

*{We are embarking upon an edition of the library's historic Benefactors' Book, and one use of such editions is to allow case studies like this one (compare the Notes on Thomas Martin and on the Ryves family in New College Notes 4). In the Appendix to this Note will be found the style we propose for editing the register, and it is hoped that this may serve in due course as a negotiable template for other collegiate benefactors' books.}*

The impact of the Civil War on New College was dramatic—when the Parliamentary Visitors purged the college, they ejected 'a least fifty fellows, four chaplains, twelve choristers and thirteen servants', and intruded their own candidates in place. While a slight majority of the dons across the university submitted to the victorious Parliament, in New College four times the number were expelled as acquiesced. The new powers in the college even curtailed the hours in which bowls could be played.<sup>1</sup>

It might be supposed that this was a time of cultural collapse in the college, especially in the library, but in fact this was not quite so. Donations of books appear to have dried up in the 1640s—or at least were no longer recorded—but by 1653 things were picking up slightly; and in the following year the deposed warden, Henry Stringer, presented to the library an extraordinary set of books for learning Arabic: two grammars, two dictionaries, and the Psalms and New Testament translated into that language.<sup>2</sup> There were eight or nine further library benefactors recorded before the Restoration, and of these perhaps the most interesting was the intruded fellow Thomas Tanner, both for his own biography, and for the books he gave the college and what they can tell us about his interests and those of his time.

Thomas Tanner was born in London in 1630, the son of a prosperous citizen.<sup>3</sup> He was educated first at St Paul's,<sup>4</sup> proceeding to Cambridge, where he matriculated at Pembroke Hall as it was then known, graduating BA in 1649. He was intruded as a fellow of New College by the Parliamentary Visitors in 1651, taking his MA in 1652, 'having', in the words of the antiquary Anthony Wood 'some time before had the degree of M. of A. conferr'd on him at Edinburgh in his rambles in Scotland, where the doctors being taken with the forwardness, prettiness and conceitedness of the youth, did confer on him that degree'. As we shall see from the evidence of his books, Tanner also travelled on the continent in the mid 1650s. Back in Oxford, in 1660 he was elected senior proctor of the university. Upon the Restoration Tanner discovered that he was sympathetic to the king's cause after all, and he managed twenty-one couplets in English, four verses in Latin, and

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<sup>1</sup> Penry Williams, 'Reformation to Reform, 1530-1850', in John Buxton

nine lines in French in celebration of King Charles II for Oxford's congratulatory poetic collection the *Britannia Rediviva* (1660). Perhaps this was the first appearance in print of a New College attempt at French verse composition:

Mais, Sire, nous restons encore  
Dans une guerre trop civile  
Contre Vostre Maiesté  
Puisque le plus grand Bonheur du Monde  
Vous dites nostre retour à loyauté  
Avec une volonté.  
Nous au contraire, beaucoup plus grand disons  
Vostre retour á nostre Royauté  
Par une rare bonté.<sup>5</sup>

