

complicated by the existence of a sale catalogue of 1687,<sup>56</sup> which purported to offer his library for sale but failed to distinguish genuinely 'Cecil' items (such as many of the manuscripts) from later printed books and some other manuscripts, which could never have belonged to him because of their date. Over 200 of his books are now at Hatfield House, built by his younger son, Robert; a very few (originally through his son Thomas) still remain at Burghley House, and what remains of the rest is scattered throughout the world as a result of the 1687 sale and earlier dispersals. To a large extent (and this must be the case with many libraries of the period) the size and content of such libraries have not only to be inferred from such catalogues, inventories and household accounts as survive but also supplemented from the books that remain.

In the face of such uncertainties, it may be unhelpful to ask what constitutes a large library in this period, particularly since what may have been a comparatively large collection in the 1560s – of (say) 200 or more books – may seem relatively insignificant in the 1630s. In the period up to 1600 there is sufficient information to suggest that two libraries – both of noblemen – exceeded 1,000 books: those of Arundel (d. 1580) and Burghley (d. 1598), while that of Francis Russell, 2nd earl of Bedford, may have exceeded 600 printed books and manuscripts (list of 1584). Among gentlemen, there is evidence for three libraries of about 400 books: those of Sir Thomas Smith (1566), Richard Stonley (1597) and William Gent (1600). In the period up to the 1640s, the surviving collections increase in number and size, as we should expect. The largest for which evidence exists is that of the 2nd earl of Arundel, Thomas Howard (1646), at some 4,500 books, and that of the Sidney family at Penshurst may have been of a similar size. Earlier, Lumley's library at Nonsuch had consisted of about 3,000 items in 1609 (excluding earlier donations and disposals), and Sir Thomas Tresham's (c. 1605), which has been estimated by Sears Jayne at about 2,600.<sup>57</sup> Two other notable collections exceeding 2,000 books were those of Sir Robert Gordon of Gordonstoun (about 2,350 by 1640, but continuing to expand up to the time of his death in 1656) and Henry Wriothesley, 3rd earl of Southampton (1624). Another eight, although smaller than these, exceeded in size any collection of the gentry or nobility in the period up to 1600:

<sup>56</sup> *Bibliotheca illustris*.

<sup>57</sup> Jayne, 138, xii (where the list is assigned to Tresham). Closer examination of BL, MS Add. 39, 830, fols. 155<sup>v</sup>–214<sup>r</sup>, reveals that there are here two overlapping lists with much duplication. The total number of items may actually have been much smaller than suggested.

| Owner                                   | Date | Approximate size                   |
|---|------|------------------------------------|
| Richard Branthwaite                     | 1620 | 1,750                              |
| Henry Percy, 9th earl of Northumberland | 1632 | 1,500–2,000                        |
| William Paget, 4th Baron Paget          | 1628 | 1,550–1,600                        |
| Sir Thomas Knyvett, of Ashwellthorpe    | 1630 | 1,484                              |
| William Drummond, of Hawthornden        | 1627 | 1,407                              |
| Cecil library at Salisbury House        | 1615 | 1,314                              |
| Sir Edward Coke                         | 1634 | 1,227+                             |
| Lord Edward Herbert, baron of Cherbury  | 1648 | 940+ books at<br>Montgomery Castle |

On a smaller scale, an increasing number of women had collections in their own right in addition to using those of their husbands. Before 1600, however, information is only sketchy. The puritan Catherine, duchess of Suffolk, is reputed to have had a 'chest full' of books in 1580, and a few survive with ownership inscriptions of Jane, Lady Lumley (Arundel's daughter) and Mildred Cecil, wife of Lord Burghley (some of these being donations to colleges). In the period after 1600, there were donations of probably over 100 books to Oakham parish church in 1616 by Ann Harington, wife of John, 1st Baron Harington of Exton, and 180 to Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, by her daughter, Lucy, countess of Bedford, in 1628. Class catalogues of somewhat larger collections are extant for those of Frances Egerton, countess of Bridgewater, in 1633 (241 items) and Frances Wolfreton, who owned about 240 books by 1641. This growth is what we might expect and it reflects the expansion of private libraries in general during the seventeenth century.

