



'The Path that Sinners Tread'

Tracking the **seven deadly sins** through the special collections of St John's College Library

7 May - 30 September 2013

Open to College members and their guests during library opening hours.





The Seven Deadly Sins

You are very likely able to list most, if not all, of the seven deadly sins: pride, envy, anger, sloth, covetousness, gluttony and lust. They seem to be deeply embedded in our consciousness, perhaps without us knowing exactly where the idea came from to begin with. It is easy to understand their endurance: the thrill of contemplating the forbidden has a habit of eclipsing the satisfaction that comes with righteous living. Our medieval ancestors certainly seem to have recognized this and understood that representing sin through art or literature allowed an audience to indulge from afar, whilst also reminding them of the consequences of overstepping the boundary from passive spectator to damned sinner.

This exhibition is intended to track the seven deadly sins from their appearances in medieval manuscripts through to more recent material, thus demonstrating how they have enriched written material through the ages. In doing so we will show how the special collections here at St John's have been enriched through people's fascination with sinning and the sinner.



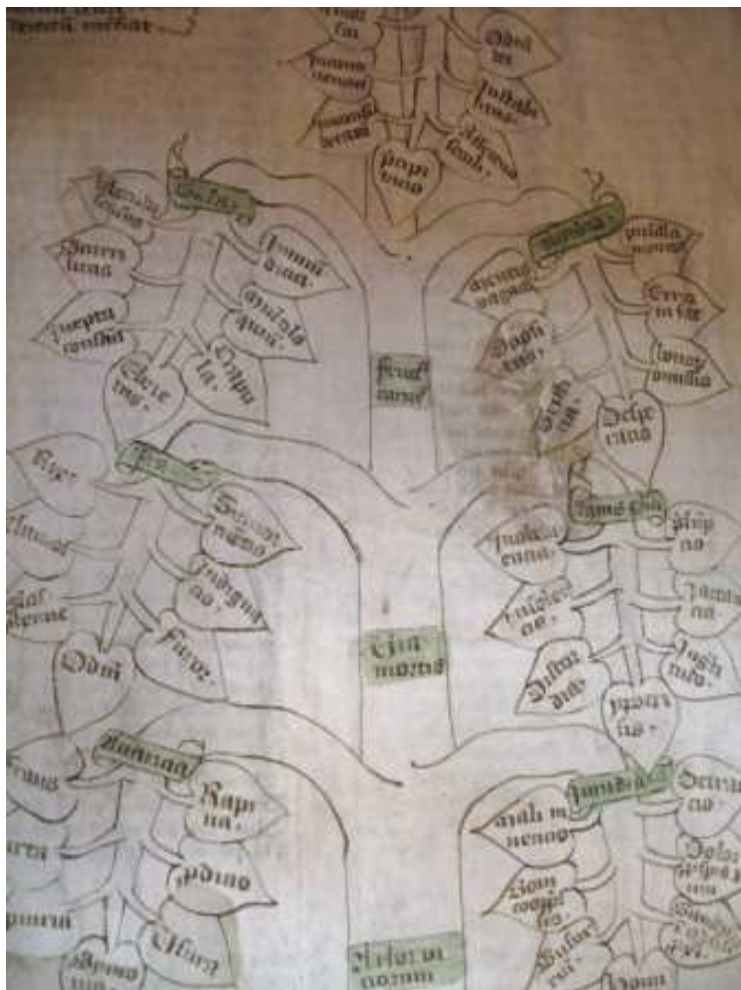
The Seven Deadly Sins: A Brief Introduction

The seven deadly sins as a collective entity has its roots in the literature of early Christians. Tertullian (c. 200), influenced by the first letter of John in the New Testament, believed that there existed sins so grave that Christ's intercession could not wash them away; thus, we find a model for the distinction of *deadly* sins, which result in eternal damnation and exclusion from God. Evagrius of Pontus (c. 345–399) identified eight evil thoughts (*logismoi*) caused by evil demons who wanted to lure monks away from their path to God; these thoughts were gluttony, lust, avarice, sadness, anger, acedia (sloth), vain glory and pride. John Cassian (c. 360–433) soon developed Evagrius' concept of eight evil thoughts into eight principle *faults*, thus transforming the victim of evil thoughts into a more active participant in sin. Cassian's teachings came to the attention of Pope Gregory the Great, who brings us closer to the seven deadly sins with which we are familiar: 'For pride is the root of all evil, of which it is said, as Scripture bears witness; *Pride is the beginning of all sin*. But seven principal vices, as its first progeny, spring doubtless from this poisonous root, namely vain glory, envy, anger, melancholy, avarice, gluttony, lust' (*Moralia in Job*, 31.45.87). The idea of 'seven principle vices', was here to stay, although vain glory eventually gave up its place to pride, Gregory's 'queen of sins', and melancholy was replaced with accidie (sloth).

