

BISHOP C.H. DAVIS, OSB AND TWO SIXTEENTH CENTURY MISSALS OF A COMMON PROVENANCE

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The April 12th, 1989 issue of the *Catholic Weekly* carried a feature article which dealt in part with various activities in the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives in the crypt of St. Mary's Cathedral. The writer drew attention to the only early printed book held in that location in these terms:

... the oldest book in the Archives, a Latin Missal dated 1588 and inscribed C.H. Davies, OSB, Bishop of Maitland, is in relatively almost mint condition (sic). It was produced in the days when paper was made from linen materials and it has weathered the centuries remarkably.¹

It may be remarked in passing that 'mint' as a term to describe the condition of a printed book is a usage borrowed from numismatics² and is chiefly employed by antiquarian booksellers and book collectors. It means as good as new and hardly admits of qualification. A book is in mint condition or it is not. While there are sixteenth century books in mint conditions they are few and far between. This missal is not. Having been used for years as a random exhibit and left open at the beginning of the *Canon Missae* with the facing illustration of the Crucifixion under bright light, the inevitable browning effect on those pages, quite apart from other blemishes, precludes the description of its condition as 'mint'.

¹ Compton, Sister, M. Xavier 'Cathedral still has many friends' *Catholic Weekly* 12 Apr. 1989 p. 23.

² See Carter, John *ABC for book collectors*. 6th ed.; with corrections and additions by Nicholas Barker. London, Granada, 1980 p. 139.

The writer of the C.W. article speculates vaguely that the missal "probably came from a European monastery as a gift for the far-distant land Australia." As it bears an early mark of Carmelite provenance it certainly did come from a European religious house, like so many other books of local Benedictine provenance.

The missal is one of two copies of the same edition of the Roman Missal known to be held in Sydney. It was printed in Salamanca by Guillelmus Foquel, who printed consecutive editions of the Roman Missal for each year from 1586 to 1589, which are differentiated by their pagination sequences in catalogue entries for all except the last.³ In 1589 he also printed the 'Pars Hyemalis' of the Roman Breviary in two parts⁴ and the Proper of the Mass of the Vigil of St. James the Apostle, Patron of Spain. This latter two-leaf item is bound with both Sydney copies of the missal and also with the copy held at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.⁵

Both Sydney copies, which are fully described at the end of this article in a composite entry derived from a MARC record, constitute one of only seven sixteenth century Spanish imprints enumerated in Fletcher and Smith's *A short-title catalogue of sixteenth century printed books held in*

³ Entries for Foquel's missals of 1586, 1588 and 1589 occur in the *National Union Catalogue, pre-1956 imprints : a cumulative author list representing Library of Congress printed cards and titles reported by other American libraries*. London, Mansell, 1968-1980. Vol. 99, p.468. A copy of his 1586 missal is at St. Vincent College and Archabbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania and one of his 1589 missal is held by the Hispanic Society of America in New York. A copy of his 1587 missal is in the British Library with an entry in British Museum. Department of Printed Books *General catalogue of printed books to 1955..* Photolithographic ed. London, Trustees of the British Museum, 1959-1966. Vol. 139, p.372, 468.c.2.

⁴ Also held by the British Library. See Thomas, H. *Short-title catalogue of Spanish, Spanish-American and Portuguese books printed before 1601 in the British Museum*. London, Trustees of the British Museum, 1966 p. 50.

⁵ See *National Union Catalogue. Op. cit.* Vol. 99, p. 468 NC 0219301.

libraries and private collections in New South Wales.⁶ The same catalogue also includes the Bishop Davis copy of a Biblical concordance printed two years before his missal, *Concordantiae Bibliorum utriusque Testamenti* (Lyons, G. Rouillé, 1586. 4t.)⁷ This bears the owner's signature dated 1841, the year he became Cellarer at Downside, and also his signature as Bishop on the front pastedown, as in his missal. These, and other marks of ownership, are detailed in two published provenance lists for sixteenth century books cited in Fletcher and Smith⁸ as well as in the listing at the end of that work.