### Studies, closets and library rooms

Simon Jervis, in his recent discussion of country-house libraries, has suggested that the origins of private libraries lie in rooms such as the 'little study called the newe Librarye', which Henry VIII had at Westminster.<sup>58</sup> He had many other studies, at Westminster, at Windsor and at Greenwich.<sup>59</sup> The 'little study' at Westminster did, it is true, house a few books, but its use resembled that of a muniment room rather than a library, as it contained 'sundry wrytinges from sondrie places beyond the Sea', 'bulle's', 'treatise & commissions for

<sup>58</sup> S. Jervis, 'The English country house library', in N. Barker, *Treasures from the libraries of National Trust country houses* (New York, 1999), 13.

<sup>59</sup> BL, MS Harley 1419 A and B, fols. 186<sup>r</sup>–188<sup>v</sup>.



peace', 'wrytinges concerning the ordre of Saynte Mychaell', and 'plattes and petygrees' in leather and canvas bags, in coffers, in boxes, and in a 'cupboard full of tilles' (i.e. 'drawers'). There were also two oak desks containing writing instruments (silver ink boxes, scissors, penknives and a pencil) and spectacle cases. Shelves supported 'paternes for Castles and engynnes of warre', and the room also contained measuring and surveying instruments and a 'great globe of the description of the Worlde'. The presence of an elephant's 'tooth', a series of handsome cabinets and coffers covered in velvets or painted leather, two coffers of mother-of-pearl with silver mounts, twenty-four enamelled plaques of the Nine Worthies and other subjects (presumably from Limoges) and an unfinished portrait of Henry VIII himself suggests that this room most closely resembled the 'cabinet of curiosities' of art and nature associated with the collectors of the early seventeenth century (such as Sir Robert Cotton) and referred to by Sir Henry Wotton in his *Elements of architecture*, published in 1624, as 'Repositories for workes of rarity in Picture or other Arts, by the Italians called Studioli'. Some of the other items stored in the little study or 'newe librarye' suggest that it more closely resembled an up-market lumber room. Among these were 'one Angling roode of rede' and no fewer than fifteen velvet collars for hounds. Also at Westminster, the 'Kynges secrete studie', called the 'chaier house', was fitted with forty-four compartments in four tiers of eleven. This, however, contained no books, but another miscellaneous collection of treasures.

In an inventory of the goods belonging to Henry, Lord Stafford (1501–63), drawn up in 1565/6, the books seem to have been kept in four classes or cases in the gallery of Stafford Castle, but were actually used in a well-lit study on the ground floor near the garden. This study was furnished with a reading desk, two cupboards and a large trestle table. Such a room might have had some resemblance to the later Kederminster Library (1631).<sup>60</sup> Peacham, in *The compleat gentleman* (1622), had timely advice to give about the location of such studies and the general care of books: 'To auoide the inconuenience of moathes and moldiness, let your studie be placed, and your windows open if it may be, towards the East' rather than to the south or west, and 'suffer them not to lie neglected', but 'haue a care of keeping your bookes handsome and well bound'. His warnings were as pertinent then as they are now: 'our mappes and pictures will quickly become pale, loosing their life and colours, or rotting vpon their cloath, or paper, decay past all helpe and recouerie'.<sup>61</sup>

60 Illustrated in Heal and Holmes, *The gentry in England and Wales*, pl. 23.

61 1622 edn, 54f.