Gregory also identified a 'multitude of vices' that he believed arose from his seven principle vices. For example, 'From gluttony are propagated foolish mirth, scurrility, uncleanness, babbling, dullness of sense in understanding' (*Moralia*, 31.45.88). The concept of sins manifested as different behaviours has roots in the ancient world. Stoicism, a school of Greek philosophical thought founded by Zeno of Citium (334–262 BC), identified four 'passions' (grief, fear, craving and pleasure), irrational impulses of the soul that interfered with one's harmony with the rational universe and led on to further disruption. For example, craving bred want, hatred, contentiousness, anger, love, wrath and resentment. Although the Stoic 'passions' differ somewhat from the Christian idea of sin that developed, the Stoics' belief in the propagative quality of that which alienates us from virtue is compatible with early Christian teaching.

A manuscript containing biblical genealogies and diagrams of virtues. Produced in England in the 15th century.

The idea of sins begetting sins survived into the late-medieval period, as we can see from the Tree of Vices contained within this 15th-century manuscript. The seven deadly sins are shown to have several 'parts' to them, illustrated by leaves shooting from the seven branches used to signify the foremost sins. The Tree of Vices is presented alongside a corresponding Tree of Virtues, thus emphasising its deficiencies: its leaves and branches are pale and droop towards Hell, from whence they came; its lifelessness proves that the seven sins are truly deadly. Pope Gregory's condemnation of pride as 'the root of all evil' lends itself to this particular way of illustrating the seven deadly sins. It is interesting to note that vain glory has regained its place as one of the seven sins that result from pride, as understood by Gregory. (*St John's College, MS 58*)



The earliest diagrammatic representations of the Tree of Vices date from the first half of the 12th century, and the figure features in *Speculum theologie*, an 'encyclopedia' of moral, devotional and theological tables and diagrams, the compilation of which is credited to John of Metz, a Franciscan, in the late-13th century. Although didactic schemas of this kind originated in monastic communities, their reach was extended following changes to the instruction of lay people in matters of morality during the 13th and 14th centuries. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 made confession compulsory for all, leading to a realization that secular clergy should be equipped to teach their congregations how to recognize sin. The fact that schemas such as the Tree of Vices were already highly visual made them ideal for adaptation to suit a new, illiterate audience. Simplified versions thus began to appear in church wall paintings for the edification of the congregation.

A bestiary, or book of beasts, produced in England c. 1300.

The bestiary provides another example of a textual and artistic form of the medieval period that promotes moral behaviour, this time through Christianized interpretations of existing animal lore. The bestiary displayed here is one of two within the College's collection of western medieval manuscripts; it dates from c.1300 and is bound with other scientific, astronomical and medical works. The volume is open at an illustration of an antelope, whose two sharp horns represent the Old and New Testaments, which humans should use to cut themselves from vice. The story of the antelope acts as a warning against the constant threat of enticement away from a virtuous life: the beast, usually too swift for the hunter to catch, begins to play with its horns in the branches of the heath bush. Its horns become

entangled and the hunter, hearing its cries, approaches and kills it. Likewise, man may become caught up in immorality and claimed by the Devil. (*St John's College, MS 178*)



The image below is another illustration of an antelope, from our second bestiary, MS 61.



G. B. Raimondi (ed.), *Euangelium Iesu Christi quemadmodum scripsit Mar Mattheus unus ex duodecim discipulis eius* (Rome: Typographia Medicea, 1591).

Of course we must acknowledge the influence of the Bible in the development of the Christian notion of sin. This 1591 edition of the Gospels in Arabic with an interlinear Latin translation was donated to the College by William Laud, who was President of the College from 1611 to 1621 and became the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. (Laud also owned a large collection of Arabic manuscripts and set up a Professorship in Arabic.) It is open at an illustration of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Jesus, famished after fasting for forty days and nights, is being tempted by the Devil to turn a stone into bread. Jesus replies, 'It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God' (Luke 4: 4). The Devil goes on to tempt Jesus with all the glory and power in the world



and finally to test his vocation as the Son of God by throwing himself off a pinnacle of the Temple. Evagrius recognized in this piece of scripture temptations to gluttony, avarice and vain glory. Crucially, Jesus overcomes temptation and remains without sin; later in the Gospel, he defeats death by rising again. Consequently the association between sin and death, indeed the deadliness of sin, is at the core of the Christian idea of salvation from the very earliest days of Christianity. (*St John's College, C.3.22*)



Covetousness



"Dragging an old chair to the table, he sat down, and took from it a magnificent gold watch, sparkling with diamonds. 'Aha!' said the Jew, shrugging up his shoulders, and distorting every feature with a hideous grin. [...] At least half a dozen more [watches] were severally drawn forth from the same box, and surveyed with equal pleasure; besides rings, brooches, bracelets, and other articles of jewellery."

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (London: Richard Bentley, 1838).

Here have on display a first edition of *Oliver Twist* by Charles Dickens, which provides a representation of one of the seven deadly sins in a secular work. The novel was published serially from February 1837 to April 1838 in *Bentley's Miscellany*, and as a three-volume book (as seen here) in 1838.