The other copy of Foquel's 1588 missal is at St. John's College, Sydney University where Bishop Davis was closely involved in the train of events leading to the College's foundation up to the time of his death in 1854.⁹ Both copies of the missal are signed, "fray Joan. de S. Hiermo", signed that is, by the Carmelite writer, Juan de San Hieronimo (1579-1667)¹⁰ and clearly must have come into his possession or use quite some years after they were published.

A monk of Downside Abbey near Bath, like Polding and Ullathorne before him, an accomplished liturgist and musician, Bishop Davis crammed a good deal of purposeful activity into the few short years he

⁶ Fletcher, J. and Smith, R. *A short-title catalogue of sixteenth century printed books held in libraries and private collections in New South Wales a list of provenances*. Sydney, Library Council of New South Wales, 1979. The two Sydney copies of the 1588 Foquel missal are entries 1137 and 1138.

⁷ Fletcher and Smith 190.

⁸ Fletcher, J. 'A first finding-list of Australian book collectors, booksellers and binders: Australian marks of provenance in sixteenth century books in New South Wales' *Bibliobooks* 5 (2,3) 1980 pp. 30-44 (p.34); Fletcher, J. 'Sixteenth century books in N.S.W. with Benedictine provenances' *Tjurunga* 19, 1980 pp. 13-24 (p. 17).

⁹ See Daly, R.A. 'The founding of St. John's College' *Australasian Catholic Record* 35(4) Oct. 1958 pp. 284-306 (p.295).

¹⁰ Fletcher and Smith *Op.cit.* p. 217, p. 1650.

spent in Sydney, despite wasting bouts of illness. Between his arrival as titular Bishop of Maitland and Archbishop Polding's coadjutor in December, 1848 and his untimely death in May, 1854 Bishop Davis introduced more than a semblance of order into a previously somewhat haphazard diocesan administration, dealt fairly and firmly with internecine problems of the Benedictine community of St. Mary's Cathedral Priory, became President of the newly opened St. Mary's College Lyndhurst in Glebe in 1852 and a member of the Senate of the nascent University of Sydney. In all these areas of responsibility he earned general esteem and affection within, and well beyond Catholic circles and a reputation for personal sanctity and ample learning. He also gained a reputation as an organ virtuoso of originality and verve, however florid his style might seem to modern taste.¹¹

The Sydney Archdiocesan Archives hold the minute book of St. Mary's Choral Society¹² which encompasses the period of his presidency of that body from 1851. Errol Lea-Scarlett's graceful retrospective tribute, which extends beyond choral initiatives epitomises the musician and the man:

It was the arrival of Charles Henry Davis, Polding's first Coadjutor Bishop in 1848 that gave unity to all the forces available for the enrichment of the liturgy, in particular, the musical department which had operated with two choirs for five years. His brief six years in Sydney, blighted as they were by his mortal illness, raised St. Mary's to her greatest peaks, for he combined with a singular sweetness of temper, outstanding gifts as an organist and choral conductor, along with no small degree of determination.¹³

But for the brevity of his Australian career and the ultimate eclipse of the local Benedictine foundation with the closure of Lyndhurst in 1877, which ended any prospect of his name having enduring local associations, it can be wondered if his cause might not have been

¹¹ cf. Kavenagh, T.J. 'Benedictine monks in Australia' *Op. cit.* pp. 93-94.

¹² St. Mary's Choral Society Minute book, 11 Feb. 1851 - 18 Dec. 1854.

¹³ Lea-Scarlett, E. 'St. Mary's liturgy under Polding' *Tjurunga* 15, 1978 pp. 109-110.

introduced in Rome a long time ago. However, beyond such historical impediments one suspects that the young bishop's genial refinement of mind and spirit might be foreign to more recent times.

His wit, sure grasp of human realities and spirituality were recalled in an affectionate memoir almost fifty years after his death by J.H.B. Curtis in the *Austral Light*.¹⁴ This collection of reminiscences by the onetime Anselm Curtis OSB is the more poignant for having been written by an apostate, but ultimately repentant, Benedictine, whose topsy turvy career has been recounted at some length as well as in a biographical summary.¹⁵ His short memoir is not the least substantial biographical source amongst the few published items on the life and work of Bishop Davis in the select bibliography appended to this article.