As collections grew in size, books were often distributed in different parts of the house. Sir William Ingleby's books, according to the 1618 inventory of Ripley Hall, Yorkshire, drawn up after his death, had been kept in the new study, the old study and the dining parlour, and where no separate library room existed this practice continued throughout the seventeenth century.<sup>62</sup> Sometimes there is information about how the books were distributed among these different locations. The 1588 inventory of Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, for example, describes in some detail the way in which his books and papers were stored in the various 'studyes'. Here, again, the various rolled up pedigrees, charters and seals were kept in sets of drawers, with the books arranged on shelves in numbered presses.<sup>63</sup> Books, however, were frequently kept in chests. In a 'noet of my lo[rds] books' made in 1584, the collection of Francis Russell (c. 1527–85), 2nd earl of Bedford, seems to have been kept 'in the long Trunck', and, 'in the great cheast bound with iron', there were no fewer than 190 books.<sup>64</sup> Business papers were also kept in chests. Lady Anne Clifford wrote in 1619 that she 'brought down with me my lady's [her mother, the countess of Cumberland] great trunk of papers to pass away the time, which trunk was full of writings of Craven and Westmorland and other affairs, with certain letters of her friends and many papers of philosophie'.<sup>65</sup> Books were still being kept in this way in the 1650s by John Holles, 2nd earl of Clare.

Gentlemen's book collections were frequently distributed among their various residences. For instance, Edward Paston (1550–1630), a Norfolk gentleman, kept some of his many music manuscripts in a chest, a closet and four 'trunckes' in the gallery in Appleton Hall (near Sandringham in Norfolk) as well as other items in the 'Study next the Parlor', but there were other books at his properties of Thorpe Hall and Town Barningham.<sup>66</sup>

Evidence exists, too, for a number of compact travelling libraries early in the seventeenth century made up of a selection of miniature books. Four examples have been identified, each with three shelves of small gold-tooled vellum-bound volumes, containing about forty-four books each, on theology and philosophy, history and poetry, placed in a wooden box, the lid of which contains on the inside an ornately decorated catalogue, while the outside of

62 Cliffe, *World of the country house*, 163–6.

63 The inventory is BL, MS Lansdowne 58, fols. 103–6. See also above, 476–84.

64 M. St Clare Byrne and G. S. Thomson, 'My Lord's books: the library of Francis, second earl of Bedford in 1584', *Review of English Studies* 7 (1931), 396–405.

65 Clifford, *Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, 66, annotation 51.

66 P. Brett, 'Edward Paston', 67.



the box gives the appearance of a leather-bound folio volume. These were evidently all gifts, very probably by the same donor, the barrister William Hakewill, to friends and patrons who included Sir Thomas Egerton (who died in 1617), Sir Julius Caesar, Master of the Rolls, a member of the Madden family, and one of the sons of Sir Nicholas Bacon. Other collections of miniature books with the same purpose in mind were made for Henry, Prince of Wales, and Prince Charles.<sup>67</sup>

Closets – small rooms within the private apartments of a gentry family – were frequently used both to store and to read books. A design for a closet made by the English architect Richard Smythson in about 1600 shows four elevations fitted out, apart from door, chimneypiece and window, with shelves divided into compartments and with four built-in desks. Some of the compartments are identified as 'For a mape', 'For loose papers', 'for writings' and 'For Incke'. This rather austere room seems more akin to a muniment room or an estate office than a room in which to enjoy a leisurely read. Nevertheless, we have a diary entry of Lady Anne Clifford for the use of a closet as a 'reading room'. She writes on 26 April 1617 at Knole: 'I spent the evening in working and going down to my Lord's Closet where I sat and read much in the Turkish History [*The Generall historie of the Turkes*, by Richard Knolles] and Chaucer.'<sup>68</sup> Again, a month later, on 24 May, she provides further evidence of the use of the closet as a library: 'The 24th we set up a great many of the books that came out of the North in my closet.'<sup>69</sup> The reference is to her library which had recently been brought down from the Clifford estates in the north, left to her uncle on her father's death.

The inventory drawn up on the death of Henry Percy, the 'Wizard Earl', in 1632 shows both chests and closets still being used for books. However, 'chests of books of all sorts fifty-two, and to fill twelve small chests besides' were kept in the library itself along with seventy-seven pictures, including 'twelve Turks' and 'twenty-four Emperors' and many 'curiosities'. Also, 'in the closet belonging to the Old Earl's chambers' were 'books in folio forty-four, in vellum of all sorts twenty-eight, pamphlets of all sorts thirty-three'. The inventory provides no evidence of shelving.<sup>70</sup> Again, in 1618, Sir William

Ingleby's books shared the old study at Ripley Hall, Yorkshire, with items such as a sparrow net, a lark net, horse collars and bridles.<sup>71</sup>

