

THE ORIGINS OF MICHAEL DORMER'S DONATION

By FRANCESCA GALLIGAN

The books given to the Bodleian in 1603 by Michael Dormer are one of two case studies discussed by Robyn Adams and Louisiane Ferlier in a recent article that explores early donations to the library.¹ Their account is here supplemented by a study of the bindings of Dormer's books: the bindings allow certain identification of his unsigned copies; they provide information on dispersal after the collection entered the Bodleian; and, most importantly, they reveal a single earlier source for the bulk of the collection.

Michael Dormer (1556–1624), son of Ambrose Dormer (d.1566) and Jane Bury (d.1581), was from the Dormer family of Ascot manor, Great Milton, in Oxfordshire. Ascot passed to Michael on his father's death, and its gateway now stands in the Blackwell Hall in the Weston Library, leading to the reading rooms where Dormer's books are consulted.² Michael was admitted to King's College, Cambridge in 1574, and served in the Low Countries under Robert Dudley and Francis Vere.³ Adams and Ferlier point to his connections with other donors to the library (we can add Vere, with his donation of 1602, to their list), and suggest that he might have known Thomas Bodley from this time in the Low Countries.⁴ He planned to respond to Bodley's call for donations to the library in the late 1590s, but was apparently dissuaded by his wife Dorothy Hawtreys, and he delayed until 1603.⁵

¹ Robyn Adams and Louisiane Ferlier, 'Building a library without walls. The early years of the Bodleian Library', *Libraries, Books, and Collectors of Texts, 1600-1900*, ed. Annika Bautz and James Gregory (New York, 2018), pp. 11–27.

² For the gateway, see p. XXX, Fig. XX, below. The books remain on the shelves at Arts End, in Duke Humfrey's Library. On Dormer's life, see: Christine Peters, *The Lord Lieutenants and High Sheriffs of Oxfordshire* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 109–112; 'Parishes: Great Milton', in Mary Lobel (ed.), *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 7, Dorchester and Thame Hundreds* (London, 1962), pp. 117–146, in *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol7/pp117-146> [accessed 25 September 2020]; Michael Maclagan, 'The Family of Dormer in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire', *Oxoniensia* 11–12 (1946–7), pp. 90–101. Maclagan gives Ambrose's death as 1556, but this is corrected in other sources to 1566.

³ J.L. Dawson, *A Cambridge Alumni Database*:

<https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/Documents/acad/2018/search-2018.html> [accessed 30 September 2020];

John Gough Nichols (ed.), *The Herald and Genealogist* (London, 1863), vol. 1, p. 324.

(<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Di89AQAIAAJ&pg> [accessed 25 September 2020]).

⁴ Adams and Ferlier, 'Building a Library', pp. 17–18.

⁵ Dudley Carleton, to John Chamberlain, 6 March 1598: 'every man bethinks himself how, by some good book or other, he may be written in the scroll of the benefactors. My cousin Dormer would have been reckoned among the first, but his wife dissuaded him, and told him it would be ascribed to some planet which possessed all men with a sudden humour; for the chief benefactor, she does not greatly marvel at his purpose' ('Queen Elizabeth - Volume 266: March 1598', in Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Elizabeth, 1598-1601* (London, 1869), pp. 33–38, in *British*

In the Bodleian Benefactors' Register, there are sixty-one entries under the gift of Michael Dormer, with dates of printing from 1484 to 1598.⁶ Some of these entries, for example 'certe comedie', serve as a generic heading for several bibliographical items bound together; others are individual entries for multiple items bound within a single volume. Further, some of the volumes containing works listed individually include other unlisted items; in these cases, the binding identifies Dormer's copies. Thirty-four of the editions listed in the Register can be confirmed as Dormer's by his inscription 'Michaell Dormer', including one volume now at Christ Church Library (discussed below).⁷ Most of these inscribed books are bound in a distinctive and unusual continental laced-case limp vellum binding, with covers that extend significantly over all edges of the text-block (sometimes encasing the whole book, Fig. 1), four sets of green ties in silk or linen (Fig. 2) Colour plate, and gilt edges over red pigment that are in most cases also gauffered; the gauffering comprises a row of dots set between two smaller rows of dots, sometimes with a small floral ornament (Fig. 3) Colour plate; the vellum cover is laced to the sewing supports with three or four alum-tawed or, in a handful of cases, tanned leather thongs. As argued below, this binding pre-dates Dormer's donation to the Bodleian.⁸ It is distinctive enough to conclude that all fifty-four editions found within these bindings are Dormer's copies, regardless of whether or not they are listed in the Benefactors' Register or signed by Dormer. Thus, although volumes of Ariosto, Sannazaro, Garimberto, and Boccaccio (comprising nine distinct bibliographical items) contain no Dormer inscriptions, the distinctive binding confirms them as his copies.⁹

