Observations on the Winthrop, Bentley Thomas and 'Ex Dono' Collections of the Original Library of Allegheny College, 1819-1823,

First listed by President Timothy Alden in Catalogus Bibliothecae Collegii Alleghaniensis, E Typis Thomae Atkinson Soc. apud Meadville. 1823.

Edwin Wolf, 2nd

Mr. Edwin Wolf, 2nd, Librarian of The Library Company of Philadelphia, was commissioned by Allegheny College to make a survey of the Original Library, March 6-16, 1962.

Notes:

Through his observations, Mr. Wolf uses the original spelling of the College's name: Alleghany.

This document is a typed transcript of Mr. Wolf’s original work.

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The library of Alleghany as it existed when Timothy Alden made his catalogue of it in 1823 has importance today for several reasons: 1) it was the most scholarly library in the west, which was the result of its major component parts; 2) the component parts were distinguished in their day: the Bentle\textsuperscript{y} collection, strong in the classics, moderately strong in the church fathers and representative in theology and linguistics; the Winthrop collection, amazingly strong in linguistics and in voyages and travels, representative in the classics and, because of the influence of John Winthrop, important in the sciences; the Thomas collection, a typical early 19th-century selection of books; 3) the early and interesting provenance of many of the volumes throw light upon an earlier New England culture; 4) there is a present day scholarly interest in individual titles which are of great rarity and/or have considerable value.
Section I. [The William Bentley Collection]

The library of William Bentley came to Alleghany by bequest after Bentley's death at the end of 1819. His will, made on May 8, 1819, left the college "all my classical and theological books, dictionaries, lexicons and Bibles". His manuscripts and New England printed books went to the American Antiquarian Society. The rest of his library was sold at auction on June 14-15, 1820. Hence, the portion which came to Meadville, according to the contemporary inventory a total of 718 volumes (the catalogue lists 740 volumes, of which 93 are now thought to be missing), was a selective segment of the total collection. It was that segment which Bentley, as a scholar and critic of "modern" education, felt should be most useful to a new college. Although the thoughtful minister of Salem was an ardent Jeffersonian, he was conservative in his educational ideas. Harvard had never been so distinguished as it had been in the "old days". In his diary on September 8, 1805 he wrote: "The Character for Learning in New England is by no means preserved. From the MNSS, which I have seen, the Libraries I have visited & the records I have examined of the studies of our Old Ministers, I am convinced that in regard to the knowledge of their own time they were higher than we are." Morison wrote of the earlier days: "A Puritan Minister must be able to expound the Sacred Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, and be cognizant of what the Church Fathers, the scholastic Philosophers, and the Reformers had written, in Greek and Latin." Bentley was.

Throughout his life, he was interested in books. Whenever he went to Boston or Cambridge he visited the college library or private libraries of note (they were not what they used to be was his usual plaint) and went from bookstore to bookstore, most of the time unimpressed with the shoddy wares they had to offer. When Welles of Boston in 1806 imported a selection of German classical and critical works, he became enthusiastic and opined that this was "the first importation of the kind in America." To his friends, the sea captains of Salem, he entrusted orders for books to be bought in St. Petersburg, Goteborg and Mokha. He was like a magnet; his congregants and acquaintances knew him as a book-lover and they brought him treasures from old attics and from the stalls of Calcutta and Bombay. Typical was his account of the exchange of books with Mr. Story from whom he received nine volumes which were "the remains of the old Library of the family of Govner Bradstreet, & his Son Minister at Charlestown, & his G. Son M. at Marblehead." Bentley bought books with an understanding of what he was buying.