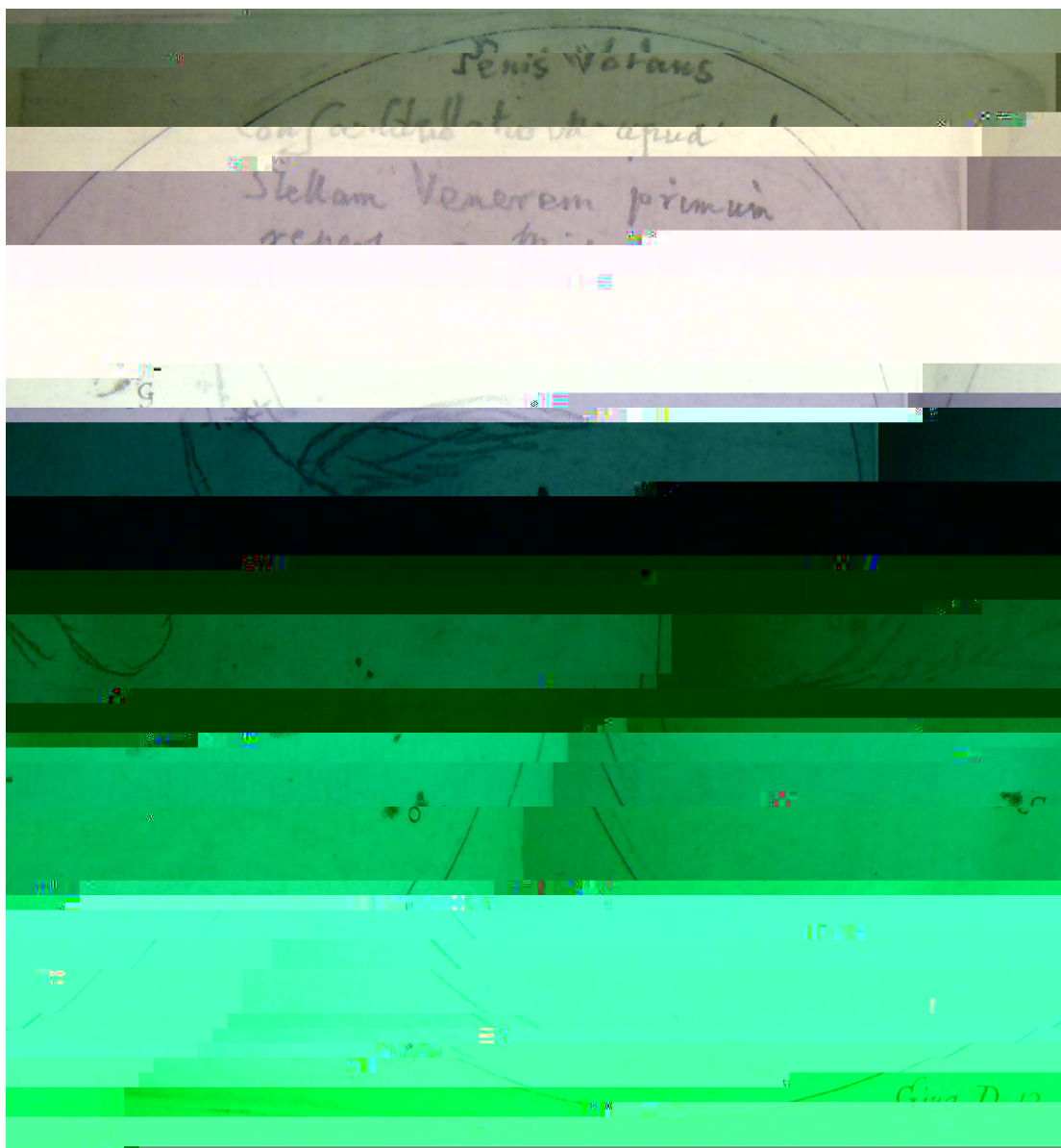
Despite his sudden conversion Tanner was however soon afterwards removed from his fellowship by the royal commissioners, and after a spell reportedly at Hart Hall (near the site of the present Hertford College), where he sat out his term as senior proctor, Tanner turned to the law instead, having enlisted in Gray's Inn in London seemingly long before the Restoration.<sup>6</sup> He was called to the bar in 1663. He cannot have been a legal success, as





texts, and of a quality that argues that they were a targeted donation, not merely the unloved and superseded spares of a scholar's bookcases. Nor was Tanner alone in the interregnum in these interests: in 1657 the poet Thomas Flatman, for instance, presented the college with the Leiden philosopher Adriaan Heereboord's *Meletemata philosophica* (1654), and in the same year John Gunter, LLB, supplied the college with further texts by Descartes and Gassendi.<sup>16</sup>

Tanner's copies themselves shed a little light on how Tanner acquired them. His copy of Morainvillier, for instance, is marked by Tanner 'A Orleans 1654', showing that he was in that city in that year. If he could bring back an account of the newly-elected Pope, then Tanner must have been in Rome somewhere between late April to June in 1655.



New College Library, Oxford, BT3.181.4(2), p. 68

William Poole  
Fellow Librarian



A new light of Alchymy by Micheel Sandivogius.

Sandivogius, Micheel [i.e. Michael Sendivogius/Michał Jakób S dziwoj], tr. J[ohn] F[rench]. *A New Light of Alchymie, taken out of the fountaine of nature, and manuell experience*. London: Thomas Williams, 1650. 4<sup>o</sup>.

Missing: there are copies in Queen's College (from the bequest of Sir John Floyer (1649-1734)), Worcester College, and the Bodleian (2). There was another edition in 1674.