Some books in later bindings retain traces of this earlier binding and can also be assigned to Dormer. The entry 'Tragedie & c. di parecchi autori', listed without a year in the Register, appears in the 1605 catalogue under the title 'Comedie et tragedie de M. Lud. Dolce. Ven. 1551' (with shelfmark '8° D 5 et 6 Art.').¹⁰ The book currently at 8° D 6 Art., containing three items, was rebound in calf in the nineteenth century and Michael Dormer's signature appears only on the title-page of the third item, Dolce's *Osseuationi nella volgar lingua*. However, the edges are typical of other Dormer books, gilt over red; a pattern of two dotted lines gauffered around the edges of the text-block on some Dormer books (Table 2,

History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/domestic/edw-eliz/1598-1601/pp33-38> [accessed 13 October 2020].

⁶ *Munificentissimis atque optimis cuiusvis ordinis, dignitatis, sexus, qui bibliothecam hanc libris, aut pecuniis numeratis ad libros coemendos, aliove quouis genere ampliarunt, Thomas Bodleius eques auratus, honorarium hoc volumen, in quod huiuscemodi donationes, simulque nomina donantium singillatim referuntur, pietatis, memoriae, virtutisque causa dedit, dedicavit* (London, 1604), pp. 73–4. See Table 1 below for the list of entries.

⁷ Adams and Ferlier have matched his inscription to a letter from 1598 ('Building a Library', p. 25, note 25), which suggests this is his adult hand, perhaps anticipating the donation to the Bodleian. There is one example with a different spelling, 'Mychaell Dormer', on the cover of 8° I 6 Art..

⁸ I acknowledge the difficulties both current and historic with the terms 'vellum' and 'parchment'; in this case the animal remains unidentified, and I use 'vellum' in line with current local practice.

⁹ 8° A 21 Art., 8° S 38 Art., 8° G 22 Art., and 8° B 23 Art.. The Benefactors' Register does not give a date for the Ariosto, listed as 'Certe comedie dell'Arisoto, & Aretino 8.Ven.', but James's 1605 catalogue provides a shelfmark for a 1547 edition of Ariosto in the distinctive Dormer binding (Thomas James (ed.), *Catalogus librorum Bibliothecae publicae* (Oxford, 1605)).

¹⁰ James, *Catalogus*, p. 313.

edge group 5) is here found towards the middle of the text-block, suggesting that the original order of the items in the volume was changed in the rebinding, and that the signed *Osseuationi* was the first in the earlier binding. This is further confirmed by the fact that there are no other signed Dormer books where the inscription appears on an item other than the first in a binding. A volume containing Giralaldi, Muzio, and Nelli (8° C 28 Art.) is bound in later English limp vellum, but retains a small trace of gilt over red on the text-block edge; that is, a remnant of an earlier edge finish that was largely obliterated during this English rebinding. None of the items in this volume are signed, but the current shelfmark matches that given in the 1605 catalogue, and the trace of edge gilding allows us again to attribute this with a degree of certainty to Dormer. While there is no doubt that the four folio editions listed under his donation survive in the library as Dormer's copies (all are inscribed), they too have been rebound, and retain traces of earlier bindings that serve as further evidence.¹¹ All four are bound in late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century English calf with a blind-tooled centrepiece, but their edges are gilt over red, typical of the Dormer books bound in limp vellum. Gilt edges are not typical of this style of Oxford or London binding, and survive from an earlier one.¹² The oldest, an edition of Dante (Venice, 1484), has a rust mark visible at the gutter that is evidence of an early Italian binding in wooden boards.¹³ While the gilt edges could be a remnant of this early binding, given that all four folios have them, it seems more likely to have been part of the finish given to the other Dormer books bound in limp vellum. Limp covers would have been unsuitable for folio volumes that were to be chained in Duke Humfrey's library, requiring the books to be rebound either by Dormer or Bodley, but in these cases the earlier gilt edges were not trimmed away.¹⁴

