



HUMFREY WANLEY

by Thomas Hill, 1722

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HUMFREY WANLEY: SAXONIST AND
LIBRARY-KEEPER

BY C. E. WRIGHT

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EARLY in 1696 Humfrey Wanley, then a young man of twenty-four, just settling in to his post of Assistant at the Bodleian, received from Dr. Thomas Smith, Sir John Cotton's librarian, a letter of inquiry about some Greek manuscripts;¹ Smith concluded his letter with this admonition:

But let this be done without prejudice to your study of the Saxon

Note. In the footnotes *Welbeck Wanleyana* refers to the Wanley manuscript material belonging to His Grace the Duke of Portland formerly at Welbeck and now on indefinite loan in the Manuscripts Department of the British Museum (Loan 29); *H.M.C. Portland Papers* refers to the volumes of such papers printed by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, in which the 'Harley Papers' occupy vols. iii-vii (1894-1901); where reference is made to the *originals* of the Harley Papers (occasionally necessitated by the fact that the H.M.C. sometimes printed only extracts or summaries) the citation is given thus 'Harley Papers, vol. xvi, f. 28'. These papers also belong to the Duke of Portland and are included in the indefinite loan referred to above. I am deeply indebted to His Grace for permission to cite, and to quote from, all of these papers.

In order to avoid confusion between the Harleys I have adopted the convention of referring to the founder of the library as Robert Harley, and to his son as Edward Harley irrespective of the titles held by either at the time of the incident discussed. Robert Harley was created Earl of Oxford in 1711 and died in 1724: Edward Harley, from 1711 to 1724 Lord Harley, is the 'My Lord' of Wanley's diary; he succeeded as 2nd Earl 1724 and died 1741.

Wanley's Diary (referred to as Diary, followed by date) is now B.M. Lansdowne MSS. 771, 772. At one time kept in the Harleian Library if Oldys is correct (cf. notes from his *Adversaria* printed in *A Literary Antiquary. Memoir of William Oldys, Esq.*, 1862, p. 38), it was subsequently in the possession of James West, one of the 2nd Earl of Oxford's executors, and in 1772 was among West's manuscripts at Alscot Park, Warwickshire (nos. 119, 120 in the list of his manuscripts there; cf. B.M. Stowe MS. 1056, f. 45). After West's death (1772) his manuscripts were acquired by William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne (in 1784 Marquis of Lansdowne), whose collection was acquired by the British Museum in 1807. The diary is now being edited by the present writer and his wife for publication by the Bibliographical Society.

¹ T. Smith to Humfrey Wanley, 22 Feb. 1695/6 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3781, f. 74; printed H. Ellis, *Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men* (Camden Society, xxiii, 1843), pp. 238, 239).

—language and antiquities, which seems to be your peculiar province, and which I would have you cultivate with your utmost industry.

This devotion of Wanley's to Anglo-Saxon studies was to culminate in the publication of his catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in 1705, a publication which had the effect not only of establishing him as an outstanding Saxonist in the eyes of his contemporaries but of ensuring that his achievement in that field of studies could never be overlooked or forgotten by later generations of scholars. At the same time, his qualifications and skill as a palaeographer and his wide acquaintance with manuscripts were also properly appreciated by those of his contemporaries best fitted to judge and have likewise been given at least some attention in more recent times. But Humfrey Wanley the library-keeper though well known, and indeed formidable, in his own day, has received in ours very much less than his due. When his Anglo-Saxon catalogue was published in 1705 Wanley had another twenty-one years before him and during those years he was neither idle nor unknown. Towards the end of 1719 Dr. Arthur Charlett, Master of University College, Oxford, one of Wanley's first patrons and a lifelong friend, made in a letter to Wanley this remark:

I am glad, you have attacht yourself, to that Noble Lord, who has Businesse so fitted to your Genius that Providence seems to have designed this Scituation.¹

At the date of Charlett's letter Wanley was and had been for some time library-keeper to Edward, Lord Harley, bibliophile, connoisseur, and patron of artists and men-of-letters, a post which Wanley was to hold until his death on 6 July 1726. Charlett's observation was, in fact, one of remarkable perceptiveness both in its thought and in the selection of its words—no 'Businesse' indeed could have been 'so fitted' to Wanley's talents and learning as that of library-keeper to an enlightened and wealthy nobleman in the circumstances prevailing in the early decades of the eighteenth century.² For in Wanley the library-keeper was put to the practical touch the knowledge acquired in researches earlier pursued as Saxonist and palaeographer. His activities in this capacity deserve therefore, I think, very much

¹ Charlett to H. W., 5 Dec. 1719 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3778, ff. 55-56).

² Wanley is associated with Lord Harley in Gay's 'Mr. Pope's Welcome from Greece' (see *The Poetical Works of John Gay*, ed. G. C. Faber, Oxford, 1926, pp. 167, 168). The poem was written in 1720 and was widely circulated among Gay's friends but did not appear in print until 1776.

more detailed attention than they have so far received, and not least for the reason that the manuscript portion of the Harleian Library became subsequently the possession of the nation and has survived intact as part of the national collections to this day. That the Harleian Library 'abounds in so valuable a Treasury [of] MSS.', wrote Sir George Wheler to Wanley, is due 'in the greatest measure by your care & vigilance'.¹ If Wanley's first title to fame and his first claim on our gratitude as scholars is his 1705 catalogue of Saxon manuscripts, his second is certainly the active part that he played in the formation of the Harleian Library and in the compilation of the still unsurpassed catalogue of its manuscripts of which the earlier and fuller part was accomplished by him single-handed between 1708 and 1726.

Wanley's association with the Harley family began in 1701 with the letter of introduction to Robert Harley, then Speaker of the House of Commons, which George Hickes wrote on his behalf in that year.

This gentleman [wrote Hickes], is Mr. Wanley of whome I spoke to you. He hath the best skill in ancient hands, and MSS. of any man not only of this, but I believe, of any former age, and I wish for the sake of the publick, y^t he might meet wth the same publick encouragem^t here, that he would have mett wth in France, Holland, or Sueden, had he been born in any of those countries.²

These last words were, perhaps, intended to be a challenge to Robert Harley; but how far was Hickes's claim on behalf of Wanley justified at the time he was writing?

The origin of Wanley's interest in manuscripts and in handwriting is to be sought in the environment of his early years in Coventry, where he was born in 1672. His father, Nathaniel Wanley, was Vicar of Holy Trinity there and has won for himself a small niche in the Temple of Fame by a work published in 1678, only two years before his death, entitled *The Wonders of the Little World*. At the time of his father's death Wanley was but eight; his father's influence therefore can only have been slight. More important indeed was that of his maternal grandfather, Humfrey Burton, who held the key position of Clerk to the Coventry Council, a post which he had occupied since 1636, and who was deeply interested in the history and records of the city; it is not perhaps irrelevant to note, too, that towards the

¹ Sir G. Wheler to H. W., 9 Sept. 1723 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3782, f. 188).

² G. Hickes to Robert Harley, 23 April 1701 (Harley Papers, vol. xx, f. 61; printed *H.M.C. Portland Papers*, iv, 1897, p. 16).

end of his life, when applying to the College of Arms for a grant of arms, he claimed to be a cadet of the family of the Burtons of Lindley in Leicestershire, a claim that was accepted by that family and consequently by the College and thus gave him a lineal relationship with William Burton, the Leicestershire historian, and Robert Burton, the author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*.¹ Wanley would thus in early and impressionable days be subjected to the influence of antiquarian interests and would, without any doubt, have had access to original records, if he were so minded, through his grandfather and other members of his family who succeeded to the post of Clerk to the Council. That he was so minded is clear from copies of documents and notes about Coventry history dating from 1690 and 1691 that still exist.² Besides securing for him access to original material at Coventry and thus enabling him to apply a natural talent for copying and to train a quite remarkable visual memory, the status given him by his relationship to Humfrey Burton would win for him contact with such local people of importance as Sir John Dugdale (who had a house in Coventry); and their influence would in turn enable him to see manuscripts in private or public collections elsewhere: for example, in 1691 we find him making facsimile copies of documents relating to St. Mary's Church at Warwick, which are described by Wanley as being in the custody of Mr. Fish of Warwick.³ Efforts to find congenial employment led him in 1692 to make inquiries about the possibility of securing work in the College of Arms as clerk to Gregory King, Rouge Dragon Pursuivant,⁴ and in the same year he was advised by Sir John Dugdale to seek a post in the Tower Records.⁵ That he should have attracted the notice of William Lloyd, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, as the

¹ The grant by Dugdale and St. George was dated 27 Nov. 1682 (see *The Visitation of Warwickshire, 1682-1683*, ed. W. H. Rylands, The Harleian Society, vol. lxii, 1911, pp. 164, 165).

² Coventry material compiled or copied by H. W. is preserved (e.g.) in B.M. Harl. MSS. 6030 (f. 4), 6388, 6402, 6863. That he was well acquainted with the Coventry records at St. Mary's Hall and in the Mayor's Parlour is shown also by his endorsement on a letter from John Tipper of Coventry, 30 Apr. 1709 (B.M. Harl. 3781, f. 286). Wanley also refers there to 'the Book written by my Grandfather'.

³ B.M. Harl. MS. 7505, ff. 2^b-19^b *passim*.

⁴ Charles King to H. W., 20 Aug. 1692, enclosing letter from Gregory King to C. K., 16 Aug. 1692 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3780, ff. 35, 36).