Bentley's Miscellany was illustrated by George Cruikshank, who achieved fame as a satirical cartoonist and had worked on the first and second series of Dickens' *Sketches by 'Boz'* in 1836. He provided one steel etching per month to accompany each of Dickens' instalments of *Oliver Twist*. Two of these illustrations depict the act of theft, but somehow nothing is as effective in the representation of covetousness as the character of Fagin. In the illustration above he is being introduced to Oliver for the first time. Cruikshank's illustrations for *Oliver Twist* hint at his background as a cartoonist, and his style is very much suited to Dickens' grotesque (and, many would argue, anti-Semitic) characterization of Fagin. However, Cruikshank is also capable of responding to the pathos of the novel's closing chapters (*right*). In a counter-image to that on display above, his depiction of Fagin with wild, roaming eyes as he awaits execution supports the narrator's account of the last few hours of a man with little hope of salvation, in this world or the next. (St John's College, STORE / ENGL / 600 / DIC)



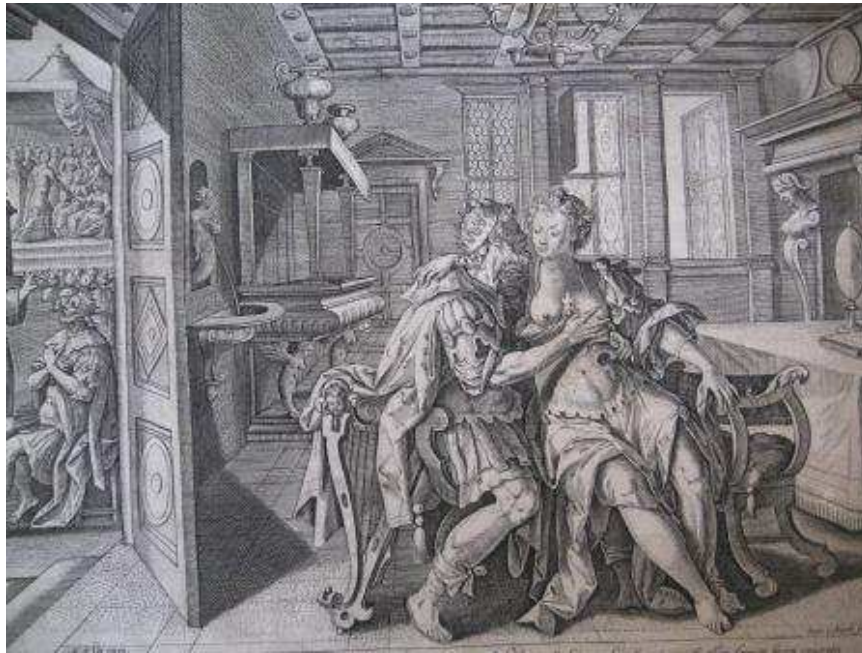
A Harmony of the Whole Law of God. Produced in Little Gidding in the 1630s.

Here we have on display another bequest of William Laud, a copy of *A Harmony of the Whole Law of God* given to him by Nicholas Ferrar. Ferrar set up a religious community consisting of his extended family at Little Gidding in 1625. They constructed biblical narratives such as this one by taking cuttings



Covetousness (cont.)

from printed bibles and series of prints before pasting them into albums. The volume is open at the last of the Ten Commandments, an injunction not to covet, accompanied by the lower of the two illustrations on the left-hand page. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the compilers of the volume have chosen to exemplify the commandment with an illustration of a man coveting another's wife, rather than his house or ox. No doubt the fact that it is a depiction of a Biblical scene (King David's adultery with



Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite) legitimizes its presence in the work. (*St John's College, MS 262*)

Boards inscribed with the Ten Commandments became more common in churches following the Reformation. Whereas previously pictorial schemas such as the Tree of Vices were intended to cater for an illiterate congregation, commandment tables directly challenged an illiterate congregation to familiarize itself with the Word of God.



Sloth

The Oxford English Dictionary defines sloth as '[p]hysical or mental inactivity; disinclination to action, exertion or labour; sluggishness, idleness, indolence, laziness'. Although we have so far viewed it as a synonym of 'accidie', it lacks the precision of the term as used by the Christian ascetics in whose ideas the seven deadly sins have their foundation. Evagrius, in his guide to ascetic living entitled *The Praktikos*, describes the effects of the 'demon of acedia' on the monk:

First of all [the demon] makes it seem that the sun barely moves, if at all, and that the day is fifty hours long. [...] This demon drives [the monk] along to desire other sites where he can more easily procure life's necessities, more readily find work and make a real success of himself. [...] [The demon] depicts life stretching out for a long period of time and brings to the mind's eye the toil of the ascetic struggle and, as the saying has it, leaves no leaf unturned to induce the monk to forsake his cell and drop out of the fight (translation found in Tilby 2009, 128).

For Evagrius, accidie is, specifically, a threat to the ascetic's sense of calling to the monastic life. However, the rest of us are not let off the hook that easily. There is an abundance of scriptural passages that condemn the type of slothfulness with which we are familiar, and warn of the



Sloth (cont.)