Six editions on the list of the Dormer gift are no longer present in any copy in the library, and three further items that are still present are clearly not his copies, as will be discussed below. Of the remaining eight editions, one was printed in Basel in 1551 (Munster's *Rudimenta*), and the rest in Zurich, Frankfurt, Venice, Antwerp, Brussels, and Paris, between 1559 and 1598. The copies of these editions present in the library today do not

¹¹ Current shelfmarks: A 1.12 Jur. (Alberti), H 1.13 Art. (Livy), Auct. 2 Q 4.13 (Dante), Auct. 2 R 2.12 (Alunno).

¹² Although Neil Ker lists the Alberti under his centrepiece xxii, and Rundle and Mandelbrote add Alunno, Ker's centrepiece does not precisely match that found on the Dormer books (Neil R. Ker, *Fragments of Medieval Manuscripts Used as Pastedowns in Oxford Bindings: With a Survey of Oxford Binding c. 1515-1620* (reprinted Oxford, 2000), no. 1942; with *Corrigenda*, p. 23). Pearson notes: 'several very similar tools of this shape and size were in circulation in the late sixteenth century; they are not easy to tell apart. The Oxford version ... has a central flower whose lobes are rather more prominently bulging than those of the London tool used around the same time, but the differences are subtle and hard to detect.' (David Pearson, *Oxford Book-binding 1500-1640* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 81-2). But the hatching, of diagonal lines of opposing slant, is typical of Oxford binding c. 1595-1630 (Pearson, *Oxford Book-binding*, pp. 37-38, example L).

¹³ Auct. 2 Q 4.13. My thanks to Andrew Honey for this information, and for his help in assessing and describing the bindings; thanks also to Alan Coates and Sarah Wheale, for reading and commenting on a draft of this article, and to my two generous anonymous readers.

¹⁴ Bodley expected his donors to present books bound, but did pay for binding in exceptional circumstances, as detailed in his correspondence with Thomas James (G.W. Wheeler (ed.), *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to Thomas James* (Oxford, 1926), p. 4, note 6, and p. 35, *Letter* 26, instructing the librarian to accept duplicates of books already in the library to cover the costs of binding and carriage). Dormer does not feature in the correspondence, lost for half of 1603 and for 1604.

bear Dormer's inscription, and their various bindings do not include the distinctive limp vellum discussed above. All of the books securely attributed to Dormer in, or with traces of, the characteristic limp vellum binding with gilt edges were printed in or before 1553, in all but one case in Italy.¹⁵ If this binding can be dated to around 1553, two groups of books emerge: a collection printed in or before 1553, mostly in Italy, bound in this unusual limp vellum, and many signed by Dormer; and another group of unsigned books, with mostly later dates of printing, covering a wider geographical area, in various bindings. Establishing the date of the limp vellum binding by other factors becomes significant. The endpapers bear several different watermarks. The most frequent is a hand or glove with a five-petalled flower above it, and 'PD' (Fig. 4), '3OM', or, most often, '3PB' at the cuff (Fig. 5). Other watermarks include a small unicorn (Fig. 6), and scales. There is not enough of the scales watermark to match it securely; and neither the hand with '3OM' nor this small unicorn appear in standard repositories of watermarks, although stylistically similar but larger unicorns were in use in France in the 1520s (see Briquet 10437 and 10101).¹⁶ A similar hand with 'PD' was used in Rouen in 1558 (Briquet 11362), and there are various examples of hands with '3PB', used in Neubourg in 1537 (Briquet 11383), Nice in 1543 (Piccard), Hamburg in 1545-6 (Briquet 11383), and in the Gravell Watermark Archive (HND.019.1, with no location given) in use in 1549.¹⁷ Together, these add to the evidence for a date around the middle of the sixteenth century for Dormer's bindings.