⁵ Charles King to H. W., 10 Sept. 1692 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3780, f. 38; printed (from Birch's transcript in B.M. Add. MS. 4163, f. 94^b) by J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. i, 1812, p. 98).

traditional story has it,¹ is not surprising; nor is it surprising that when he did leave Coventry for Oxford he received for many years financial support from the Council of his native town by way of an exhibition.² At any rate, it was the good use to which he had put his natural gifts and the skill that he had acquired at Coventry that won him his introduction to Oxford in 1695 and his appointment as an Assistant at the Bodleian in November of the same year.³

His being settled in Oxford made it possible for his two pre-vailing interests—palaeography and the Saxon language⁴—to be disciplined and developed. He became a member of the group of notable Saxonists that adorned the university in the later decades of the seventeenth century—Edmund Gibson, William Nicolson, George Hickes, Edward Thwaites, and William Elstob, the last a Fellow of Wanley's own college, University;⁵ and his expertise in palaeography and manuscripts was to be used to the full in his work at the Bodleian. Of the opportunities provided by his position there he took full advantage and his interest in library arrangements and in the proper custody of books, whether printed or manuscript, and of coins, soon found expression in a report which he submitted to the Curators just two years after his arrival.⁶

It is unlikely that he was popular with the authorities but his precocity, his capacity for sustained hard work, and his conscientiousness led to his being utilized (I use the word

¹ See, e.g., *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne* (Oxford Historical Society), vol. ix, 1914, p. 161 (under the date 10 July 1726). A claim that Wanley's 'coming out of the Draper's Shop and Settling in a Gown at Oxford was almost entirely owing to me' was made by Thomas Tanner in a letter to Edward Harley, 21 Mar. 1729/30 ('Harley Letters and Papers, 1725-40', f. 156; *H.M.C. Portland Papers*, vi, 1901, p. 27).

² See the payments recorded in the Treasurer's Book of Receipts and Payments preserved among the Corporation Muniments at Coventry.

³ *Bodl. Lib. Record*, v (1954-56), p. 95. His salary was £12 a year.

⁴ For evidence of his early interest in Saxon studies see Charles King to H. W., 4 Apr. 1692 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3780, f. 27): King promised to bring Wanley Somner's *Dictionary, 'Evangelia Saxonica & Gothica* (given me by Mr Junius) & another Saxon Tract which I accidentally bought at Lichfield, which may be of use to your Studies in y^t tongue.⁷

⁵ Wanley matriculated at St. Edmund Hall, 7 May 1695, but under Charlett's influence transferred to University College where we find him by September of that year.

⁶ On Wanley's memorandum see Strickland Gibson, 'Humphrey Wanley and the Bodleian in 1697', *Bodl. Quarterly Record*, i (1914-16), pp. 106-12, and S. G. Gillam and R. W. Hunt, 'The Curators of the Library and Humphrey Wanley', *Bodl. Lib. Record*, v (1954-56), pp. 85-94.

deliberately) by a number of people for the furtherance of enterprises in which they were interested. Thus, for the great *Catalogi Manuscriptorum Angliae*, which goes under Bernard's name, he supplied two (or possibly three) of the catalogues.¹ In addition, he made the indexes to that work, a task completed by the May of 1697. 'I am glad to heare', wrote Dr. Thomas Smith in the middle of that month, 'that your drudgery of making an index to the Catalogues of Manuscripts is at last happily over.'² This was not by any means the last work of 'drudgery' that Wanley was to undertake. Indeed, the amount of work that he got through in the ten years immediately preceding the publication of his catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts in 1705 is phenomenal.

As early as 1696 Hickes had obtained his help in the preparation of his great *Thesaurus*, and letters from Hickes to Wanley show that the latter was called on, at all stages, to assist Hickes in points of detail.³ Wanley's last years at Oxford were ones of great bitterness of spirit and his abandonment of Oxford owing to his discouragement there took place in 1700. The opportunity to make the break came indeed through Hickes himself, very largely by Wanley's undertaking to prepare for him the catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts which was the essential supplement to Hickes's own part of the *Thesaurus*. What this involved in concrete terms is disclosed by a memorandum that Wanley wrote on the back of a letter from Thwaites dated 17 June 1703.⁴ On undertaking it Wanley was promised by Hickes

¹ Wanley's catalogue of the manuscripts in the Free School library at Coventry is printed Bernard, *C.M.A.*, Oxford, 1697, ii, pp. 33, 34 (nos. 1446-62) and of St. Mary's, Warwick, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 203-6 (nos. 6683-6715); for the catalogue of the Earl of Denbigh's collection see *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 35-39 (nos. 1463-1552). (See H. W. to the Earl of Denbigh, 28 Nov. 1713 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*): cf. also A. S. Turberville, *History of Welbeck Abbey and its Owners*, i, 1938, p. 369).

² T. Smith to H. W., 15 May 1697 (B.M. Harl. 3781, f. 76b; printed H. Ellis, *Letters of Eminent Literary Men* (Camden Society, xxiii, 1843), p. 241).

³ See especially the long series of letters from Hickes to H. W. in B.M. Harl. MS. 3779.

⁴ Edward Thwaites to H. W., 17 June 1703 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*). In spite of the acerbity of Wanley's remarks about Hickes in this memorandum the friendship of the two men was a very close one (it was to Hickes that Wanley poured out complaints of his ill usage at Oxford). In his letters Hickes acknowledged generously the help he received: in that of 14 Mar. 1697/8 Hickes wrote (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 65), 'I have learnt more from you, than ever I did from any other man, and living or dying I will make my acknowledgment more ways than one.' Unfortunately Hickes as a non-juror was in no position to help actively; he wrote to Wanley, 7 Oct. 1699 (B.M. Harl. MS.

£3 per sheet as printed; he received in all for his work £65 plus three printed copies of the book unbound (one of the large paper and two of the common paper) and the sum remaining to him, he tells us, he forgave Hickes; furthermore, out of this £65 he bore his own

charges in Oxford, in London, Cambridge, Canterbury, etc. From these places [continues Wanley], I furnished him with Transcripts and Citations, which he used almost all over his Book, with an Air of Confidence, just as if he had seen or used the Originals himself. In like manner, he trump's up my Notions, as his own; after he had (in the beginning of our Acquaintance) assured me, that he thought the Robbing a Man of his Notions, was full as Wicked as Robbing a Man of his Money on the High-way.

Finally, he supplied Hickes with the index gratis; this Wanley wanted at the end of his catalogue but Hickes, to quote Wanley again, 'would need's shuffle it in among his other indexes'.

Nevertheless, the knowledge that Wanley acquired in the preparation of this catalogue was to stand him in good stead, for it gave him that acquaintance with the contents of libraries in many places and with the whereabouts of individual books in public and private ownership which he was to draw on later in the service of the Harleys. From the August to October of 1699 he was at Cambridge¹ working on manuscripts in the University Library and in those of Trinity and Corpus; in May 1700 he began work in London in the Cotton Library² (already known to him, of course); in the May of the following year he was probably busy taking an account of the manuscripts of the Royal Society at Gresham College,³ and in July he was at Canterbury examining the Saxon charters belonging to the Dean and Chapter there;⁴ at the end of that year or the beginning of 1702 3779, f. 103): 'Were I in the world as formerly, you had never drudged so long in the Bodleyan, but felt the power of my interest in a better station before this.'

¹ Hickes's letter of instruction to H. W. before his setting to work at Cambridge is in B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 92.

² See letters from Hickes to H. W. in B.M. Harl. 3779 *passim*; and also important letter from Hickes to Charlett, 27 Apr. 1700 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, ff. 127, 128).

³ Hickes to H. W. [6 May 1701] (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 154). The manuscripts would be the Arundel MSS. presented to the Royal Society by Henry Howard in 1681. That Wanley was well acquainted with them is suggested by Anstis's request to H. W. in 1709 that he might accompany H. W. to Gresham College to see the manuscripts (Anstis to H. W., 31 May 1709, *Welbeck Wanleyana*).

⁴ John Anstis to H. W., 22 July 1701 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

he was working on Lord Somers's Saxon charters.¹ Manuscripts elsewhere required for the work were lent to Hickes for Wanley's use. In this way he became familiar at first hand with St. Chad's Gospels from Lichfield,² with the Exeter Book from Exeter,³ with the important Anglo-Saxon herbal manuscript then in the possession of Robert Bourscough, Archdeacon of Totnes,⁴ and with manuscripts from Durham—'The Durham MSS. are come', wrote Hickes⁵ exultantly to Wanley in the September of 1700, 'pray come and survey them'.⁶

The experience Wanley gained in handling such a wide range of manuscripts and his skill in palaeographical matters,⁷ now becoming well known, led to suggestions that he should prepare a *Res Diplomatica*, suggestions to which he lent, apparently, a ready ear: 'You cannot do a more acceptable Service to the Commonwealth of Antiquaries', wrote Nicolson in 1702, adding, 'And, without flattery, you are the best qualify'd for the undertaking'.⁸

In this flush of youthful energy and enthusiasm, Wanley had thoughts of going abroad to see the libraries on the Continent. I was this day [wrote Hickes to Wanley on 23 May 1700], with Dr. Sloan. I told him you were taking my Catalogue [of Anglo-Saxon

¹ Hickes to H. W., 23 Jan. 1701/2 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 183).

² Hickes to H. W., n.d. (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 171).

³ Hickes to H. W., 21 June 1701 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 178).

⁴ The loan was obtained through Richard King of Exeter (see his letter to H. W., 22 Mar. 1700/01, B.M. Harl. MS. 3780, f. 55); the manuscript was subsequently acquired by Wanley from whom it passed into the Harleian collection (B.M. Harl. MS. 585). Bourscough's remaining manuscripts were later (17 May 1715, cf. Diary) bought *en bloc* by Edward Harley.

