

" This D ooth E rasmus Williams R epresent"
Richard Haydock
1608
Gift to New College for the Library by Mark S. Byford

This is the caption we have placed under a print recently presented to the library of a fine monumental brass done in or just after 1608, and featuring Erasmus Williams, an Elizabethan fellow of the college. The print was taken by inking the monument itself and printing directly from it, with the consequence that of course the resulting print is back-to-front, including all the lettering.

Erasmus Williams took his MA in 1578, and in 1589 was appointed rector of St Mary Magdalene, Tingewick, Bucks, a college living. This is where he died and where his funerary brass remains, the source for this print, in the chancel of his church. It is a striking piece of work, featuring Williams on his knees in prayer, placed between two columns, one classical (on which he turns his back), the other (towards which he faces)

biblical, from 1 Kings 7, the description of Solomon's Temple. We will return to this design and its accompanying inscriptions.

Who engraved this piece? Happily, the verses under the kneeling Williams are signed, by one Richard Haydocke, and he was also the engraver and designer of the whole brass. Haydocke (1569/70-c. 1642) is a well-known figure, a fellow of New College (BA 1592, MA 1595, BM 1601) who became not a clergyman but a physician, practising in Salisbury. He is best known for his translation of Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's *Trattato dell'arte della pittura* (1584), which he published on the Oxford press of Joseph Barnes under the title *A tracte containing the artes of curious paintinge, carvinge & buildinge* (1598). Haydocke himself executed all the engravings for this book, and the good-looking head on the title-page may be a self-portrait. Many fine copies of the book survive, including exemplars in New College and Winchester College libraries.¹

Detail from frontispiece of *A tracte containing the artes of curious paintinge, carvinge & buildinge* (1598), from New College, BT1.27.15(1).

This was the first such translation to be published in English, and in it Haydocke used his dedication, to Sir Thomas Bodley, to announce Bodley's major project, namely the Bodleian Library itself, which finally opened its doors in 1602. The book also contains an epistle to the translator by the well-known Oxford teacher John Case (1540/41?-1600), sometime chorister at New College, an interesting association given Case's known 'popish' beliefs. In this connection it is interesting to note too that Haydocke initially received Lomazzo in Italian from Thomas Allen (1540?-1632), the famous Oxford mathematician, antiquary, and of a similar persuasion to Case. In his preface Haydocke writes of his own leisure interests in New College in the 1590s: following the wording of the title of his translation, painting, carving, and building. Haydocke is also notorious for the scandal he later

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have adopted for editing such entries from the Benefactors Register. All his books are grouped together in the register under 1605, following the inscriptions on several of the

taught, his engraver and elegist. The design and its accompanying verse, in short, encapsulate a pious worry we often find articulated in the period.¹⁰ Learning the arts and sciences (i.e. the undergraduate degrees) was all very good, but such things were in the last analysis only preparations for the higher (graduate and vocational) life of theology and the ministry. Obviously the most interesting and intricate part of the engraving is the Corinthian pillar with its books and instruments, and its statue-filled niche ('Remember Lot's wife') in the pedestal. And yet Haydocke engraves what he knows he too ought finally to reject.

William Poole
Fellow Librarian

Appendix 2: Entry for Erasmus Williams from the Library Benefactors Book

ANNO MDCV

ERASMUS WILLIAMS Artium Mag:^r et huius Coll: Socius donavit libros qui sequuntur

Donor: ERASMUS WILLIAMS, MA 1578, rector of Tingewick, Bucks, 1589 (Foster). He assisted Richard Haydocke with the latter's celebrated translation of Lomazzo.

Benedicti Ariæ Montani Elucidationes in 4.^{or} Evangelia

Montanus, Benedictus Arias. *Elucidationes in quatuor Evangelia, Matthæi, Marci, Lucae & Iohannis... quibus accedunt eiusdem elucidationes in Acta Apostolorum.* Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, 1575. 4^o.

Tabulæ Prutenicæ

Reinhold, Erasmus. *Prutenicæ tabulæ coelestium motuum*. Tubingen: Oswaldus & Georgius Gruppenbachius, 1571. 4^o.

BT3.181.1. Aleph System Number: 015958793. 'Liber Collegij btæ Mariæ ex legato M^{ri} Erasmi Williams huius collegij olim socij. Año Dñi 1608.' Original boards, but rebacked; centrepiece stamp of a lion rampant. A fragment of musical MS has been used to strengthen the binding, from the 'Christum venerantes deum' for the Feast of St Cecilia.

Nicolaus Copernicus de revolutionibus orbium cælestium.

Copernicus, Nicolaus. *De revolutionibus orbium cœlestium, libri VI*. Basel: ex officina Henricpetrina, 1566. 2^o.

BT1.36.11(1). Aleph System Number: 013128872. 'Liber Collegij btæ Mariæ ex legato M Erasmi