

Francis MANSELL 1579–1665

Mansell was born in Muddlescombe, Camarthenshire to Sir Francis and Catherine Mansell. He was educated at the free school in Hereford before attending Jesus College, Oxford in 1607. He received his BA in 1609, followed by his MA in 1611 and an All Souls' fellowship (as founder's kin) in 1613. Mansell became principal of Jesus College in 1620, which marked the start of a tumultuous career. He resigned amidst opposition in 1624, only to be re-elected in 1630. During this time, he was awarded his DB and DD, as well as taking up several positions within the church. Through much of the Civil War he remained in Wales to stir up Royalist support. He returned to College for the Parliamentary visitation of the University in 1647, when he was ejected from his role as principal. Mansell continued to teach until he regained his position at the Restoration, although ill health forced him to retire a year later.

Mansell did much to support the expansion of college buildings. As well as extending the chapel and developing the second quadrangle, Mansell made plans for a new library to replace his predecessor's unsuitable building, completed after Mansell's death.

Books

Mansell's personal library was described by his biographer as 'a very compleat one, and suitable to his Great and Universall Knowledge, whether we consider the choice or the number of the Books' (*Life of Dr Mansell*, pp. 15-16, quoted in Fordyce and Knox, p. 15). Although only six books have been recorded in the catalogue with Mansell's ownership, evidence of Mansell's library can be gleaned from several sources. A letter dated 1646 records Mansell's donation of his library to Jesus College, with the proviso that he would have use of the collection during his lifetime. An inventory drawn up by Mansell after his ejection from the College in 1649 provides a list of approximately six hundred volumes that he donated. Most of these are theological, and a significant proportion consists of sermon collections in Latin and English. Notable books owned by Mansell include Hervacius's *Biblia Sacra* (Basel, 1545) which contains the authentic signatures of Philippus Melancthon and other Reformation polemicists, a copy of Bacon's *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (*Opera* Vol. I, London, 1623) bound in the presentation copy velvet, and James I's *Workes* (London, 1616) in a gold-tooled vellum binding bearing the arms of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

Characteristic Markings

There are few traces of Mansell's book ownership in the Fellows' Library collection: no characteristic bindings, bookplates or mottoes can be seen. However, one book contains a donation inscription by Mansell, some books have abbreviated titles written on the fore-edges, and a copy of Lancelot Andrews's sermons (G.16.10) has notes in Mansell's hand bound before and after the main text.

Bibliography

Allen, Brigid, *Jesus College, Oxford: A Short History and Guide* [unpublished]

Fordyce, J.C. and Knox, T.M., *The Library of Jesus College, Oxford, with an Appendix on the Books Bequeathed Thereto by Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, Oxford: Oxford Bibliographical Society, 1937, pp. 14-15

Mansell's Inventory (Jesus College Oxford Archives PR.Mansell.C.1)

Pollard, A.F., 'Mansell, Francis (1579-1665)', rev. J.H.Curthoys, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004

'The Assignment of my Bookes to Jesus College' (Jesus College Oxford Archives LI)

Draft: July 2014