If the bindings do date from around 1553, two problems emerge. First, the books printed after 1553 listed in the Dormer gift cannot be securely identified as his one way or the other, as they form a disparate un-signed group without a typical binding. Second, the books printed in or before 1553 in the relatively uniform limp vellum cannot have been commissioned or purchased *in situ* by Michael Dormer, who was born in 1556. I propose that the books Michael presented to the library comprise books he acquired himself (that is, possibly the 1551 Munster, and some or all of the eight titles that are printed after 1553), and a collection of books bound and sold on the continent and inherited as a collection from his father Ambrose.

One of the books in the distinctive continental limp vellum, signed by Michael Dormer, also bears the inscription 'Ambrosio Dormero'.¹⁸ Ambrose does not appear among the *alumni* of Oxford or Cambridge, and much of what we know about him comes from the inscription Michael placed on their shared family tomb in St Mary's Church, Great Milton. Besides being the son of the Lord Mayor of London (another Michael Dormer), Ambrose spent some eight years abroad, including in France and Italy, and was skilled in languages:

Ambrosio Dormero V.C. armigero Michaelis Dormeri equitis aurati quondam in urbe
Londoninensi Praetoris filio a primis incunabulis ad adolescentiam usque magna patris
solicitudine bonis artibus exculto, tum exteris nationes visendi studio, Galliam omnem,

¹⁵ The exception is Alamanni (Paris, 1546; 4° D 5(2) Art.).

¹⁶ Briquet Online: http://www.ksbm.oew.ac.at/_scripts/php/BR.php [accessed 2 October 2020].

¹⁷ Gerhard Piccard, *Wasserzeichen Hand und Handschuh* (Stuttgart, 1997), vol. 17, no. 1618 (also online, <https://www.piccard-online.de/start.php>); <https://www.gravell.org> [accessed 2 October 2020].

¹⁸ 8° F 12 Art., Fornari's commentary on *Orlando furioso* (Florence, 1549–50). Olivia Thompson undertook a preliminary survey of copies of editions listed under Dormer's donation during an internship at the Bodleian in 2015, and I grateful to her for this work, and for finding the inscription.

Italiam, Hungariam, Germaniamque octo plus minus anos pervagato et singularem inde linguarum peritiam adepto.¹⁹

There are records of an Ambrose Dormer elected Butler at Middle Temple every year from 1553 to 1558, and of a 21-year lease on a graphite mine in Borrowdale, Cumbria, granted by the Crown in 1555.²⁰ This suggests he was back in England from 1553, and certainly by 1555, not least because Michael was born the following year. Ambrose's eight years of foreign travel were likely to have been as a young man from the mid-1540s; this puts him on the continent at the right time to have commissioned or bought these limp vellum bindings around 1553, and in a setting that prompted him to write his name in one of them in Italian form. We know for certain that Ambrose did own books: his will, proved 1567, states 'I gyve and bequethe to my soonne Michell all my Bookes to be delyuered vnto him by the discretion of myne Executorres'.²¹ The titles are not specified, but we might reasonably assume them to be the collection of books printed in or before 1553 in – or retaining traces of – the distinctive continental limp vellum binding, purchased by Ambrose during his period abroad.