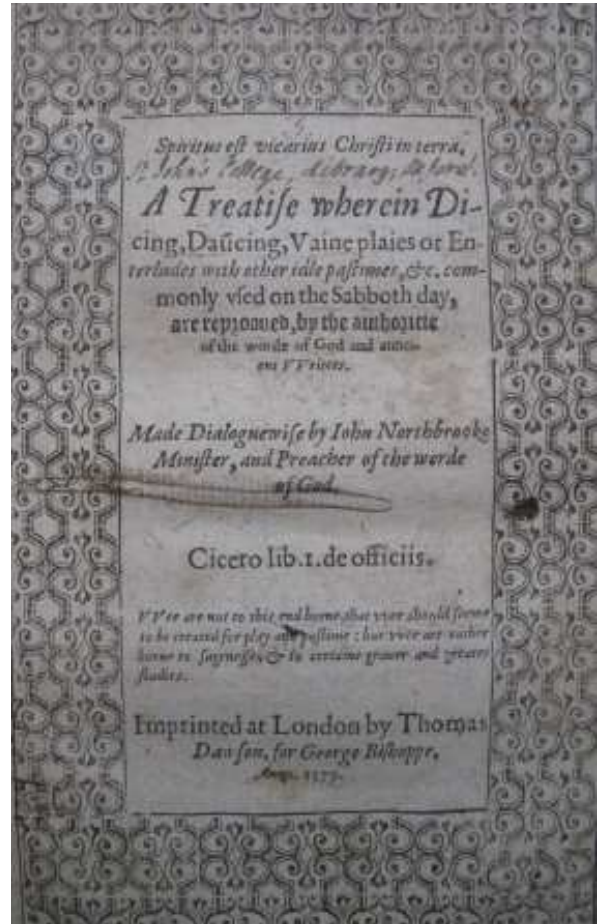
consequences. For example, Proverbs 6: 9-11 reads: 'How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.'

John Northbrooke, *Spiritus est vicarius Christi in terra: a treatise wherein dicing, dauncing, vaine playes, or enterluds, with other idle pastimes, &c., commonly used on the sabboth day, are reprov'd by the authoritie of the word of God and auntient writers* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1579).

John Northbrooke, the author of this treatise, was a Church of England clergyman during the reign of Elizabeth I. In 1568, whilst curate of St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol, he joined James Calphill in attacking Richard Cheyney, Bishop of Gloucester, who expressed support for the doctrine of free will. The attack was a reflection of the mainstream Calvinism of the Elizabethan Church, and indicates Northbrooke's puritan ideology. Further evidence of his religious position can be found in his writing. The preoccupation of the treatise on display here is 'dicing, dau[n]cing, vaine plaies or enterludes with other idle pastimes, &c. commonly vsed on the Sabbath day'; Northbrooke wrote it in 1577 in response to the formal opening of public theatres in London. The treatise may also have constituted an attack on

Northbrooke's local magistrates: whilst London magistrates did not support theatrical performances in their own guildhall, magistrates in Bristol did.

The puritan ideology behind Northbrooke's attack on 'idle pastimes' echoes very closely ascetic Christians' ideas about accidie. In the treatise, Northbrooke engineers a dialogue between Age and Youth in which Age warns Youth against the distractions that threaten to lead him away from a godly life. (*St John's College, HB4/4.a.6.15*)



***Gesta Romanorum*, translated by Charles Swan (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1924).**

This is a modern printing of a 13th-century collection of fables, the *Gesta Romanorum*, or *Deeds of the Romans*. As with the medieval bestiary, these stories have an attached moralization, for the edification of the reader. There are about 165 manuscripts of the original Latin version, as well as 15th-century versions in many European languages, evidence of the collection's widespread and sustained popularity. Such popularity had apparently diminished by the 19th century, however: in the preface to this 1924 edition of a translation by the Reverend Charles Swan (first published in 1824), E. A. Baker informs us that '[t]he present work is the first, and indeed only, translation into modern English of a



Sloth (cont.)

book that was for centuries as popular as the *Arabian Nights* or the *Morte d'Arthur* in their heyday'.

Swan's translation of the *Gesta Romanorum* is subtitled *Entertaining Stories Invented by the Monks as a Fire-Side Recreation and Commonly Applied in their Discourses from the Pulpit Whence the Most Celebrated of Our Own Poets and Others Have Extracted their Plots*; 'Of Sloth', the story at which the volume is open, is a particularly amusing example. The copy on display belongs to the working library of Robert Graves, an alumnus of the College. The library and his papers were bequeathed to the St John's College Robert Grave Trust by his widow Beryl in 2003. (St John's College, PR-SW-2-29)

Gaspar Schott, *Physica curiosa, sive Mirabilia naturae et artis*, Volume 2 (1667).

An altogether different representation of sloth. Gaspar Schott was a German Jesuit scholar who published on a wide variety of subjects including music, geology and natural history. The volume on display here contains descriptions of animals, including the sloth (right), armadillo and anteater. (HB4/5.c.2.16)



Gluttony

John Taylor, *The Great Eater of Kent* (London, 1630).