The missal bearing his episcopal signature is one of the few surviving artifacts of Polding's first coadjutor. Designated simply as 'Missal of Bishop Davis' it was displayed, along with his heart and chalice in a 1971 exhibition to commemorate the laying of the foundation stone of St. Mary's on 29th October, 1821 by Governor Macquarie.¹⁶ Unfortunately, whereas the St. John's copy is bound in gold-tooled old calf, the other features wooden boards stripped of the old or original binding material, the result of amateur "conservation" within living memory.

¹⁴ Curtis, J.H.B. 'In Memoriam Revrendissimi Caroli Henrici Davis, O.S.B.' *Austral Light* 1 Feb. 1902 pp. 133-137.

¹⁵ Livinston, K. 'Anselm Curtis : first Sydney-born Benedictine priest of St. Mary's Monastery' *Tjurunga* 8, 1974 pp. 195-216. See also Kavenagh, T.J. 'Polding's monks' Appendix I. *Tjurunga* 8, 1974 p. v.

¹⁶ Australian Catholic Historical Society, *Sydney Souvenir guide. Commemorating the laying of the foundation stone of the first church in Sydney on October 29, 1821 by Governor Macquarie. An historical exhibition of the growth of Catholicity through 150 years, held in the crypt of St. Mary's Cathedral in October, 1971.* Sydney, the Society, 1971. Items 18-20.

Courtesy of the late Monsignor C.J. Duffy, the then Archdiocesan Archivist, I examined and recorded the missal of Bishop Davis in late 1982, its bibliographical twin at St. John's College having been examined and recorded by a colleague earlier that year. When I visited the Cathedral crypt for the purpose, the Monsignor kindly and sensibly gave me two other early printed books, which were unrelated to the holdings of the Archdiocesan Archives, for consignment to the modest, but properly organised, rare books collection in the library of a religious order.

The long continuance of this single early printed book of local Benedictine provenance in total isolation from other books of the same local provenance is extremely curious. The substantial remains of the Benedictine library collection of 5,698 books have been at St. Patrick's College, Manly, for just on a hundred years. Founded on "about a thousand volumes of Theology, Fathers, Canon Law and sacred literature" brought to Sydney by W.B. Ullathorne OSB in 1833, which were later purchased from him by Polding, augmented by donations and purchases in England and by Downside Abbey duplicated and expanded by Polding's assiduous book collecting from European religious houses and the Propaganda in Rome during his *ad limina* visits, the resultant collection was rich, various and somewhat arcane.¹⁷ Transferred from the crypt to Lyndhurst in 1864 the collection fortuitously escaped the conflagration which consumed the Cathedral in the following year. Following the closure of Lyndhurst in 1877 it was transported from Glebe to St. John's College at Sydney University. In view of the common early provenance of both copies of the Foquel missal this may be significant. Ultimately the collection became part of the corpus of books for Cardinal Moran's new seminary at Manly in 1889.

¹⁷ For a summary account of the origins and growth of the Benedictine Collection see Fletcher, J. 'The Library of St. Patrick's College, Manly' *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* Dec. 1976 pp. 249-253. See also Carleton, F. 'Catholic libraries and the Early Imprints Project in New South Wales' *Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand Bulletin* 6(4), 1982 pp. 185-189.

Thanks to the rediscovery of the Benedictine manuscript library catalogue of 1859 in its draft and bound versions in the 1970's, the Benedictine Collection was reassembled in its original order by catalogue accession numbers.¹⁸ Both the Benedictine and the Rare Book Collections at Manly include books of individual Benedictines as attested by their marks of ownership. Hence two eighteenth century editions of the Rule of St. Benedict in the Benedictine Collection have J.B. Polding's bookplate as Bishop of Hiero-Caesarea and on one of these, his signature. The sixteenth century Biblical concordance of Bishop Davis, which is referenced above, is another of numerous examples. The bibliographical details, marks of provenance and locations of pre-1801 monastic liturgical books in use at St. Mary's Cathedral during the local Benedictine era were published several years ago.¹⁹ Included in their number is a Maurist *Caeremoniale Monasticum* (Paris, L. Billaine, 1680. 8v.)²⁰ with the name stamp of Placid Quirk, OSB, sometime Choir Chaplain at St. Mary's Cathedral. So too do the Benedictine and Rare Book Collections at Manly contain non monastic liturgical books of the local Benedictine era like S.J.A. Sheehy's signed copy of an eighteenth century Roman Missal bound in green morocco (Avignon, F. Seguin, 1774. Fo.) in the latter collection.