A significant question remains over where the bindings were made, and an answer would shed further light on Ambrose and his travels. As mentioned above, watermarks similar to several of those in the Dormer books are recorded in use in France and, in one case, Germany. Further details of the binding offer other clues. Cover extensions over all edges of the text-block appear to be quite rare in the sixteenth century. There is a vellum binding with modest cover extensions on a 1563 Frankfurt edition of Paracelsus, described as contemporary German.²² More expansive cover extensions appear on a Paris edition of Cicero (1543) and a Venetian Flaminio (1564), both with two sets of ties and plain edges; it is unclear where these were bound.²³ A Parisian Lactantius (1561) with plain edges and four sets of ties has linked cover extensions (where one slots into the other), a feature found on a small group of mid-sixteenth-century French limp-vellum bindings.²⁴ The Folger has a similar example, again with four sets of ties and plain edges, but describes it as Netherlandish.²⁵ There is an elaborate example of cover extensions over gilt edges on an Italian manuscript of around 1591, described by Howard Nixon as Venetian on account of the

¹⁹ Peters, *Lord Lieutenants*, p. 110.

²⁰ Charles Henry Hopwood (ed.), *Middle Temple Records* (London, 1904), passim. *National Trust Annual Archaeological review 1998–99*, p. 18: <https://www.aditnow.co.uk/documents/Borrowdale-Graphite-Mine/History.pdf>; <https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/HBSMR/MonRecord.aspx?uid=MNA119961> [accessed January 2020].

²¹ National Archives, PROB 11/48/547; the will also mentions Michael's brother, another Ambrose.

²² Detlev Auvermann, *German Imprints* [Catalogue] (London, 2020).

²³ In the collection of Dr T. Kimball Brooker. The Flaminio has later provenance relating possibly to a religious house in Padua.

²⁴ https://www.ligatus.org.uk/lob/search?search_api_views_fulltext=cover+extensions [accessed 9 December 2020]. The Lactantius is in the collection of Richard Linenthal. I am indebted to Ed Potten for these examples in private collections.

²⁵ Martial and Ausonius (Antwerp, Christophe Plantin, 1568; call number PA6501 A2 1568 Cage): <https://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/s/xcy22v> [accessed 9 December 2020].

style of the tooling, influenced by French fanfare bindings.²⁶ It is significantly later than the Dormer bindings of the 1550s, morocco over wooden boards rather than limp vellum, and with four sets of metal clasps in place of ties. While Nixon's attribution to Venice is tentative, he is confident that it is Italian, presumably not least on account of the manuscript itself, which contains Privileges of the Cassinese congregation of the Benedictine Order, prepared for the monastery of St John the Evangelist, Parma. Some aspects of the Dormer bindings do point to Italy as their place of origin. The use of four sets of ties is typically Italian, and this, combined with the places of printing, and Ambrose's Italian inscription, suggest Italy.²⁷ If so, then Venice seems a likely candidate: fifty-five editions were printed there, compared with six in Florence, three in Rome, and one each in Bologna and Naples. However, cover extensions over all edges seem to be unusual for Venetian binding, and another option presents itself.²⁸

The endbands on the Dormer bindings have front beads in the French manner.²⁹ There are also parallels in the style of gauffering that point towards France. In particular, the *atelier de Fontainebleau* was producing gilt edges with the same gauffered dots between two rows of smaller dots for François I in the 1540s (influenced by Italian binding).³⁰ Other examples of this edge decoration from the sixteenth century include a Lyon binding on a 1559 Lyon Cicero; a Hebrew Bible printed in Paris, 1543–46; and a Lyon 1552 edition of *Historiae Romanae auctores varii*.³¹ This evidence, combined with that of the watermarks, suggests France rather than Italy, although again these appear to be unusual for French work.³²

The fragments of manuscript used in the Dormer bindings are perhaps also slightly more suggestive of a French origin. Four bindings use manuscript fragments from a lost or unknown illuminated manuscript on vellum of Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la cité des dames*; three or four use fragments from an early fifteenth-century(?) manuscript on vellum, in semi-gothic or pre-humanistic script, of Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares*; another contains fragments on vellum of an Italian(?) fourteenth-century liturgical manuscript including text from the *Epistle of James*, 1.27.³³ Whether these manuscripts are more likely to have become

²⁶ Howard M. Nixon, *Broxbourne Library: Styles and Designs of Bookbindings* (London, 1956), no. 47.

²⁷ For images of sixteenth-century Italian bindings with four ties, see British Library C46b13, Davis873, C65f5, Arundel MS 538, Add MS 14093, and Davis872 at <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/> [accessed 15 October 2020].