Nicholas Wood, also known as 'The Great Eater of Kent', was not a fictional character; he was a celebrated glutton who performed at country fairs and festivals in the early-17th century. In 1630, John Taylor, a waterman-come-poet with a thirst for publicity, visited Wood at his home at Harrisom in Kent and invited the glutton to London. Taylor explains, 'my plot was to haue him to





Gluttony (cont.)

the Beare-garden, and there before a house full of people, he should haue eaten a wheele barrow full of Tripes, and the next day, as many puddings as should reach ouer the Thames'. (A bear garden was an arena in which the spectator sport of bear-baiting took place. One such place was situated at Bankside, south of the Thames, near to where Taylor lived.) In return, Taylor offered Wood free board and lodging at his home and a wage of 5s a day; of course, the profits were to be shared between Taylor as promoter and the managers of the bear garden. The deal fell through, however. If Taylor is to be believed, this was because Wood feared he might fail to consume whatever was put before him:

Indeed hee made a doubt of his expected performance in his quality, by reason of his being growne in yeeres, so that if his stomack should faile him publikely, and lay his reputation in the mire, it might haue beene a disparagement to him for ever, and especially in Kent, where he hath long beene famouse, hee would be loth to be defamed[.]

Despite this setback, Taylor retained enough humour to write an extremely witty pamphlet on the matter. (*St John's college*, 17.4.42)

Two hand-drawn illustrations by Spike Milligan from the first volume of his war memoirs, *Adolf Hitler: My Part in His Downfall*.

Under the simple heading 'Food', Milligan recalls 'Oh those military meals!' and the 'Chef' Sergeant Paddy Harris, depicted here in the left-hand drawing. Milligan writes:

Harris could be seen leaving the billet, his Service Dress stuffed with tins of fruit, cream, and other wartime goodies that he laid at the feet of his mistress prior to coitus. When he first met her, she was a little six stone darling; when we left Bexhill two years later she weighed fourteen stone and owned a chain of grocery stores.

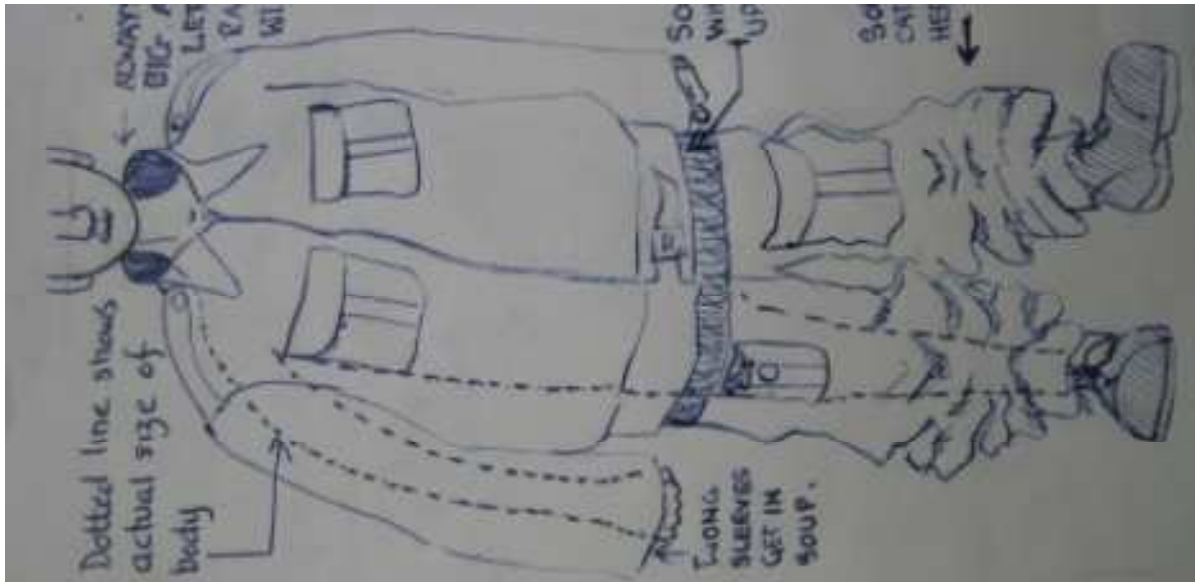
The humorous depiction of a soldier in standard English battle-dress accompanies the following passage from *Adolf Hitler: My Part in his Downfall*: 'Words can't describe the wretched appearance of a soldier in a new battle-dress. Size had nothing to do with it. You wore what you got. Some soldiers never left barracks for fear of being seen'. Whilst Milligan's memoirs are an undeniably amusing account of his wartime experiences, the bluntness of his humour inevitably serves to highlight the absurdity of war, an altogether different, and rather more sinister, form of the ridiculous.





Gluttony (cont.)

Before his death in 2002, Milligan gave to the College the manuscripts of approximately 30 works of fiction, poetry and non-fiction. In addition to illustrations and typescripts of his war memoirs, the collection includes some of his books for children, as well as correspondence between Milligan and his close friend Robert Graves, who was an alumnus of the College.



Envy

A letter from Jane Austen to her niece, Anna, dated 28 September 1814.

St John's College Library is in possession of five letters written by Jane Austen to her niece, Anna.