The two Sydney copies of the Foquel missal are rare early printed books by virtue of their imprint and publication date and are enhanced by the marks of provenance which they bear. The copy at St. Mary's Cathedral is a book unique in that location where random aggregations of old books and other printed materials resulting from time and chance bear

¹⁸ For convenience in arrangement the two numerical sequences in the catalogue were actually assimilated to one by continuing the numbering at the end of the first sequence for the books enumerated in the second sequence. Folios and large quartos were shelved together in catalogue number order.

¹⁹ Carleton, F. 'The Rule and monastic liturgical books: pre 1801 editions in Sydney Catholic libraries' *Tjurunga* 26, 1984 pp. 44-51.

²⁰ *Ibid* p.50. Item 14

no resemblance to a collection as understood by rare book librarians, historical bibliographers or book collectors.²¹

Missale Romanum. Salamanca, 1588

Missale Romanum, ex decret sacro-sancti Concilii Tri-dentini restitutum. Pii V. Pontif. Max. ivssv editvm. Cum Kalendrio Gregoriano. Salamanticae, excudebat Guillelmus Foquel. 1588

[68], 655, 141,[3] p. ill., music 4to

Titlepage and text in red and black. - "Cum licentia & privilegio" above imprint. - Colophon, verso of last leaf.

Bound with the above

Proprium Missae in vigilia S. Jacobi Hispaniarum patroni. Ad formam Brevarii Romani restitutum.

Salamanticae. Apud Guillelmus Foquel. 1589.

[4] p. 4to.

Titlepage and text in red and black. - Text begins on titlepage verso

Provenances

1. Copy in Archdiocesan Archives

Signed:

a) fraj Joan. de S. Hiermo

b) C.H. Davis O.S.B. Eps. Maitlandensis

2. St. John's College copy

Signed: fraj Joan de S. Hiermo

Bookplate: Insontes ut columbae Revd. J. Francis M.A.

Charles Henry Davis, OSB (1815-1854) : A Select Bibliography

²¹ For criteria underlying the establishment and organisation of rare book collections in the library context see Cave, R. *Rare book librarianship*. 2nd rev. ed. London, Bingley, 1982.

1. Birt, N. *Benedictine pioneers in Australia*. 2 vols. London, Herbert & Daniel, 1911 Vol. 1, pp. 241-242; Vol. 2, pp. 133-135, 153-155, 163-166, 197-200, 202-215.
2. Curtis, J.H.B. 'In Memoriam Revrendissimi Caroli Henrici Davis, O.S.B.' *Austral Light* 1 Feb. 1902 pp. 133-137.
3. Daly, R.A. 'Davis, Charles Henry (1815-1854)' *Australian dictionary of biography* Vol. 1. : 1788-1850. A-H Melbourne University Press, 1968 pp. 292-293.
4. Kavenagh, T.J. 'Benedictine monks in Australia' in *A man with an idea: St. Benedict of Nursia*. Ed. by J.S. Martin. Parkville, Vic., University of Melbourne, 1981 pp. 82-83, 93-95.
'Polding's monks' Appendix I. *Tjurunga* 8, 1974 p. vi.
5. Lea-Scarlett, E. 'St. Mary's liturgy under Polding' *Tjurunga* 15, 1978 pp. 105-116 (109-113).
6. Linane, T.J. 'D24 Davis, Charles Henry, Most Rev. OSB' *From Abel to Zundolovich* Vol 2. Armadale, Vic., H.H. Stephenson, n.d. pp. 129-130.
7. Shanahan, M. 'Bishop Davis : 1848-1854' *Manna* No. 6, 1963 pp. 50-62.

Frank Carleton recorded pre-1801 books in Sydney Catholic libraries during 1982 for the Early Imprints Project in New South Wales. In 1987 he was Project Archivist for the New South Wales Bicentennial Archives Program at St. Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. He then spent 1988 establishing the library of St. Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College, Sydney and presently does freelance rare book cataloguing and historical bibliography.

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