The idea of a separate library room for the display of books on shelves took hold only gradually even among the wealthier gentry, as Cliffe points out.<sup>72</sup> Early in the period there is evidence from Longleat, the residence of Sir John Thynne, where in 1563 two Frenchmen, a sculptor and a joiner, were hired for work which included the decoration of the porch, the panelling of the gallery and work on bookcases for the library.<sup>73</sup> At the end of the period, an inventory of 1634 drawn up on the death of Sir Edward Zouch describes a room in his newly completed Jacobean mansion as a library containing 250 books. If the class-catalogue of Lord Lumley's library made by Anthony Alcock in 1596 was based simply on an inspection of the books on the shelves, then the collection at Nonsuch was arranged in a large room according to seven subject classes, with some, particularly theology, occupying a number of cases.<sup>74</sup> This seems to have been the case at Salisbury House in the Strand. The 1614/15 catalogue of books 'in your lordships library' – one of the many London houses of the Cecils – suggests a large library room with three cases on the left and four on the right, accommodating in all about 1,300 books. If a survey and plan made by Sir Christopher Wren in 1706 is to be believed, the library built at St James's in 1609–10 to accommodate the book collection of Henry, Prince of Wales, was located on an upper floor of the palace at the extreme south-east corner. The room was 25ft by 35ft, divided lengthways by a fitting which seems to have had a double stack of shelves or boxes. The interior was not exclusively utilitarian, as payments to the master sculptor Maximilian Colt reveal the addition of an elaborate fireplace and 'four greate arches over the passages in the library, with architrave round aboute them and the Princes armes in the spandrils'. The decoration also included both Ionic and Corinthian capitals, pyramids, pendants and satyrs.<sup>75</sup> It was not, however, until the end of the seventeenth century that the libraries of English country houses became the elegant rooms with ornate decoration, lined with books in uniform bindings, that we see today.

A library room furnished with bookcases rather than chests or trunks was a place where finely bound books could be displayed to advantage and shown to visitors, and there are many examples of owners from this period who valued their books in this way. Lumley, despite the size, range and historical

67 W. A. Jackson and H. M. Nixon, 'English seventeenth-century travelling libraries', *TCBS* 7 (1979), 294–32.

68 Clifford, *Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, 54. 69 *Ibid.*, 56.

70 Batho, 'Library of the "Wizard" Earl', 250. For a recent reassessment suggesting 'an early form of the Pepys-type freestanding bookcase' see S. West, 'Studies and status: spaces for books in seventeenth-century Penshurst Place, Kent', *TCBS* 12 (2002), 266–92, esp. 271.

71 Cliffe, *World of the country house*, 163. 72 *Ibid.*

73 D. Burnett, *Longleat: the story of an English country house* (London, 1978), 32, 34.

74 Jayne and Johnson, *Lumley library*, 9–10, 32–3.

75 R. Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's lost Renaissance* (London, 1986), 210.



of the period – to Burghley in 1597.<sup>94</sup> Theobalds was acquired by Burghley in 1564, and during the 1570s and 1580s it developed into a kind of auxiliary royal palace for the queen's frequent visits there towards the end of her reign. The gardens were constructed in the latest fashion between 1575 and 1585. His London house also had elaborate gardens, though we know little about them. Burghley's 'weakness' is reflected in the books and manuscripts in his library. Hatfield preserves a number of garden plans in his own hand. In one of his notebooks that survive, there are notes in his hand relating to the planting and care of crops, and there is a letter from him in 1561 (25 March) to Sir Thomas Windebank, who was in Paris with Cecil's son Thomas, requesting him to procure 'a lymon, a pomgranat, and a myrt tree' (to add to his existing orange tree) so that these could be included with other items that Sir Francis Carew was intending to send home. He particularly requests Sir Thomas that 'before hand [he] send me in wryting a perfect declaration howe they ought to be used kept and ordered'.<sup>95</sup> Books relating to gardening and agriculture with Cecil's signature now at Hatfield include his much annotated 'Geoponica' (or *De agriculturae* (Basle, 1540) attributed to 'Constantine VII', with commentary by Cornarius), the *De re hortensi libellus, vulgaria herbarum florum et fructum* by Charles Estienne in 1539, bound with the same author's *Seminarium, et plantarum fructiferarum* (Paris, 1540) – the former annotated by Burghley throughout.