Jane's father was an alumnus of St John's, as were her brothers Henry and James (Anna's father). Anna's granddaughter, Mary Isabella Lefroy gave the letters to the College in 1939. In this letter, dated Wednesday 28 September 1814, Jane offers Anna advice on the book she is writing. Of particular interest to us in our pursuit of the seven deadly sins, are the following lines: 'Walter Scott has no business to write novels, especially good ones.—It is not fair.—He has Fame & Profit enough as a Poet, and should not be taking the bread out of other people's mouths.—I do not like him, & do not mean to like Waverley if I can help it—but fear I must.' (*Waverley* had been published anonymously on 7 July 1814.) Scott was much more gracious in his acknowledgement of his contemporary's genius. In an unsigned review of *Emma*, he complains





Envy (cont.)

about the exhausted genre of romantic fiction and praises Austen for her success at writing 'realistic' novels:

We [...] bestow no mean compliment upon the author of *Emma*, when we say that, keeping close to common incidents, and to such characters as occupy the ordinary walks of life, she has produced sketches of such spirit and originality, that we never miss the excitation which depends upon a narrative of uncommon events, arising from the consideration of minds, manners and sentiments, greatly above our own. In this class she stands almost alone.

(*Quarterly Review*, vol. 14, dated October 1815, issued March 1816)

Austen wrote to thank John Murray, the owner of *Quarterly Review*, for sending her a copy of the periodical containing this review, but expressed her indignation at the reviewer's failure to mention *Mansfield Park*, writing, 'I cannot but be sorry that so clever a man as the Reviewer of *Emma* should consider it as unworthy of being noticed'. (*St John's College, MS 279*)



Lust

A bestiary produced at the Priory of Holy Trinity, York, in the 13th century.

This bestiary was bequeathed to St John's College in 1634 by Sir William Paddy, a graduate and benefactor of the College and Physician to King James I. The illustration represents a two-part narrative that warns of the consequences of lust. It is based upon the legend of fire rocks, which were understood to be found in pairs on a mountain in the East. Significantly, one of the pair is female and the other is male; if those two rocks come into contact with one another, an all-consuming fire breaks out. The moral of the story is that men and women should be careful not to give into the temptation of lust, and thus avoid the resulting devastation. The juxtaposition of two scenes illustrating 'before' and 'after' the coming together of the rocks is a common feature of the fire rocks narrative in bestiaries. In the illustration on display here, the rocks, held aloft by the two figures, seem to signify the potential for sin that is present





Lust (cont.)

within each human being. (*St John's College, MS 61*)

Interestingly, although the illustrations that accompany the fire rocks narrative in bestiaries generally portray the man and woman as equally responsible for the sin of lust and its consequences, the texts themselves make quite clear that the blame lies with Eve and, by association, the rest of womankind. Debra Hassig, in her book *Medieval Bestiaries: Text, Image, Ideology*, explores the misogyny of the textual fire rocks narratives contained within bestiaries. She notes that earlier bestiaries, such as this one, place particular emphasis on the narrative, perhaps through positioning it as the final entry (as is the case here), or setting it apart from the other material; meanwhile, later bestiaries omit the narrative entirely. Hassig suggests that 'the absence of the fire rocks entries in the later bestiaries may be indirect evidence of lay female readership, a hypothesis strengthened by known patterns of book ownership for the late-thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manuscripts' (Hassig 1995, 127).

'Queen Mary's Mass Book' (Paris: Germain Hardouyn, 1530).

Here we again encounter the Old Testament figures of David and Bathsheba. The illustration shows David spying on Bathsheba in the bath, which immediately precedes the piece of scripture that is depicted in the Little Gidding album under the heading of 'Covetousness' (see the case over the book hoist). Of course the Biblical story, and indeed the two accompanying illustrations on display in this exhibition, represent the sin of lust just as effectively as they do the sin of covetousness.

David and Bathsheba appear here in a 16th-century book of hours, a Roman Catholic devotional volume containing a shorter version of the devotions performed at the eight canonical hours. Books of hours were extremely popular from the 14th to 16th centuries and were produced in vast numbers for the laity throughout Europe both in manuscript form and, from the late-15th century, in printed form. The text of this book of hours has been printed, but on vellum rather than on paper, as is usual, in order to reproduce the effect of a manuscript. For that same reason the illustrations and borders have been hand-illuminated. Germain Hardouyn, originally working with his brother Gilles, was one of the foremost producers of these editions. The book is characterized as 'use of Sarum', meaning that the liturgy follows the Roman Catholic rite as used in Salisbury Cathedral from about the 12th century onwards.