⁵ Hickes to H. W., [Sept. 1700] (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 149); cf. also Dr. John Smith's letter to H. W., 6 June 1702, relating to manuscripts sent from Durham by him by carrier (B.M. Harl. MS. 3781, f. 88).

⁶ Manuscripts were also borrowed from Worcester, including one containing Bede's 'Historia Ecclesiastica' (Hickes to H. W., 3 Feb. [? 1702]: B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 159).

⁷ In the course of his palaeographical studies H. W. had brought together a 'Book of Specimens', which was shown by Charlett to the Archbishop of Canterbury 20 Oct. 1697 (Charlett to H. W., same date, *Welbeck Wanleyana*); it is referred to by Hickes in a letter to H. W., 28 Jan. 1698/9 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 82^b), a reference which shows that it included specimens of handwriting used in Domesday Book and the Red Book of the Exchequer. Hickes advised H. W. (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 92) to take it with him to Cambridge in August 1699. It was to amplify this collection that Wanley applied to the Curators of the Bodleian for leave to remove manuscript leaves which had been used in the bindings of old books. (See *Welbeck Wanleyana*, Misc. 29.)

⁸ W. Nicolson to H. W., 23 July 1702 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3780, f. 261).

manuscripts] and after other discourse of you, and telling him how you had been discouraged at the University, I told him you had a great inclination to visit all the librarys of Europe, if money could be raised. He said What can hinder that? I will undertake my self to get him 100^{libb} a year.¹

Wanley, however, never went abroad and his relations with foreign scholars and librarians were confined to an interchange of letters or to meetings with them in London. He certainly waited on Sloane and established a life-long friendship with him; indeed, shortly after the date of Hickes's conversation Wanley was employed by Sloane to catalogue his own collection of manuscripts.²

In the meantime, in December 1700, Wanley had secured the post of Assistant Secretary to the S.P.C.K., a success which he owed largely to Robert Nelson and to White Kennett, later the formidable Bishop of Peterborough,³ and in March 1702 he succeeded Chamberlayne as secretary, a post he was to hold until the June of 1708. This removed from him any anxiety as to means of support, but more important for his later career as librarian is the way the everyday work of a secretary brought him into contact with a wide range of people (with many of whom he made firm friendships) and gave him experience in handling correspondence, conducting negotiations, and keeping committee minutes.

Public recognition of his standing as a scholar and particularly as an authority on manuscripts came to him in May 1703 when, on the death of Sir John Cotton, he was appointed (with Matthew Hutton and John Anstis) by the Trustees of the Cotton Library (one of whom was Robert Harley) to inspect and report on the library; the report was completed expeditiously on 22 June, but Wanley submitted, *on his own*, on 29 May a scheme for completing the Cotton Catalogue and, in addition, drew up rules for the conduct of the library. The report itself (of which several copies, all in Wanley's autograph, are extant) was

¹ Hickes to H. W., 23 May 1700 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, f. 132). Cf. the programme for study abroad drawn up by Wanley and preserved in B.M. Harl. MS. 5911, ff. 2-3 (printed J. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, i, 1812, pp. 100-2) and his 'advices' to Noel in 1725 (Diary 17 Aug. 1725).

² Wanley's catalogues are in B.M. Sloane MSS. 3972. b (manuscripts) and 3972. c (printed books), both undated, but see H. W. to Sloane, 12 Oct. 1701 (B.M. Sloane MS. 4038, f. 252), excusing his delay in beginning the catalogue.

³ See letters from John Chamberlayne to H. W., 7 and 16 Oct. 1700 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*); the whole series therein from Chamberlayne and in B.M. Harl. MS. 3780 from Robert Nelson (with Wanley's endorsements) is important for Wanley's work with the S.P.C.K.

certainly Wanley's work.¹ All three documents illustrate the remarkable maturity of his knowledge in library matters.²

With Robert Harley the association begun with Hickeys' letter of introduction in 1701 was gradually strengthened.³ In 1703 we find Wanley sending him sheets of the catalogue of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts as they came from the press⁴ and writing to him about certain features in the Edgar charter in Harley's possession.⁵ At the end of the year he took steps to interest Harley in the library which had been formed by Sir Simonds D'Ewes, the seventeenth-century antiquary, and which was still housed at the D'Ewes mansion at Stowlangtoft in Suffolk, where Wanley had been a guest in the October. And Wanley made the final move in his choice of Harley as patron on 28 August 1704, the day he signed the Preface of his catalogue, which he addressed to Robert Harley himself, who is signaled in it as his Maecenas.

¹ Wanley's appointment was made 19 May 1703. In a memorandum drawn up by him and submitted to Robert Harley, 11 Feb. 1711/12 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*) H. W. sets out the work he carried out as a result of this appointment 'for all which services (he concludes) I have not been Gratiified to this day'. The 'scheme or method for completing the Catalogue' of the Library, dated 29 May 1703, is preserved in B.M. Lansdowne MS. 846, ff. 213-15 (two drafts of it are also in B.M. Harl. MS. 7055, ff. 19-20, 22-23); the draft Rules for the Library, undated, are in B.M. Lansdowne MS. 846, ff. 224, 225 (two copies of another draft are in B.M. Harl. MS. 7055, ff. 26-27^b). The report of Wanley, Anstis and Hutton, dated 22 June 1703, was drawn up by Wanley himself and copies in his *autograph* were inserted in three copies of Smith's 1696 Cotton Catalogue, viz. (i) that of Sir Nathan Wright, Lord Keeper, now B.M. Dept. of Printed Books, press-mark 125.l.11; (ii) that of Sir John Holt, Lord Chief Justice, now B.M. Add. MS. 46911; and (iii) that of Robert Harley, Speaker of the House of Commons, now Oxford, Bodl. Lib. Add. MS. D. 82 (S.C. 30308) (presumably from this last was made the copy by William Thomas, Steward of the Harley Estates, in the Grenville copy of Smith's catalogue (B.M. Dept. of Printed Books, press-mark G. 150(1)).

² His published work of a palaeographical character amounted at this date (1703) to no more than 'Part of a Letter to a Most Reverend Prelate . . . judging of the Age of MSS . . .', dated 11 July 1701, *Philosophical Transactions*, xxiv, 1706, pp. 1993-2008. The identity of the 'Reverend Prelate' as the Archbishop of Dublin (Narcissus Marsh) is established by a reference in a letter from Charlett to H. W., 27 June 1701 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

³ It may have been to Robert Harley that Wanley addressed the letter (undated) (*Welbeck Wanleyana*) applying for the Keepership of the Royal Library.

⁴ The covering letter (*Welbeck Wanleyana*) belongs probably to Jan. 1703.

⁵ H. W. to Robert Harley, 6 July 1703 (B.M. Harl. MS. 7526, ff. 148-149^b); Robert Harley's letter of same date on this subject is in *Welbeck Wanleyana*. The Edgar Charter in question (A.D. 964: *B.C.S.*, no. 1135) is B.M. Harl. MS. 7513.

On this same day he wrote a long letter to Eric Benzelius the Swedish scholar, a letter of great importance for its brief summary of his activities up to that date.¹ It opens with an account of the completion of his work on the Saxon catalogue, then turns to a description of Grabe's work on the new edition of the Septuagint (in which Wanley had himself assisted), a subject which leads Wanley on to a palaeographical discourse on the 'Cotton Genesis' and its relation to the Codex Alexandrinus and other Biblical manuscripts. Thence he proceeds to an account of the Moore MS. of Bede's Ecclesiastical History which he describes himself as having 'retrieved'. Next follow questions to Benzelius about books written in runes. Lastly, Wanley comes to the story of his discovery of a 'Tract in the Cottonian Library (omitted in Dr. Smith's Catalogue) written in Dano-Saxon Poetry, and describing some Wars between Beowulf a King of the Danes of y^e Family of the Scyldingi, and some of your Swedish Princes'. 'Pray, Dear Sir', adds Wanley, 'have you any Histories about such a King, & such Wars?' 'As for myself', he concludes, 'I have had scarcely time to eat or sleep, and no time at all, comparatively speaking, for study.' *Beowulf* was not Wanley's only discovery in the course of his researches in preparing the catalogue. He was responsible for identifying the Wulfstan of the *Sermo Lupi* as early as 1699, as we know from a letter of Hickes, and early in 1700 Hickes had written to Wanley congratulating him on his discovery at Corpus of 'the originall of Apollonius of Tyre. The discovery will be a great ornament to my Catalogue, w^{ch} will ow all its improvem^{ts} and Graces to you.'²

The catalogue appeared in 1705 and Wanley was then to pass on to what was in fact to prove his life-work.³ On 4 October of that year Robert Harley made the first block purchase of manuscripts for his collection. It was from the library of Sir

¹ Printed Ruth C. Wright, 'Letters from Humfrey Wanley to Eric Benzelius and Peter the Great's Librarian', *Durham University Journal*, n.s., vol. i (1940), pp. 185-93.

² Hickes to H. W., 26 Sept. 1699, 2 Jan. 1699/1700 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3779, ff. 99, 117).

³ Wanley's interest in Saxon manuscripts and studies, however, was maintained; for example, when Edmund Gibson had in mind the reprinting of his edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (*Chronicon Saxonicum*, Oxford, 1692) Wanley wrote him two letters, 25 Jan. and 19 Apr. 1709, on the subject of the Chronicle MSS. and made a collation of them for Gibson (see B.M. Add. MS. 44879, ff. iv, vi). Cf. also below, p. 123, on his attempts to acquire the 'Lauderdale Orosius', &c., for the Harleian Library.