The garden at Theobalds seems to owe something to the gardens presented by Vredeman de Vries in his *Hortorum viridariumque formae*. De Vries's work was widely used for its garden patterns by builders in England. There is a plan of the Great Garden at Theobalds endorsed by Burghley. The approach to this garden was through a loggia painted with genealogies (another of Burghley's interests), and the garden was surrounded by a moat on which visitors could be rowed in boats. The design echoes Androuet du Cerceau's engravings of French gardens in his *Le plus excellents bastiments de France* (1576) – one of the very few architectural books to give actual views of gardens, and a book which was known and studied in England.<sup>96</sup>

His son Robert inherited his father's passion for gardening. As a young man he had created a remarkable emblematic garden at his house at Pymms (4 miles distant from Theobalds)<sup>97</sup> in honour of Elizabeth I, and as soon as he inherited Theobalds, on Burghley's death in 1598, he started new garden

developments. The garden at Hatfield House, built between 1607 and 1612 (which he had exchanged with James I for Theobalds in 1607) was created by Cecil's gardener, Mountain Jennings. When it came to stocking the garden, John Tradescant took over, being to Hatfield what Gerard had been to Theobalds. Tradescant brought shiploads of rare trees, fruits, flowers, plants and seeds back from Europe. Marie de Medici sent Cecil 500 fruit trees and two gardeners to supervise their planting. Robert Cecil died on 24 May 1612 and never lived to enjoy either his great house or its magnificent garden.

### The gentleman as 'virtuoso'

The early seventeenth century saw the emergence of the new cultural phenomenon of the 'virtuoso'. A virtuoso was someone whose main concern in life was with the collecting of natural or artificial 'curiosities' – accompanied by some antiquarian 'research', aesthetic appreciation, and the acquisition of classical sculpture and 'old-master' paintings. He often dabbled in a little 'science' and engineering, on the side. The collecting of 'curiosities' was certainly not new in the early seventeenth century. John Stowe tells us that Reyner Wolfe (d. 1573), the printer and also the instigator of Holinshed's *Chronicles*, had just such a collection, including 'curiosities' found among the numerous cartloads of bones he removed from the charnel house in St Paul's Churchyard when setting up his business there. Antiquarians such as John Twyne, of Canterbury, began excavating at ancient sites, and William Camden, Lord Howard of Naworth and Sir Robert Cotton were interested in Roman antiquities being found at Hadrian's Wall. Lord Howard, who lived very close to the wall, formed his own collection of Roman altars and inscribed stones to adorn the gardens at Naworth, sending some examples south to add to Cotton's growing collection of antiquities.<sup>98</sup> Pottery, bones and above all coins found their way into their collections – notably that of Sir Robert Cotton – and were proudly displayed to visitors, along with their shelves of books. William Cecil also had a coin collection to accompany his books at Theobalds, and evidence of his interest in coin and medal collecting survives in his library, which included Sebastiano Erizzo, *Discorso sopra le medaglie antiche* (Venice, 1559), which he acquired in 1565, now at the National Art Library (V&A, Clements Coll. CLE LL2). Henry Herbert, 2nd earl of Pembroke (?1534–1601), was another, collecting not only

<sup>94</sup> STC 11750, with Burghley's arms, as dedicatee, on the verso of the title page.

<sup>95</sup> R. Strong, 'Sir Francis Carew's garden at Beddington', in E. Chaney and P. Mack (eds.), *England and the continental Renaissance* (Woodbridge, 1990, 1994), 234.