It is not known how this book of hours came to the Library here at St John's, but we do know that in 1710 it was shown to a German guest named Konrad von Uffenbach and described to him as 'Queen Mary's mass-book'. The exact identity of the Mary referred to is unknown, although tradition dictates that the book belonged to Mary of Modena, the wife of James II, who fled into exile with him after the Glorious revolution. (*St John's College, HB4/6.a.3.14*)





Pride

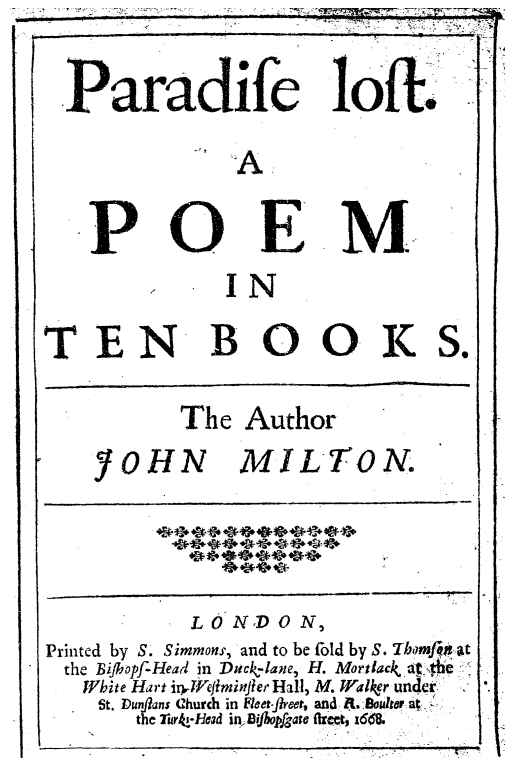


title page of which reveals that the poem was originally divided into ten books. (For the second edition of 1674, Milton organized it into twelve books, in the manner of Virgil's *Aeneid*.)
(St John's College, HB4/6.a.2.6)

The Satan of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* arguably provides us with the most memorable representation of pride in the English language. It is only right that the accolade should go to the fallen angel, since Judeo-Christian tradition implies that Satan was the first to commit this sin: presumably his banishment from Heaven for rebelling against the authority of God precedes his temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden, and only after she has eaten from the Tree of Knowledge does sin (including that of pride) enter God's creation.

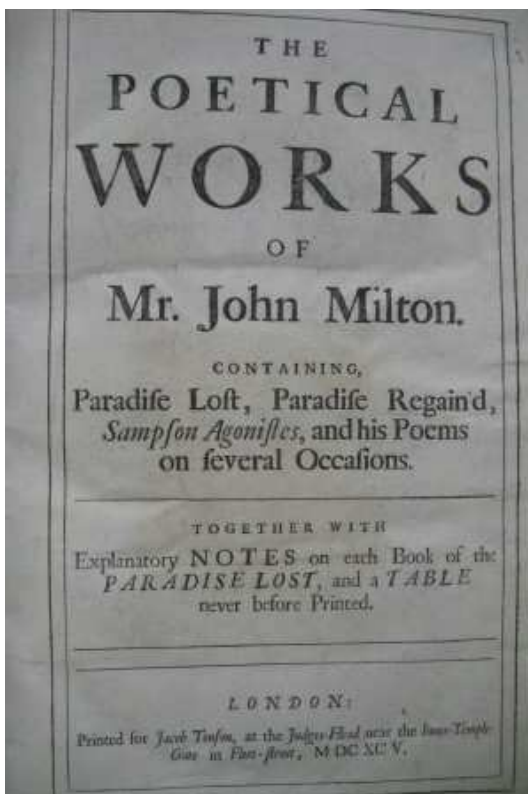
John Milton,
Paradise Lost
(London: Samuel
Simmons, 1668).

Here we have on display a 1668 reissue of the first edition of *Paradise Lost*, the



John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1695).

This copy of *Paradise Lost* is a component of *The Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton*.: *Containing, Paradise Lost, Paradise Regain'd, Sampson Agonistes, and his Poems on Several Occasions*, printed in 1695 for Jacob Tonson. The title-page informs us that the volume also contains '[e]xplanatory NOTES on each Book of the *PARADISE LOST*, and a *TABLE* [index] never before Printed'. Tonson believed *Paradise Lost* to be of huge literary value, although current fashion dictated otherwise; his dedication to the poem and its creator, coupled with his proficiency as a publisher, helped to popularize them both. His first involvement in the publication of *Paradise Lost* came in 1683, when he bought half of the copyright. (He bought





Pride (cont.)

the remaining half in 1690.) Five years later, in 1688, he published the fourth (and first illustrated) edition of the epic poem. It is thought that the 1695 collection of poetical works, on display here, was devised as a way of clearing unsold copies of the 1688 editions of *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Sampson's Agonistes*, since sets often contain the 1688 printing of these works. The design of most of the illustrations has been attributed to John Baptist de Medina (1659-1710), although it is not certain that he designed the one on display here. However, we do know that the engraver was Michael Burghers, who produced countless engravings for publications by Oxford University Press. The image shows Satan standing over his fellow rebel angels in Hell's burning lake, immediately following their banishment from Heaven. (*St John's College*, Ψ .3.29)



Anger



The Summoner

Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales* (Westminster: William Caxton, 1483).