Simonds D'Ewes which Wanley had reported on at the end of the preceding year and the sum of £450 paid for it was handed over through the agency of Wanley himself,¹ and it is worth noting that in the January of 1706 Wanley (as we learn from a letter of Charlett's)² was employed by Harley in 'digesting' it. In April of 1707 Harley followed up this purchase by a second bulk acquisition, the manuscript portion of Bishop Stillingfleet's library, and a year later, on 24 April, Wanley began his catalogue of Harley's manuscripts;³ in June he resigned the secretaryship of the S.P.C.K. From this date certainly Wanley must have acted as full-time library-keeper to Robert Harley, a post which he was to continue to hold with Robert's son, Edward.

From 1701 until the end of 1714 Robert Harley lived in York Buildings, occupying the river-front block at the south-west corner of Buckingham Street, a house tenanted until 1700 by Samuel Pepys, and it was here that Harley's library was installed and that his friends—Swift, St. John, Prior, and others—met and that Wanley was to be found, until Harley's fall from power with the loss of the Lord Treasurership in the July of 1714 compelled him to seek another house.⁴ At this critical juncture of his fortunes, however, Harley had apparently no intention of abandoning the formation of his library: we find Wanley's Cambridge friend Dr. Tudway writing to him thus in September of that year: 'I'm very glad to understand . . . that my Lord of Oxford goes vigourously on In furnishing his Library wth ev'ry thing that is curious, And shows y^e world thereby, that that great undertakeing, does not depend upon y^e Staff; Tis what is worthy of a great man, as he undoubtedly is.'⁵ And indeed it was at this date that Wanley addressed to Harley a long memorandum on the subject of a library building and its arrangement and furnishing.⁶ Nevertheless, in actual fact, the *day by day* control

¹ The receipt, dated 4 Oct. 1705 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*), is in the following terms:

'Received then of the Right Hon^{ble}. Robert Harley by the hands of Humfrey Wanley, the sum of four hundred and fifty pounds, in full payment for my Library.

li s d

I say recd by me 450. 0. 0. SIMONDS D'EWES.'

² Charlett to H. W., 14 Jan. 1705/6 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

³ Now B.M. Add. MSS. 45701-7.

⁴ A number of houses was suggested; see, for example, Robert Harley to Edward Harley, 6 Feb. 1714/15 (*H.M.C. Portland Papers*, iii, p. 506).

⁵ Thomas Tudway to H. W., 10 Sept. 1714 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3782, f. 29).

⁶ Wanley's memorandum is preserved in B.M. Harl. MS. 7055, f. 16: it bears the date 27 Feb. 1713/14.

of the library had with Robert Harley's accession to supreme power in 1711 been transferred to his son Edward, later to succeed him as 2nd Earl of Oxford, and it was to Edward Harley's new house in Dover Street that the manuscript portion of the library was eventually moved after Robert's release from the Tower in the summer of 1717. A remark made by Edward Harley in a letter written to Wanley in the August of that year suggests that there was some difficulty in accommodating the library there and that it was in an annex to the house rather than in the house itself: 'There can no room in the House in Dover Street be allowed for the Library', wrote Edward Harley, 'The Garden House is the only room that can be spared, and if that will not do I cannot help it.'¹ The Dover Street house was used only for this manuscript part of the library. Edward Harley's vast and ever-growing collection of printed books was, for the most part, housed outside London at his Cambridgeshire mansion, Wimpole Hall; hence the title by which it is occasionally known, *Bibliotheca Wimpoliana*. This house came to Edward Harley through his marriage to the Newcastle heiress, Henrietta Cavendish Holles, in 1713, and it remained his country seat until he was forced to sell it to Lord Hardwicke in 1740. It lies between Cambridge and Royston and is a moderate-sized country house, much remodelled by Harley, who added the library wing in 1718.

Although Wanley himself occupied a house in York Buildings from 1704 to 1714 and was for a short time at Wimpole while cataloguing the printed books there in 1716 and 1717² he was never, strictly speaking, a resident library-keeper. After lodging in several places, chiefly in the Covent Garden area, it was not until the autumn of 1722 that he was able to secure a home near the library, when he obtained lodgings at the corner of Bond Street and Stafford Street: 'I am glad', wrote Harley to him in January 1723, 'you have got so near to Dover Street, it will save a great deal of time.'³

The amount of original material, by way of correspondence⁴ (including commissions or letters of instructions),⁵

¹ Edward Harley to H. W., 13 Aug. 1717 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

² The catalogue is B.M. Lansdowne MS. 816.

³ Edward Harley to H. W., 1 Jan. 1722/3 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

⁴ Preserved chiefly in B.M. Harl. MSS. 3777-82 and *Welbeck Wanleyana*.

⁵ The five most important commissions or letters of instructions are those addressed to: (i) Philip Stubbs on the subject of Jean Aymon's MSS. in Holland, 2 July 1712 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*, Misc. 37); (ii) George Daniel on the subject of Greek MSS., apparently on his departure for Smyrna [1712],

journals,¹ memoranda,² and notebooks,³ that resulted from Wanley's library-keepership, and is still extant, is quite exceptional for such an office at that date and indeed until our own day, and is itself a striking testimony to the way in which Wanley interpreted his office of library-keeper to the Harleys. Everything about his handling of the library business bears the stamp of his strong personality. Even so, one of the first things in the picture of his everyday life as librarian that must strike at any rate a working librarian of today is the fact that the responsibilities and problems, the harassments and interruptions, the incubus of cataloguing and the requirements of conservation that take up the greater part of his modern counterpart's time, are already present in the early decades of the eighteenth century for Wanley—with the added burden in his case that having no staff he was compelled to handle (often in a strictly literal sense) everything himself. Thus the description of his work as library-keeper to the Harleys falls into a familiar pattern. First, there was the acquisition of the books, either by gift or by purchase; in the case of the latter it might be by private sale from an individual owner, following sometimes prolonged negotiations, or from booksellers or at public auctions. The books had then to be brought to the library and be checked by Wanley and 'placed' on the shelves. Very many would require binding, the finer or more important being bound in a special style. For all of these Wanley had to write titles for the binder, whose work needed careful checking when the books were returned. When time was available the cataloguing of the collection would have to be proceeded with. The books must be readily available to Harley and to such scholars and students as were favoured with admission to the library. A still more select few were allowed to borrow books on

(B.M. Harl. MS. 7055, ff. 17-18; cf. also commissions in *Welbeck Wanleyana*, Misc. 40, dated 28 Sept. 1712 and 30 Sept. 1713); (iii) Thomas Harley, Envoy Extraordinary at Hanover, 27 Apr. 1714, relating to Professor Lentz's Syriac MS. (B.M. Harl. MS. 7526, ff. 150-1); (iv) Samuel Palmer, at his setting out for Persia, 22 June 1718 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*, Misc. 71); (v) Andrew Hay, at the commencement of his journey to Italy, 3 May 1720 (original among James West's Papers belonging to Mrs. Alston-Roberts-West of Alscot Park, and printed imperfectly in the Preface to the 1759 *Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts*). (I am indebted to Mr. H. M. Colvin for drawing my attention to the whereabouts of the original.)

¹ B.M. Lansdowne MSS. 771, 772.

² B.M. Lansdowne MS. 677.

³ e.g. B.M. Harl. MSS. 3886, 7627. A, B, and Add. MS. 6052. His carefully annotated copy of Tanner's *Notitia Monastica* (1695 edition) is now B.M. Add. MS. 47842; for a reference to this copy see T. Tanner to Edward Harley, 21 Mar. 1729/30 (*H.M.C. Portland Papers*, iv, p. 27).

Harley's authority and for the issue and return of these Wanley was responsible—as he was also responsible for the care and maintenance of the library furnishings. Some of these tasks necessitated quite a lot of correspondence, which was increased of course by inquiries, that might also involve Wanley in a certain amount of research. In addition, he was required to show the library or its more notable treasures to visitors, whose numbers increased as the years went on; this took up a very great deal of time. Lastly, he was responsible for printed books as well as manuscripts and charters and, beyond this, for coins, medals, and antiquities, and the last might be Egyptian, Greek or Roman, medieval or renaissance. Occasionally he was called on by Harley to perform secretarial duties or to act as an intermediary.

Wanley's library hours were from 8.0 to 11.0 in the morning and from 1.0 to 3.0 or 4.0 in the afternoon¹ (presumably according to the time of the year). He was scrupulous in his attendance and there are few occasions when, by reason of ill health² or domestic upsets,³ he failed to be in the library. Of course, he was frequently absent on library business: visits had to be made to booksellers to examine and list new parcels of books or check over their contents with catalogues, and sometimes, on Harley's instructions, to private owners. Book auctions Wanley did not attend in person, the bidding being done through an agent.

But Wanley's evenings were also devoted frequently, directly or indirectly, to library affairs. Much business was transacted then either at his lodgings or at one of the neighbouring inns, such as the 'Genoa Arms', or at what Wanley refers to as 'a weekly club which I frequent'.⁴ At the time of the visit of the Archimandrite Gennadius and his entourage to this country in 1721, Wanley invited some of the Greeks 'to drink a glass of wine' with him in the hope (as he bluntly expresses it) 'to get somewhat from them'.⁵ Noel the bookseller frequently dined with him and the hours were occupied in 'much conversation about this library-business.'⁶

¹ H. W. to Sloane, 17 Mar. 1723/4 (B.M. Sloane MS. 4047, f. 153). Cf. also Diary, 26 Feb. 1723/4 and 26 Jan. 1724/5; under 23 Oct. 1722 is a reference to 'at my new Dinner-Time'—what this was, however, is not clear.