Alphabetically from Aelianus to Xenophon, he owned editions of the Greek and Latin classics. Sometimes these were old editions, which had been handed down from one New England scholar to another; sometimes they were the modern German critical editions with variorum texts and the latest revisions. Of the great Greek dramatists he had copies of Aeschylus (Schulz's
edition, Halle, 1782), Aristophanes (a number of early printings and Invernizzi's edition, Leipzig, 1794), Euripides (a 1537 Basle printing, a number of others, and Porson's text, Leipzig, 1802), and Sophocles (several volumes including Niemeyer's recension, Halle, 1781). The poets were represented, Hesiod, Homer in several editions, among them that printed at Orleans in 1606 and various texts edited by Wolf, Heyne and Hermann published at Leipzig in 1804-06, Pindar, Callimachus, Sappho, Anacreon, Bion and Moschus. The major historians were in his collection, Thucydides, Herodotus in a Geneva edition of 1618, Xenophon in a Frankfurt one of 1596, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus in one from the same city of 1586. His Plutarch was that of Paris, 1624. There were several Lucians, including Seybold's edition, Gotha, 1785. Bentley had a folio collected edition of Plato, Basle, 1534, miscellaneous works of Aristotle in miscellaneous editions and the important writings of Aeschines, Demosthenes, Athenagoras, Isocrates and Manilius, together with those perennial school texts of the day, Aesop, Epictetus and Phaedrus.

His comprehensiveness in the Latin classics was equally good. There were nine different printings of Ovid and seven of Horace, a number of Virgils including the four-volume Heyne recension, Leipzig, 1788, Catullus, Juvenal, Lucretius, Persius and Martial. He had various Ciceros, but the complete works printed by Foulis at Glasgow is now lacking, as are most of the tiny Elzevir editions he once owned. The Roman historians, Caesar, Livy, Tacitus, Suetonius, Sallust, Polybius, Curtius Rufus, Ammianus Marcellinus, Diodorus Siculus and Justinus were represented. He owned copies of Nepos, Statius, Aulus Gellius, of the dramatists Plautus and Terence, of the philosopher Seneca in Ruhkopf's Leipzig edition of 1808, of the agriculturalist Cato, of the stylist Quintilian, and of the natural historian Pliny in a handsome folio Frankfurt printing of 1582. If all the editions were not the best and most modern, here at least was the nucleus of a classical collection which few colleges in the country could boast of in 1823. The copies were not those of a collector, but a user; many show signs of hard pre-Bentley and possibly Bentley wear.

Bentley frequently complained that his contemporaries in the ministry had little knowledge of the Church Fathers. While his selection of such works was not comparable to that of Harvard or Yale, it showed an interest in the earliest Christian writings unusual in a private library of his day. St. Augustine was comprehensively included with the six-volume edition of Lyon, 1562, as well as other works. There were also a critical Cambridge edition of 1712 of two treatises by St. John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria's works, Oxford, 1715, Clement of Rome's Ad Corinthios epistolae, Cambridge, 1718, St. Cyprian in a 1593 folio, Cyrillus of Alexandria in the 1572 Paris edition, Cyrillus of Jerusalem in one of 1631 also of Paris, the recensions of the Epistolae of St. Ignatius, a Cologne 1596 folio of St. Irenaeus of Lyon, Photius, and Theodoritus's church history, Paris 1673. And Bentley also owned a number of works by
Nathaniel Lardner, a pioneer in critical research in patristic literature. These, with other minor works, were a solid base for study by a serious theologian.

Surprisingly, Bentley did not have the usual New England preponderance of 17th century sermons, devotions and polemics. He did own, as did most colonial Americans who had a shelf of folios, Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the works of Thomas Adams, called "the prose Shakespeare of Puritan theologians," and the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes, one of the translators of the King James version, all of these volumes imperfect from hard usage. Bossuet, the French divine whose sermons were highly regarded in England and America as models of eloquence, was well represented. He owned an Italian text of Paolo Sarpi's history of the Council of Trent, a work found ubiquitously in American libraries. He had the ever-popular Chillingworth, Bull, Hooker On Ecclesiastical Policy, and Pascal's Lettres Provinciales and Pensees. Isaac Newton's Chronology of the Ancient Kingdoms and Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel were typical of the new era during which theologians strove to bring the Bible into harmony with the scientific advances of the day. These were supplemented by the collected sermons of Samuel Clarke, metaphysician, scientist and the founder of the "intellectual" school of divinity, by Whiston and Bentley's Boyle lectures, and the often-reprinted and widely read works of William Derham. The London 1727, six-volume, collected edition of Robert South's sermons was an accepted classic of its kind. Bentley's own liberal views were, however, manifested in his possession of several books by the Unitarian Theophilus Lindsey and, strikingly, by no less than thirteen works by Priestley, a few presented by the author whose son he met several times and for whom he expressed high regard. This liberalism was further manifested by the presence of the works of the "heretics" Socinus and Arminius, the latter in the first edition of 1629, and Barclay's well known Quaker Apology, Birmingham, 1765.

