mr Wm Michael daughter of John Michael Esq. late of Milton Wilts died 1724 aged 27



A.S. & view of Crowell Parish Church Jan 24. 1813

Rev Mr. Bettie Thame Parsh Rector
 Dr Payne of St Johns Coll: Oxon his curate
 Lord & Mend man } Lords of the
 Do & thing don } Manor

B. Church notes and typical sketch by James Hunt (Bodl. MS. Don. e. 108, fol. 9).

Photos: Bodleian Library, Oxford