² Diary 9 Feb. 1719/20 his absence owing to a violent cold is noted.

³ e.g. Diary 10–12 Nov. 1724.

⁴ Diary 7 Mar. 1723/4: a reference to the 'Miter-Club' is made *ib.*, 22 May 1723. The Society of Antiquaries met at the Mitre in H. W.'s time.

⁵ B.M. Lansdowne MS. 677, f. 8^b (under 25 Nov. 1721).

⁶ Diary 6 Feb. 1724/5.

In *The Analysis of Beauty* published in 1753 Hogarth wrote these words: 'Pursuing is the business of our lives; and even abstracted from any other view, gives pleasure. Every arising difficulty, that for a while attends and interrupts the pursuit, gives a sort of spring to the mind.'¹ No words could more happily and exactly describe the impulse that seems to have guided Wanley's life as library-keeper to the Harleys. No opportunity, however trifling, was missed. On one occasion, when dining at the house of Andrew Hay, the collector and dealer who travelled widely in France and Italy in search of antiquities and books and was so employed by Harley, Wanley records that he found Hay 'guilty of possessing (& concealing from my Lord) an old Roman Ink pot (the Cover broken off)' and adds 'I seized upon the same for my Lords Use, & have brought it hither [that is, to Dover Street] accordingly'.²

So far as his visits to the 'Genoa Arms' are concerned Wanley in fact specifically noted on one occasion: 'I seldom or never am at the Genoa Armes, but some part or other of my Lords business is in agitation. And it seems but reasonable (he continues) that his Lordship should defray me.'³ The salary that Wanley received would certainly have necessitated some such understanding, for records show that his salary was £3 a week.⁴ As from Midsummer Day 1724 this was augmented by 10s. a week 'in consideration' (Wanley notes in his diary) 'of my long and faithful Service';⁵ his salary for the last two years of his life was therefore £182 a year. Incidentally, it is worth noting that when Dr. John Woodward had in mind in 1723 the creation of a museum for his collection of natural curiosities he proposed a salary of £200 a year for the keeper of it⁶ and Richard Bentley's salary as Keeper of the Royal Library was the same amount.⁷

Skill in negotiation and a capacity to establish good relations with people were essential qualifications for the post which Wanley held and the perception that he had these qualities in addition to learning, diligence, and a methodical habit of mind

¹ Quoted Peter Quennell, *Hogarth's Progress*, 1955, p. 229; William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753, p. 24.

² Diary 4 May 1724.

³ *Welbeck Wanleyana*, Misc. 48.

⁴ *Welbeck Wanleyana*, Misc. 48, 49.

⁵ Diary 25 Aug. 1724.

⁶ According to a record (Diary 17 May 1723) which Wanley kept of a conversation with Woodward.

⁷ For Bentley's salary see (e.g.) J. Chamberlayne's *Magnae Britanniae Notitia*, 1708, p. 614.

most probably led Robert Harley to choose him for his library-keeper. Certainly in the first task that had been set him (the negotiation of the purchase of Sir Simonds D'Ewes's library) he had been completely successful. Nothing is more noticeable indeed than Wanley's flair for establishing quickly and lastingly a friendship with those with whom he came into contact, a relationship which never involved on his side any abatement of his independence. Thus we find him on easy and friendly terms with such diverse characters as John Anstis Garter, John Covell the learned and difficult Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, Richard Bentley, Samuel Pepys, collectors like Sir Hans Sloane and Richard Mead, the poets Prior and Pope, and successive Bodley's Librarians—Hyde, Hudson, and Bowles. It is a tribute to Wanley's character that some of these friendships survived severe strain. No transactions were more trying either to himself or to Edward Harley than the protracted ones with Covell which preceded the purchase of Covell's Greek manuscripts and antiquities.¹

Literary skill, a knowledge of what he is writing about, and clarity of thought are all three particularly well illustrated in the commissions or letters of instructions which it was one of Wanley's duties as library keeper to draft to agents and others going abroad for the purpose of securing books for the library. These instructions² are long not because they are wordy but because they contain very full surveys of the subject in hand, thus supplying his correspondent with all that Wanley thought needful in guiding him to the right sort of books. After describing the several kinds of Greek manuscripts that the merchant, George Daniel, was to try to acquire in the Levant, Wanley adds such comments as this:

Although upon Enquiry you will find the Libraries of Churches and Monasteries to be most miserably Plundered; yet by Diligent and careful Search, you will find many Things in Private Studies, Cells and Corners, that will turn to good Accompt.

And he continues:

One thing I must, in especial manner recommend to your most particular Care. It is plain that the Cathedral Churches and Monasteries must have had a legal Foundation there, as well as here; and that

¹ Letters from H. W. to Covell are in B.M. Add. MS. 22911 and from Covell to H. W. in B.M. Harl. MS. 3778. Wanley's catalogue of Covell's Greek medals (with his valuations) is in B.M. Add. MS. 22911, ff. 265-76.

² See footnote 5, p. 111 for the most important of these.

the Benefactions in Land, must have been conveyed to them by Deeds there, as well as here. And we know it to be so. Now I would have you to procure as many Original Deeds in Greek, as you possibly can, taking special Care of the Seals, whether they be of metal or of Wax. The Old Churches and Monasteries have Offices or Places where these things & their other Books of Entries and Records lie. Buy up all these that you can, they will come Cheap, & will be of excellent use.¹

In the letter of instruction to Thomas Harley, then Envoy Extraordinary at Hanover, in 1714 he gave a most precise description of the Syriac manuscript that Harley was to look for so that he might recognize it at once in the owner's library.²

Negotiations with booksellers and dealers in London were sometimes tortuous and frequently difficult owing to the state of the market and the cross-currents at work, especially at the auctions. The last were unfavourably influenced by the influx of Dutch dealers about this time³ and by the creation of 'rings'.⁴ Also, certain collectors were determined to secure the books they required irrespective of price; of these the chief villain in Wanley's eyes was Charles Spencer, Earl of Sunderland, who gave unlimited commissions; thus, at Freebairne's auction in 1721 Wanley was told by his agent that it was observed that when Vaillant (Sunderland's agent) bought the 1472 printed Virgil at £46 he 'Huzza'd out aloud, & threw-up his Hat for Joy, that he had bought it so cheap'. As a result of what happened at this sale the booksellers decided to push up the prices of 'Philological Books of the first Editions, and indeed of all Old Editions accordingly'. Noel the bookseller told Wanley that he himself had agreed to sell to Lord Sunderland six duplicate printed books then coming up the river to the Custom House for £50 per book; in recording this, Wanley adds ruefully 'Although My Lord [Harley] gives no such prices.'⁵ The exultant comments written by Wanley in his diary on 19 April 1722 recording the Earl of Sunderland's death are therefore understandable; 'by Reason of his Decease', writes Wanley,

¹ B.M. Harl. MS. 7055, f. 18.

² B.M. Harl. MS. 7526, ff. 150, 151. Thomas Harley was Envoy Extraordinary at Hanover 24 Apr.-14 May 1714 (see D. B. Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives 1689-1789*, 1932, p. 52); he was Robert Harley's cousin.

³ Diary 15 Feb. 1720/1. For Wanley's opinion of the Dutchmen (with reference particularly to J. Gronewegen and his partner) see Diary 26 Mar. 1723 (item 15).

⁴ See Diary 4 Dec. 1721 for a reference to 'a Combination of the Booksellers against the Sale' (Freebairne's auction).

⁵ Diary 4 Dec. 1721.

'some benefit may accrue to this Library, even in case none of his relations will part with none of his Books, I mean, by his raising the Price of Books no higher now; So that, in all probability, this Commodity may fall in the Market; and any Gentleman be permitted to buy an uncommon old Book for less than fourty or fifty Pounds.'

The position with regard to purchases from abroad was also becoming increasingly difficult both as to price and supply. Economic conditions were sometimes to blame; for example, in 1719 and 1720 Noel's agent, George Suttie, wrote home from France complaining that 'divers enriched by the Mississippi-Stock hinder him in buying books.'¹ More permanent was a twofold development taking place in Italy in the 1720's. On the one hand, there was a drying-up of the sources of supply. This was noted by Wanley with particular reference to a purchase of books made from Italy in the March of 1723; Wanley was disappointed in the poor quality of the items and comments: 'In short, they seem to show, what I hear from others, that the Italian Monasteries do now begin to be pretty much drained of their old printed books and MSS.'² Hence such an increase in prices that made it hardly worth the agents' trouble to bring the books over. John Gibson, Harley's chief agent for Italian purchases, threatened in the August of 1724 that he would 'trade no more [with Italy] things being grown so scarce that they are as dear in Italy as here'.³ This contraction of supply, however, was caused also by increasing opposition on the part of the Italians who were growing angry at so many manuscripts and other items leaving the country and were themselves bidding high prices in order to retain them there.⁴ Combinations of booksellers and dealers and increasing prices were not the only difficulties. There was the competition not only from a lavish collector like Sunderland but from many others like Thomas Coke of Holkham, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Hans Sloane, Richard Mead, the Rawlinsons, and Sir Thomas Sebright of Beechwood, the last of whom made a sudden appearance in the market in or about 1717 and is described by Charlett as having 'grown a great Collector of Scarce and Valuable Books'.⁵ In this matter of competition Wanley's good personal relations were sometimes helpful—for instance, with Sloane, who on more than one occasion stood down in Harley's favour.⁶

¹ Diary 4 Feb. 1719/20.