Bentley spent much time studying biblical criticism and went so far as to begin his own translation of the Bible in an interleaved copy of the Standard Version, making emendations in accordance with his own knowledge of Hebrew and of recent biblical studies. His library was rich in apparatus for such work, the Leipzig 1769 edition of Origen's Hexapla, one volume of Walton's Polyglot, Pole's massive Synopsis Criticorum, Kennicott's Hebrew Old Testament, Oxford, 1776, the commentaries of Crellus, Drusius, Du Pin and Grotius and many others. He owned copies of the Bible in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, of course, but also French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, and Welsh, and New Testaments in French, Spanish, Syriac and Greek.

It was said that Bentley had command of twenty languages and his impressive collection of dictionaries, grammars and phrase-books bears out his reputation. In the autumn of 1787 Captain Hodges, returned from St. Petersburg, delivered a case of books which Bentley had ordered
including a French-German-Latin-Russian dictionary in three quarto volumes, printed in St. Petersburg in 1785. He asked the same Captain Hodges to get him a number of Scandinavian books when he sailed for Goteborg in the spring of 1788. In 1805 he wrote in his diary that Captain Prince, returned form the Mediterranean, had "brought me several valuable books which discover kind attention."

The linguistic collection was solidly based upon a sound group of works on Hebrew. There were Schindler's Lexicon Pentaglotten, Frankfurt, 1612, and the English orientalist Castell's Lexicon Heptaglotta of 1669 in two folio volumes, Buxtorf's Hebrew-Chaldee lexicon, Basle, 1621, Avenarius's Hebrew lexicon, Wittenberg, 1568, Pike's of London, 1766, and the famous Hebrew-German dictionary of Gesenius, Leipzig 1810. Bentley had for reference Scapula's Greaco-Latin lexicon, Basle 1605, and Schneider's Greaco-German one, Jena and Leipzig, 1805. His Latin dictionary was the standard one of Ainsworth and his English one, Johnson's in a 1760 edition. Boyer's French-English dictionary was also a standard in its day and remained current for a century. To this Bentley added a Lyon 1777 dictionary of the Academie Royale and a Latin-French one of Boudot. His Italian guides were also the usual ones, Altieri's of 1726 and Baretti's of 1807. For German he relied on Ludwig's English-German-French dictionary, Leipzig, 1736. He owned the classic Spanish compilation of the Spanish Royal Academy, a folio printed at Madrid in 1791. His more esoteric handbooks were Baden's Latin-Danish lexicon, 1786, and Arnold's English-Danish one of 1784; Vieyra's English-Portugese dictionaries of 1782 and 1809; Widegren's Swedish-English lexicon of 1788; in addition to the Russian dictionary mentioned above, Heym's Russian-French-German dictionary, Moscow, 1799; Mellema's work in Flemish and French, Rotterdam, 1612, and Van den Ende's similar one, Rotterdam, 1651; Marin's Dutch-French Dictionary; and finally two oriental vocabularies, Kirkpatrick's of Persian and Arabic, London, 1785, and Egan's of Persian and Hindustani, Calcutta, 1818.

This survey of the contents of William Bentley's bequest to Alleghany College omits by name more works than it includes, but it does give an idea of its scholarly importance to the new college. It should be remembered that this was not the whole of Bentley's library, merely that portion of it which the Salem minister believed would be most appropriate for an institute of learning. Isaiah Thomas wrote to Timothy Alden on May 8, 1820, "I was in some measure disappointed relative to the Legacy left to our Society- The New England printed books were fewer in number than I had expected, & there were no Old public journals...The German Books were more numerous than I had expected- but the greater part of the Library goes to his Executor. However, the Legacies to your College, & to the Amn. Ann. Society are very valuable." In an age when emphasis on Hebrew and classical languages was greater than on history, literature and science, the Bentley books sent to Meadville were a rich gift.