A copy of William Caxton's second edition of *Canterbury Tales*, thought to have been published in 1483. The *Canterbury Tales* were already popular when Caxton published his first edition of the text (most likely in 1476); his preface to the second edition explains that his first edition was found to be lacking in completeness by a young man whose father had in his library a manuscript containing the *Tales* exactly as written by Chaucer. Caxton subsequently borrowed the manuscript to produce this second edition. The most obvious difference between the two



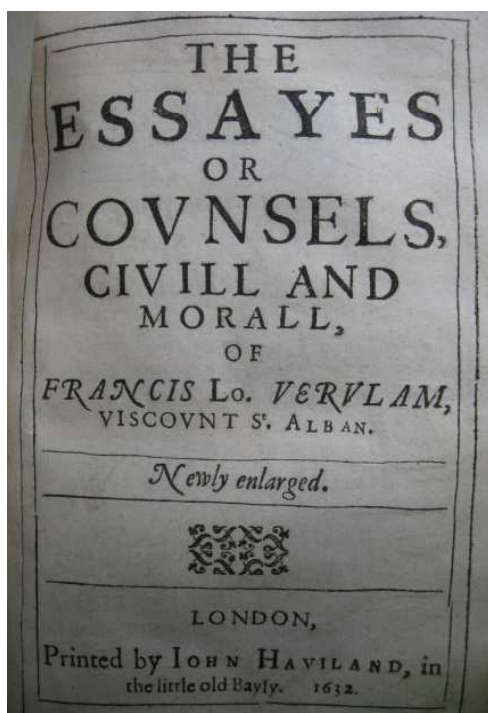
Anger (cont.)

editions is that the second features woodcut illustrations, each tale being accompanied by a depiction of the appropriate pilgrim travelling to Canterbury on a horse. Some of the woodcuts were used more than once, and so we find duplicate illustrations throughout the work.

The structure of *The Canterbury Tales* facilitates the use of multiple layers of narrative within the text; this is demonstrated particularly well in 'The Summoner's Tale', at which the volume is open. Firstly, in the prologue to the tale, the overarching narrative describes the Summoner's reaction to the insulting tale that the Friar has just directed at him: 'High in his stirrups stood the Summoner, / He was so wild with anger at the Friar, / That like an aspen leaf he shook with ire'. Secondly, the Summoner relates his tale about a friar who infuriates an acquaintance by begging for money; Thomas, the aforementioned acquaintance, then enrages the friar by inviting him to put his hand down his trousers on the pretence that there is a gift for his convent hidden there. But alas, 'Full in the friar's hand he let a fart, / And no carthorse that ever drew a cart / Ever let out a fart as thunderous'. The third and last layer of narrative in the tale is provided by the Friar's lecture on anger, in which he relates stories about wrathful kings. Thus 'The Summoner's Tale' provides us with an impressive threefold illustration of the sin of anger. (St John's College, Safe)



The Friar



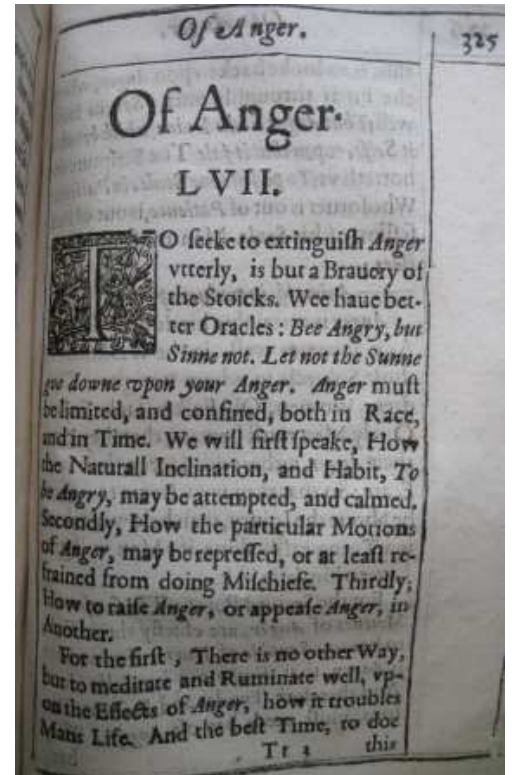
Francis Bacon, *The Essayes or Covnsels, Civill and Morall, of Francis Lo. Vervlam, Viscovnt St. Alban* (London: John Haviland, 1632).

Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626) is a figure of significant literary importance, having played a central role in the development of the English essay. He first appeared in print in 1597 with the publication of *Essayes*, a slim volume of ten essays advising on personal and courtly issues. In the second edition of 1612, the collection was augmented to thirty-eight essays and its continued success led to six reprints between 1612 and 1624. A third edition containing fifty-eight essays appeared in April 1625; here on display is a 1632 printing of that final edition. In 'Of Anger', Bacon rejects the Stoic notion that anger is an irrational passion that it is possible to eliminate. Instead, he views it as an inevitable part of the human experience that it is important to



Anger (cont.)

acknowledge and control: 'Men must beware, that they carry their *Anger*, rather with Scorne, than with Feare : So that they may seeme rather, to be aboue the Iniury, than below it'. Other topics on which Bacon offers advice include gardens, masks and triumphs, marriage and single life, 'regiment of health', studies and plantations. Although most of Bacon's other works were written and published in Latin, his essays appeared only in English during his lifetime, making them more accessible and thus contributing to their popularity. Bacon was aware of their appeal, declaring in 1622 that such writings as the *Essayes* would 'yield more lustre and reputation to my name' than those in natural philosophy. (*St John's College, HB4/2.a.1.12*)



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