² Diary 22 Mar. 1722/3.

³ Diary 4 Aug. 1724.

⁴ Diary 9 Jan. 1723/4.

⁵ Charlett to H. W., 30 Dec. 1717 (B.M. Harl. MS. 3778, f. 39).

⁶ See Diary, e.g. 10 and 11 Mar. 1723/4.

Wanley's first act when the manuscripts came into the library was to write on the fly-leaf or first page a date-inscription; this normally recorded the day the book was received but sometimes it was that on which the negotiations for purchase were concluded. Very occasionally he deliberately refrained from inserting the date; for example, he notes in his journal with reference to eight manuscripts received from Gibson on 7 November 1721 from Italy that he 'gave them to the Binder the same day; but not dated on their first Pages, lest any inquisitive person coming in, should thereby perceive how lately they were bought'. Occasionally dates inserted by Wanley have been lost through cropping by the binders; even in his own time Wanley had occasion to complain of this.

Of the bulk acquisitions, inventories of course had to be made. This was sometimes an arduous task. The inventory of the great mass of manuscripts from the collection of Pierre Seguier, the French Chancellor, occupied Wanley two days at Andrew Hay's in the August of 1720.

Most of the manuscripts and many of the printed books acquired were received unbound; there was therefore a steady flow of material to the binders, and this side of Wanley's work was a very heavy one. The two binders chiefly employed were Thomas Elliott and Christopher Chapman. Before the books went to the binders title-labels were written for each volume and a delivery list was made—what Wanley called on one occasion a 'check-note'.¹ This was important as a safeguard and must have been a lengthy business, as the books were going out at frequent intervals in twenties and thirties at a time. While the binding was for the most part done by the binders at their workshops, occasionally some part of it was done in the library itself.² Most of the preliminary work on the *Codex Aureus* (Harley MS. 2788) was executed in the library. On 27 June 1721 Wanley records that 'Mr. Elliott began to work about the *Codex Aureus* in Order to the New Binding of it, the Cover it had in the Second Binding of it, perhaps about 90 years ago, being worn out, and the whole sewing gone.' On the 13th of the following month Elliott 'having clothed the CODEX AVREVS in my Lords Marocco-Leather' took it to his house to work on it 'with his Best Tools' (that is, for the lettering and the decoration).

Most of the manuscripts were bound in calf, but for the special books, both printed and manuscript, crimson morocco was used,

¹ Diary 21 May 1723.

² Diary, e.g. 13 Feb. 1720/1; 21 June 1721; 6 and 7 June 1722.

adorned with a decorative pattern to which the title 'Harleian Style' has been given by students of binding. The morocco skins for these special books were provided by Harley himself. They were acquired by Wanley's stepson-in-law, John Beaver, when the latter was in Gibraltar in the winter of 1720/1, through merchants from Fez; Harley paid £72 for two gross.¹ These skins were retained by Harley or Wanley and were only handed over by the latter, as required, to Elliott or Chapman, who entered into a special contract for binding with them: Chapman wanted to purchase the skins at a cheap price and to bind on the usual terms but was curtly told by Wanley that 'my Lord will not turn Leather-Seller; & therefore he must bring hither his proposals for Binding with my Lords Marocco-Skins; otherwise, his Lordship will appoint some other Binder to do so'.²

Binding was by no means always a straightforward job; technical problems frequently arose. Of the Nevers Missal (Harley MSS. 2991, 2992), acquired by Harley in 1724, Elliott reported³ that he had 'had great trouble with the later part . . . ; and that so much of it is utterly perished, & a great part of what remains is so rotten, that he think's he can save but little'. 'I encouraged him however', adds Wanley, 'to do all in his power.' Many of Harley's early printed books were on vellum and as such were therefore subject to cockling, which can only be remedied by damping the vellum: Wanley notes that he and Elliott had a long talk in the January of 1723 as to the 'best way of getting out the Cockles risen in my Lords Virgil & Tullius' Epistles both printed on vellum', Elliott estimating that six weeks would be needed for the job.⁴ He probably used too much moisture for we find Wanley complaining later that some of the 'principal Painted Letters' were damaged.⁵

On their return, the books were closely scrutinized and a constant stream of complaints is recorded by Wanley about the delinquencies of the binders. The titling was frequently marred by mistakes or was badly done—Wanley once refers to the 'Vicious Lettering'⁶—and the volume or volumes had to be returned for

¹ Edward Harley to H. W., 18 July 1720 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*). For source of the skins see letter from Beaver to H. W., 22 Jan. 1720/1 (B.M. Harl. 3777, ff. 179–80). The skins were cleared through the Custom House 9 May 1721.

² Diary 20 Jan. 1721/2.

³ Diary 3 Nov. 1724. Cf. also the difficulty with Harl. MS. 2686 (Diary 17 Oct. 1724).

⁴ Diary 9 Jan. 1722/3.

⁵ Diary 18 Mar. 1722/3.

⁶ Diary 3 Dec. 1722/3.

corrections to be made.¹ Chapman on one occasion muddled-up, or to use Wanley's word 'disordered', a collection of old tracts and Wanley had to arrange them again.² The title-labels written by him were sometimes lost. Occasionally a leaf was transposed,³ and once, a manuscript of Eusebius bound by Chapman had to go back for him to 'find the first leaf (which was loose) and fix it to its proper place'.⁴

The 'placing' of the material must have occupied a great deal of time, especially when large collections were acquired or groups of charters had to be arranged. The sort of thing involved is revealed by several entries in the diary. When Collins, the genealogist, called in November of 1722 Wanley notes: 'I bad him call again after the next week is over, because I want the whole room for sorting of Charters.'⁵ On another occasion Wanley put off Elliott when he called for a batch of books to bind because he was busy 'putting-up & Ordering my Lords Classical MSS.'⁶ An added complication was the division of the library (already referred to) between Dover Street and Wimpole, since Wanley was responsible for packing and dispatching to Wimpole cases not only of the newly acquired printed books but of any other things (such as prints, antiquities or 'Rarities') that Harley required there.⁷

From an early stage in its development Robert Harley undoubtedly envisaged his library being a public one, the scarcity of public libraries in London then being a matter of some concern to scholars and others,⁸ and this policy was certainly continued

¹ Diary, e.g. 1, 3 Dec. 1722; 6 Aug. 1723; 11 Sept. 1724; 22 Nov. 1725. Lettering was a particularly troublesome point: one reason in Wanley's view was that it was not always done by Elliott himself (see Diary 11 Aug. 1722, where H.W. says with reference to books returned 'pretty well done except as to the Lettering, about which he will *still employ his Men* [my italics] notwithstanding all that I have been able to say').

² Diary 3 Nov. 1722.

³ Diary 9 April 1720.

⁴ Diary 8 June 1720.

⁵ Diary 21 Nov. 1722.

⁶ Diary 15 Oct. 1724. H. W. notes in Diary under 12 Oct. 1724 that he was 'about to putt all my Lords Greek MSS. in Order together'.

⁷ For example, the 'Great Book of Prints & Drawings (long since bought of John Kemp)' (Diary 6 Oct. 1720), a 'Box full of Rarities' (Diary 1 Sept. 1720), 'pieces of Antiquity' (Diary 20, 23 Nov. 1721), printed books bound in morocco (2 cases, Diary 21 Dec. 1721; 3 cases, Diary 29 Aug. 1720), and 'fine manuscripts' (four in number, Diary 29 Aug. 1720).

⁸ See, e.g. Evelyn to Pepys, 12 Aug. 1689: 'This greate & auguste city of London, abounding with so many wits and letter'd persons, has scarce one library furnish'd and indow'd for the publique.' (*Memoirs of Evelyn*, ed. W. Bray, iv, 1827, p. 313.) And late in the eighteenth century Gibbon (in 1770)

by Edward Harley. The library was not of course public as we should understand it today. Access to it was restricted to well-known scholars, to 'decently accredited petitioners' (if I may appropriate a phrase of Henry James) and, of course, to persons of quality. The knowledge that the *Bibliotheca Harleiana* was being formed on such a large scale and that its contents were in this way accessible probably encouraged gifts to it, some of which were, doubtless, thankofferings for help received; we find manuscripts presented, for example, by Hickes, Peter Le Neve, John Anstis, White Kennett, Lord Bathurst, Francis Atterbury, and Alexander Pope.

A constant succession of visitors in fact came to the library in Dover Street. There were scholars making researches for books on which they were engaged, such as Michael Maittaire, the second volume of whose *Annales Typographici* was dedicated to Edward Harley, and Richard Fiddes, who was gathering materials for his life of Wolsey and who on one occasion brought with him a workman to delineate the cardinal's arms from one of the manuscripts.¹ Some had the work done for them by their clerks or amanuenses; for instance, John Bridges, the Northamptonshire historian, employed William Slyford, who was also Browne Willis's amanuensis. Of course many, anxious to secure Harley's patronage, came to the library to enlist Wanley's help first. In this way he became an important intermediary for authors seeking subscriptions for projected publications; and one such occasion illustrates Wanley's judgement and perception in such matters—Lord St. John of Bletso's chaplain called for this purpose and Wanley gave his agreement in Harley's absence 'having seen him with my late noble Lord who shewed him a good Countenance'.² A number of people were also constantly in and out of the library doing work for Harley himself, such as George Vertue the artist³ and Charles Christian the gem engraver.⁴ Most of the visitors, however, were casual ones who

deplored the lack of a public library in London, which compelled him to build up his own working library for writing *The Decline and Fall* (see G. Keynes, *The Library of Edward Gibbon*, 1940, p. 19). But in fact by this date the British Museum Library was available.