<sup>96</sup> Strong, *Renaissance garden in England*, 53. <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>98</sup> G. Ornsby (ed.), *Selections from the household books of the Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle*, Surtees Soc. 68 (Durham, 1878), lvii, lix.



manuscripts, but ancient sculpture, coins, medals and gems. Others had begun to purchase sculpture and works of art from abroad, often to decorate their new homes and 'fantasticall' gardens. In the 1560s, for example, William Cecil was buying statues of Roman emperors from Venice and importing marble doorframes, basins and tables from France to be set up eventually in his new residence, Theobalds. The 'Wizard Earl' was interested in scientific experiments, as William Drummond of Hawthornden was in trying to invent weapons of war. The libraries of such men reflect these interests and we have to see their libraries in this wider context.

However, it was Thomas Howard, 2nd earl of Arundel (1585–1646), who was to be dubbed by Horace Walpole in the eighteenth century as 'the father of virtu' in England. A man of great *hauteur* – whom many found insufferable – he was nevertheless to set before his contemporaries a new ideal for the life of a gentleman. It was this side of him that stands out in this description of him by his one-time secretary, Sir Edward Walker:<sup>99</sup>

He was the greatest favourer of Arts, especially painting, sculpture, Designs [i.e. drawings], carving, Building and the like, that this age has produced; his Collection of Designs being more than any person living, and his Statues equal in number, value and antiquity to those in the Houses of most Princes . . . And he had the Honour to be the first Person of Quality that set a value on them in our Nation.

Arundel's visit to Italy in 1613/14 with his friend Inigo Jones saw the beginning of his collecting activities. While in Rome he obtained a licence to import Roman antiquities, and commissioned four statues from a Roman sculptor. He was also purchasing books in Italy. These antiquities had a considerable impact when they arrived in England. His great-uncle, John, Lord Lumley, had owned the largest collection of pictures in England – over 200 – but these were mainly portraits of ancestors and notable 'worthies' of the day. Lumley also had the second largest library of the time, and another relative, Lord William Howard of Naworth, had formed another large library in the north. What was different about Arundel's collection was not only its size and scope, but its intention – 'art for art's sake' – as opposed to the often utilitarian outlook of his predecessors.

Inigo Jones designed a new italianate picture and sculpture gallery at Somerset House to house the collection. The collection was viewed by Lady Anne Clifford in December 1616: 'Upon the 27th . . . Presently after Dinner

<sup>99</sup> R. Strong, *The spirit of Britain: a narrative history of the arts* (London, 1999), 238. Chapter 18 (239–51) deals in detail with Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel, the 'Virtuoso'.

came my Lord thither and we went together to my Lady Arundel's where I saw all the Pictures and Statues in the Lower Rooms.'<sup>100</sup>

As well as sculpture, paintings and antiquities, Arundel owned a huge library. This was augmented, when he was a part of the 1636 embassy to Vienna, by the purchase of the library of Willibald Pirckheimer, the wealthy Renaissance humanist and friend of Dürer, which included priceless books and incunabula – some of them illustrated by the great German artist.

Arundel's circle included Sir Robert Cotton, John Selden, William Camden, Sir Henry Spelman and William Harvey. His librarian was Francis Junius. In his *Compleat gentleman*, Henry Peacham, who was tutor to Arundel's children, sums up the changes in the education of a gentleman largely inspired by Arundel. In a chapter entitled 'Of the dignities and necessitie of Learning in Princes and Nobilitie', he writes: 'Since learning then is an essential part of Nobilitie, as unto which we are beholden, for whatsoever dependeth on the culture of the mind; it followeth, that who is nobly borne, and a Scholar withal, Deserveth Double Honour, being bothe εὐγενής and πολυμαθής.'<sup>101</sup> These were fine words for a lofty ideal. We have come a long way from the perceived stereotype of the hunting and hawking gentleman who had little if any time for his books. Let Peacham have the last word in his timely advice to those who would be 'compleat gentlemen' in 1622:

Affect not as some doe, that bookish Ambition, to be stored with books and haue well furnished Libraries, yet keepe their heads emptie of knowledge: to desire to haue many bookes, and neuer to vse them, is like a childe that will haue a candle burning by him, all the while he is sleeping.'<sup>102</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Clifford, *Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, 43.

<sup>101</sup> Peacham, *The compleat gentleman*, ch. 2, 18.

<sup>102</sup> Peacham, *The compleat gentleman*, 54.