²⁸ Email correspondence with Claudia Benvestito, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, January 2020.

²⁹ Informal correspondence with Nicholas Pickwoad, via Andrew Honey, also suggests a possible French origin for these bindings, and I am grateful to them for this observation about the endbands.

³⁰ Marie-Pierre Lafitte and Fabienne Le Bars, *Reliures royales de la renaissance* (Paris, 1999), no. 29; see also no. 44. See Mirjam Foot for shifting fashions of edge decoration from Italy to France (*The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, v.4, eds. John Barnard, D.F. McKenzie, and Maureen Bell (Cambridge, 2002), p. 624).

³¹ Bodleian Library, Buchanan f.179 and Lincoln CHS 2; Bernard Quaritch Ltd, *May New Acquisitions* [Catalogue] (London, 2020), item 26.

³² Isabelle de Conihout has not seen these bindings in French collections.

³³ See Table 2 below for shelfmarks. I am most grateful to Bruce Barker-Benfield for assistance in dating and describing the Cicero and *Epistle* fragments.

redundant and sold as binder's waste in France or Italy is unclear. The Pizan fragments suggest France, but further work on them may clarify this.³⁴

The use of the same materials for spine supports across volumes (there are four examples of blue paper, in addition to these groups of manuscript fragments) suggests a common origin. The bindings are not uniform, but an examination of their differences, set out in Table 2 below, also suggests that Ambrose purchased or commissioned his books from a single source. Although there is a variety of papers and of endpaper construction, and six variations in the extent of edge gauffering, three sorts of green ties, and two different skins used for lacing the covers, when grouped in terms of each of these differences, the overall groupings become less distinct: papers bearing watermarks with both 'PD' and '3PB' occur in the same book; dark green silk ties are found on books printed in Venice, Rome, and Florence, across edge groups 1, 4, 5, and 6; both linen and silk ties are present on books with Pizan fragments; variety in the construction of endpapers is found on books with silk and linen ties, and across groups of edge decoration; and place or date of printing do not seem to correspond to patterns of binding features. This suggests that differences are not significant, and that the bindings are most likely the product of one or a group of related workshops. A question that remains unanswered for now is whether Ambrose purchased these books bound, or commissioned the bindings himself. Limp vellum was used to bind books ready for sale, but the ties and gilding on these would have rendered them more expensive, and thus perhaps less likely without a commission.³⁵

Finally, recognising these bindings will help to clarify the fate of some of Dormer's books. One, 4° M 13 Art., is marked as a duplicate on the cover, but escaped disposal. Others were not so lucky, and were substituted with other copies, often placed at the same shelfmark. The reasons for these substitutions seem to have varied. Thucydides (Venice, 1550) was perhaps purged in favour of a cleaner copy: it is listed in the Bodleian 1605 catalogue at shelfmark 8° T 1 Art. (p. 396), but can now be found - still in its distinctive limp vellum binding, with the Bodleian shelfmark, and Dormer's inscription - at Christ Church Library (SH.9.9) in the collection of David Gregory (1696–1767).³⁶ An early Italian manuscript note on the final leaf may be the reason for the disposal of the book: Thomas Bodley preferred clean copies, such as the one that now occupies the same shelfmark in the Bodleian.³⁷ While

³⁴ None of the twenty-six known manuscripts of Christine's *Livre*, all of which are French, has an early presence in Italy (Maureen Curnow, *The 'Livre de la cite des dames' of Christine de Pisan: a Critical Edition*, unpublished PhD thesis (Vanderbilt University, 1975), retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/302738209?accountid=13042>), pp. 547–67). These fragments are either the only known remnants of the lost copy Curnow notes in the library of the Dukes of Savoy at Chambéry in 1498 (Curnow, pp. 565–567), now dispersed, or belong to an unknown manuscript. A note on these newly identified fragments is in preparation.

³⁵ P.J.M. Marks, *The British Library Guide to Bookbinding: History and Techniques* (London, 1998), p. 44.

³⁶ My thanks to Stephen Archer and Cristina Neagu at Christ Church Library for arranging access and helping with additional enquiries.