¹ Diary 29 Mar. 1721. The manuscript in question was 67. A. 1 (= Harl. MS. 1197); the arms are at f. 202.

² Diary 31 Oct. 1724.

³ For example, Vertue came to copy some of the illuminations in the 'Benedictional of St. Ethelwold' (then on loan to Harley) on 5 and 10 Dec. 1720 (see Diary).

⁴ Charles Christian came 7 May 1720 (see Diary) to take off impressions of Lady Henrietta Harley's 'fine seals'.

wished to look at some particular book, or people of quality who came to the library as one of the sights of the town, and these, of course, took up most time. Many of them had to be shown every attention, some being personal friends of Harley or members of the family. Several were foreigners, such as the Count Simoneta of Milan and John Daniel Schumacher, library-keeper to Peter the Great. Among the English visitors may be mentioned Sir Hans Sloane, Conyers Middleton Librarian to the University of Cambridge, Dr. Woodward the naturalist, Sir James Thornhill the painter, Alexander Pope and John Anstis Garter.

Nor were these visits short ones. Count Simoneta's lasted 'above two hours',¹ Conyers Middleton was attended by Wanley on one occasion 'almost the whole morning',² and the second of Lord Winchelsea's visits lasted over four hours.³ Wanley's reward lay in the appreciation expressed; he notes the 'great Delight and Satisfaction' of Schumacher⁴ who appears on his side to have made a most favourable impression, for we find Harley himself on one occasion showing him the pictures, miniatures and gems⁵ and he was subsequently invited to Wimpole, Wanley acting as his escort. Sir James Thornhill and his friends 'went away extremely well satisfied'.⁶ Surprise or amazement was also frequently expressed in addition to satisfaction. A Fellow of Corpus Christi Oxford was so ill advised as to brag about the manuscripts in his college library ('all which', comments Wanley, 'I have formerly seen') but the display of Harley's treasures 'soon made him throw-down the Cudgell, & yield the Precedency to my Lords, in all respects'.⁷ Not *all* were satisfied; Browne Willis left in great anger⁸ and Collins the genealogist found Wanley again too busy to attend him when he called in February 1725 and was furthermore given (to quote Wanley's words) 'little encouragement to trouble himself (un-asked) about my Lords Family'.⁹ Wanley was cautious about strangers. A Frenchman (contemptuously described by him as 'a French sort of a Droll') was waited on by Wanley downstairs which he took, records Wanley, 'as a piece of Ceremony; but indeed, it was to see him out of the house without stealing

¹ Diary 29 May 1722.

² Diary 14 July 1722.

³ Diary 19 June 1722. Another visit (25 Nov. 1723) lasted an hour and a half.

⁴ Diary 21 Feb. 1721/2.

⁵ Diary 27 Apr. 1722.

⁶ Diary 21 Nov. 1722.

⁷ Diary 9 Mar. 1724/5.

⁸ Diary 13 Dec. 1725.

⁹ Diary 12 Feb. 1724/5.

something'.¹ Gratuities Wanley refused with scorn and to one who offered him a guinea for his 'trouble' Wanley in refusing said he would 'by no means, sell my Lords Favor'.²

To a very select few the resources of the library were also made available by way of loans both of manuscripts and printed books. Bentley was allowed to have the Codex Aureus for nearly a fortnight in May of 1721.³ An earlier borrowing by Bentley (in 1717) earned Wanley a mild rebuke from Edward Harley, who in November of that year wrote: 'I wish the manuscripts were all got out of Bentleys hand. I think it is too long they have already been there; *I wish they had not been all lent at one time*' (my italics).⁴

It would, of course, be unrealistic to think that the courtesies displayed by Wanley to visitors were always disinterested. These attentions, he very well knew, might at a later date yield dividends, either by way of gifts or by the readiness of some of those so favoured to act as intermediaries or to use their influence with owners of desirable collections. Even Peter the Great's librarian, Schumacher (who had received so many civilities from Wanley and Edward Harley), when about to return to Moscow, was given a commission by Wanley to buy the Greek manuscripts of Wolfius at Hamburg, the books of Zacharias von Uffenbach at Frankfort, and modern bibles at Amsterdam.⁵

As regards individual items the scene is well set at the very beginning of the journal in 1715 where Wanley records how he drew Harley's attention to important manuscripts that should be secured for the library. Thus, he instances St. Chad's Gospels in the possession of the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield and efforts were made to secure it⁶ but although he was later (in July 1721) able to obtain the loan of it for Harley,⁷ the attempt to acquire it was unsuccessful; he thought that the 'Lauderdale Orosius' should be sought for and here again he was unsuccessful;⁸ repeated attempts were made between 1719 and 1721 to

¹ Diary 6 May 1724. ² Diary 28 Sept. 1720. ³ Diary 11, 26 May 1721.

⁴ Edward Harley to H. W., 14 Nov. 1717 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

⁵ Diary 1 May 1722; for Wanley's commission to Schumacher of this date (and other letters to Schumacher) see Ruth C. Wright, 'Letters from Humfrey Wanley to Eric Benzelius and Peter the Great's Librarian', *Durham University Journal*, n.s., vol. i (1940), pp. 193-7.

⁶ Diary 2 Mar. 1714/15.

⁷ Diary 5 July 1721 (cf. B.M. Lansdowne MS. 677, f. 7^b, under 2 June 1721).

⁸ Diary 26 Mar. 1714/15. It was acquired by the British Museum in 1953 and is now Add. MS. 47967.

acquire the 'Benedictional of St. Ethelwold' from the Duke of Devonshire, but the duke declined to yield it, or rather, perhaps, put the question by, claiming that it was a gift to him from General Compton;¹ Wanley made fruitless efforts to trace in 1720 the twenty-four Saxon charters which had been in the possession of Lord Somers² when he had worked on them at the end of 1701 or the beginning of 1702 and of which he had printed the texts in his 1705 catalogue,³ and for which that catalogue is now our only authority; an acrimonious correspondence involving many people followed his persistent, but not tactful, efforts to obtain the Red Book of Hergest from Jesus College, Oxford;⁴ he had no patience with a collection of valuable manuscripts being in a 'remote corner of the Kingdom' like Durham, arguing that they should be in Harley's Library where they would be more accessible to scholars.⁵ In his memorandum-book of 1721 he made a long list of manuscripts known to be in the possession of private owners or institutions, sometimes adding against them the names of persons who might have influence or might be useful as negotiators—thus, against the entry 'MSS. with the Dean and Chapter of Sarum' are added the expressive words, 'WORK by Dr. Whitby'. The list is headed, significantly—'Things proper for the Library in the Hands of Particular Persons'.⁶ That anyone possessed of a library should be unready to give or sell his books to Harley obviously seemed to Wanley a very unreasonable, not to say quixotic, attitude. He had been told that Mr. Chishull of Walthamstow, who had been Lord Paget's chaplain in Turkey, had a number of books uncommon here but, adds Wanley, 'he seems unwilling to part with anything'.⁷

In the same way he expected booksellers to accord Harley a pre-view of all books and manuscripts coming forward for sale

¹ Diary 18 Jan. 1719/20, 23 June and 29 Nov. 1720. Vertue was set to copy an illumination from it for Harley 5 Dec. 1720 (cf. Diary). The manuscript remained on loan to Harley until 18 May 1721 when it was returned to the Duke by Dr. Sherard, who had acted as intermediary. It was acquired by the British Museum in 1958 and is now Add. MS. 49598.

² Diary 28 Jan. 1719/20, &c.

³ G. Hickes, *Thesaurus Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium*, vol. ii, 1705, pp. 301-3.

⁴ Diary 2 Mar. 1714/15 (cf. also 16 Apr. 1715, etc.).

⁵ Diary 3 June 1723.

⁶ B.M. Lansdowne MS. 677, ff. 3-4^b.

⁷ The information came from James Bogdani, the painter (see B.M. Lansdowne MS. 677, f. 6^b, under 13 May 1721).

and on one occasion refused to do business at all since the things had been shown 'to every customer' and a catalogue been printed 'in order to bring in other buyers'.¹

The energy shown by Wanley in his other activities as a librarian was also displayed in his cataloguing.

The printed books at Wimpole, numbering then over 7,000 titles, he catalogued briefly but adequately between September 1716 and June 1717, in a folio volume of nearly 160 leaves, adding an index in the autumn of 1718.² His catalogue of the manuscripts was begun in 1708: by the time of his death in 1726 Wanley had written nearly seven folio volumes each containing on an average 400 leaves, and had reached MS. 2407. That the cataloguing of the printed books occasioned some delay in dealing with the catalogue of manuscripts is shown by the long time taken to complete the fifth volume of the latter catalogue—1712 to 1717. But slowness of progress in the later volumes was due largely to the increasing calls made on his time by the other library business and also I think to the nature of the material in the manuscripts preceding the number 2407; these included the D'Ewes, Stillingfleet, and Randle Holme collections, very many volumes in which comprised miscellaneous items or papers, which necessitated the detailed listing of their contents. The manuscripts amounted in 1715 to 3,000 volumes; by 1721, according to a reference in a letter of Montfaucon's, the number had doubled. The cataloguing was done on a generous scale³ and it is unlikely (bearing in mind especially the heavy intake in the years 1724 and 1725) that Wanley, working as he did single-handed, could ever have overtaken the arrears.

The whole catalogue bears the stamp of his strong personality and the standard is high. He had a clear idea as far back as 1697 as to how manuscripts should be described. In a passage in the report which he made to the Curators of the Bodleian in that year he says with reference to the cataloguing of the Greek and Latin manuscripts that the account of them

¹ Diary 1 May 1721.

² Now B.M. Lansdowne MS. 816.

³ The scale was certainly more generous than that usual in the early eighteenth century. Wanley may have been influenced by the exceptional example of Peter Lambeck's Commentaries on the manuscripts in the Imperial Library at Vienna. It is worth noting that a contemporary bibliographer, William Oldys, did in an account of the Cotton Library link Wanley's name with that of Lambeck: 'Had the late Mr. Humphrey Wanley had encouragement he could have exhibited the Cotton Library to the world with as much advantage as Lambeck has done the Emperor's at Vienna'. (See *A Literary Antiquary. Memoir of William Oldys*, 1862, p. 65.)

should be very nice, in distinguishing authors, their genuine & suppositious works, &c., giving the Title with 2 or 3 words of each tract, & shewing in what page it may be found; telling what Pictures, or Notes are in the book deserving to be made publick, whether it be in paper or Parchment, & how old it is, how many leaves it be on the whole, whether it were ever printed or not; if it be printed whether it agree or disagree with the printed Editions, and such like.¹

This method he does in fact generally follow in his catalogue and for vernacular² as well as Greek and Latin manuscripts. Where there is doubt as to the author's name or where a work is anonymous he sometimes indulges in lengthy disquisitions, occasionally of a controversial kind, but in this he is characteristic of his time. Again, personal opinions of a kind that would now be rigidly excluded make sporadic appearances.³ He refers with obvious satisfaction and pride to friends whose knowledge he had drawn on: he speaks of 'my late industrious friend Anthony Wood' and 'my worthy Friend George Holmes' (who was Keeper of the Tower Records). He never hesitated to invoke aid where necessary, being troubled by no false pride in such matters; for Irish manuscripts he received assistance from Thomas O'Sullevane⁴ and for Oriental manuscripts from Salomon Negri and John Gagnier. Occasionally he transcribes into the catalogue some memorandum in the manuscript before him which caught his fancy; apologetic asides show that he was well aware of this occasional weakness in himself for such irrelevancies.⁵ As we should expect in such an able palaeographer and in one so accustomed to the handling of manuscripts he shows a quick eye for detail—noting, for example, in one place the way in which the leaves of a certain medieval manuscript are 'registered' or numbered and in another the quality of the ink used in some of his writing by Peter Bales, the Elizabethan calligrapher; and, of course, frequent references are made to manuscripts elsewhere, in public or private collections, for

¹ *Bodleian Quarterly Record*, i (1914-16), p. 109.

² D. Nichol Smith has pointed out the way in which his descriptions of these vernacular manuscripts in the Harleian Collection and his liberal quotations from them (e.g. the opening stanza of 'Lenten ys come with love to toun') stimulated the interest of such men as Thomas Warton ('Warton's History of English Poetry', British Academy Warton Lecture, 1929, pp. 10, 11).

³ See his description of Harl. MS. 2367, art. 9.

⁴ On O'Sullevane see R. Flower and M. Dillon, *Catalogue of Irish MSS. in the British Museum*, iii, 1953, pp. 15-17.

⁵ See his description of Harl. MS. 2336, art. 7.

purposes of comparison or amplification.¹ In the matter of citing dates it must be admitted that he is irritatingly inconsistent sometimes citing one and sometimes not.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding its shortcomings and its unfinished state it is no less a monument to his scholarship and his enormous capacity for steady and competent hard work than his Anglo-Saxon catalogue of 1705. How good it is can be seen from a comparison of Wanley's portion with that of the several people—Casley, Hocker, Gifford, and Morton—whose aid was invoked after his death to complete it for publication in 1759.

The amount of original material relating to Wanley's life is very considerable but of such a character that it is not difficult to form a vivid impression of the man, and one not inconsistent with that conveyed so strikingly by Thomas Hill in the portrait of him painted in 1722 that hangs in the Manuscripts Students Room of the British Museum.² (See Plate I.)

In the first place, he had great physical and mental energy and was pertinacious in following up any matter he had undertaken. He once made in a letter this revealing remark: 'In all affairs wherein I happen to be concerned, I love to come to a Point as soon as I may.'³ He had great skill in negotiation. In writing he was assisted by a genius for a happy turn of phrase, ready choice of the effective word, and the possession of a direct style. Examples in letters and in the diary are numerous. Of the sale of the Valetta collection at Naples in 1720 he wrote: 'Three Generations made it; and this Man, for Lucre of ready Money, sold it.'⁴ Noel's fidgety, restless character comes to life when Wanley tells us that on one occasion 'Mr. Noel came *bluttering* about one of Dr. Whincopps books'.⁵ Sometimes he relieves his feelings in what is almost an aside, as when he notes that 'Mr. Hugh Thomas came to study, *as he think's*'.⁶ When a book-binder offered one day to bring some old painted books to show him Wanley records: 'I bad him not give himself the trouble.'⁷ One of the best examples of his skill in describing an incident is his account of the failure of Warburton's manœuvre in the

¹ See his reference to the tradition that the Lindisfarne Gospels had been dropped in the sea in the description of Harl. MS. 1806.

² See the references to the painting of this portrait by Thomas Hill in 1722 by Wanley in his letters to Schumacher, printed Ruth C. Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 196, 197.

³ H. W. to [?John Cooper] concerning the 'Leicester Codex', 9 Dec. 1712 (*Welbeck Wanleyana*).

⁴ Diary 25 July 1720.

⁵ Diary 17 Mar. 1719/20.

⁶ Diary 11 May 1720.

⁷ Diary 21 June 1723.

negotiations for the sale of his manuscripts to Harley in 1720; this is Wanley's account:

Mr. Warburton came to see me at the Genoa Arms, & then took me to another Tavern, & kept me up all the Night, thinking to Muddle me & so to gain upon me in Selling his MSS. &c. But the Contrary happened, and he [was] induced to Agree to accept of the Sum he offered at the first, without the Advancement of a single Farthing.¹

Wanley was also a man of great integrity, a quality not always evident in the early eighteenth century. Gratuities he always declined. I have referred to his refusing one offered by a *visitor* to the Library; on another occasion he was proffered a gratuity by a *bookseller* 'to help him off' with four books, but Wanley adds: 'I told him he did not know me.'² Money indeed seems not to have interested Wanley very much. He notes in a memorandum-book, after recording some discussions with Noel, that 'Noel wonder's that I can resist Money . . . and declare's to me that he *never can have enough*.'³ This integrity extended also to scholarship and to matters pertaining to books. The bookseller Woodman asked Wanley to remove an ownership inscription from an early manuscript of the Gospels which had been 'bought privately', but Wanley declined saying that he could paste a bit of parchment over the inscription '& so lett it rest for 20 years' adding 'For I do not love to putt a pen-knife upon an old Book, in order to erase.'⁴

He was a sociable man with a great capacity for friendship and was generous in his help, but had at the same time a very proper sense of the dignity of his position and was not easily imposed upon. To the Harleys, father and son, he devoted entirely his time, his energies, and his wide knowledge, and won—and retained—their affection and support. That he was methodical is shown by his accounts, by the careful lists he made of books offered for sale or received in the library, by the drafts that are still extant of his letters and the commissions he drew up for dealers and others, and by the notebooks he compiled for his own use on the subject of early printing, heraldic and genealogical manuscripts and coins. And notwithstanding all the writing he did, his handwriting remained throughout his life and right up to the last entry in his diary, which was made

¹ Diary 13 July 1720.

² Diary 13 July 1723.

³ See Lansdowne MS. 677, f. 10, under 12 Dec. 1721.

⁴ Diary 1 July 1725 (cf. what Wanley says at the end of his description of Harl. MS. 1568 with reference to D'Ewes's treatment of Harl. MS. 266).

up a fortnight before his death, neat, clear, firm, and quite unchanged.

Yet a contemporary could write of him as 'a pretending, conceited Fellow' who 'would (does with some People) pass for a Considerable Man', could accuse him of having stolen letters from the Cotton Library, could accept readily the story that he was a 'most terrible Drinker' 'generally drunk when he writes', 'a vain Coxcomb', that he was 'naturally of an unsettled temper', though of 'good Parts', 'wanted Steadiness and Judgement', that he was 'a loose, debauched Man, kept Whores, was a very great Sot, & by that means broke to pieces his otherwise very strong Constitution'. And yet again, after this farrago, this same contemporary recorded, also in his diary and apparently with approval, the remark of Wanley's friend, Thomas Baker of St. John's College, Cambridge, that Wanley 'was so exact a man, that his copies [from manuscripts] are next to originals'.¹

And this man whose remarks on Wanley I have just quoted is no other than Thomas Hearne, the contemporary who is too often taken as the authority on Humfrey Wanley. I will leave you to judge as between the picture drawn by Thomas Hearne and that presented by the material set out in this lecture. I think you will, at any rate, agree with Thomas Bacon, Member of Parliament for Cambridgeshire, who, when recommending to Harley, shortly after Wanley's death, a successor, concluded his letter with the words 'Your Lordship must never expect to find one equal to W[anley]'.²

¹ See *Remarks and Collections of Thomas Hearne*, Oxford Historical Society, 1885-1921, *passim*.

² Thomas Bacon to Edward Harley, 22 July 1726 (*H.M.C. Portland Papers*, iv, p. 16; original in Welbeck 'Harley Letters and Papers, 1725-1740', f. 69).