³⁷ Bodley writes of replacing marked books in a letter to Thomas James: 'Others were ill bounde, and noted in the margine, or otherwise touched, of which I sent some in the first chestes, for which I sent better copies in my last' (Wheeler, *Letters* 11, p. 12). The hand of the Christ Church annotation does not seem to match what we can make of Ambrose Dormer's hand from the single inscription in 8° F 12 Art.. Other marks in Dormer books include: a manuscript correction in Aristophanes (8° A 19

the inscription and binding clarify Dormer's provenance in this case, he did not sign all of his books; recognising the binding may allow identification of other dispersed copies, such as Patrizi's *Discorsi* (Venice, 1545). The copy in the Bodleian is no longer the Dormer one, but that of its first librarian Thomas James, inscribed with his motto, signature, and the date 1597. It is now at shelfmark Auct. 2 R 7.37, but has the previous shelfmark 8° P 1 Art., given in the 1605 catalogue, on the title-page and fore-edge. The book is not listed in the Benefactors' Register among James's donations of 1601, but acquired perhaps on James's death, and certainly before 1840 when the Art. shelfmark was superseded.³⁸ James's importance as the first Librarian was a likely factor in his copy taking the place of the Dormer one; we know from Bodley's letters that provenance was a factor in the selection of copies.³⁹ The original Dormer copy has not yet been located elsewhere.

The acquisition of books belonging to Alessandro de Mortara also displaced Dormer books. Aristotle's *Ethics* in Italian (Florence, 1550), grouped with two other volumes of Aristotle in the 1605 catalogue (4° A 19-21 Art.), is listed in catalogues from 1620 to 1843 at 4° A 21 Art., but in the latter this has been crossed out and substituted with Mortara 852.⁴⁰ Mortara's books were purchased in 1852, so the Dormer copy was seemingly replaced with the Mortara one between 1843 and 1852, and has yet to be traced. Another likely casualty of the Mortara acquisition is Dormer's copy of Tullia d'Aragona's *Dialogo della infinità di amore* (Venice, 1552), bound with an Italian translation by Agnolo Firenzuola of Apuleius' *Golden Ass* (Venice, 1550). These are listed at 8° T 14 Art. from the 1605 catalogue through to that of 1843. The shelfmark is still in use today, but for two different works. The only copy of this edition of Apuleius now in the Bodleian is at Mortara 34; but the disposal of the Dormer copy – again, presumably, between 1843 and 1852 – seems to have been at the expense of the Tullia d'Aragona, bound with Apuleius, which is no longer present in any early edition.

Dormer books have also been replaced by both earlier and later editions. Terence with Giovanni Fabrini's commentary, Venice, 1548, is listed in the Benefactors' Register under Dormer's gift, and appears in the 1605 and 1620 catalogues (T 3.12 Art.). This edition is not found in the 1674 catalogue, but a later edition of 1565 is listed at 4° T 16 Art..⁴¹ The original Dormer copy, presumably disposed of between 1620 and 1674, may yet be identified elsewhere. Similarly, Cataneo's *Pratiche delle due prime mathematiche* (Venice, 1546) appears in the 1605 catalogue at 8° C 18 Art., and again at this shelfmark in the 1620 catalogue alongside a 1559 edition (4° P 32 Art.). The 1546 edition is not listed in the 1674 catalogue, but two copies of the 1559 are (with shelfmarks 4° C 63 Art., and 4° S 15 Art.). As

Art.); a marginal asterisk (8° G 22(2) Art.); underlining of the author's name (4° A 19 Art.); manuscript folio numbers, and an Italian inventory number or shelfmark (Auct. 2 Q 4.13).

³⁸ James's books were valued at £40 in an inventory of 1629 (Julian Roberts, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/14619> [accessed 30 September 2020]).

³⁹ Bodley requested similar substitutions: 'I sent in this last collection of bookes Sir Tho. Moores Workes of the gifte of Sir William Roper, whose booke I had rather keepe, then that which yow had before, because he was of his kindred' (Wheeler, *Letters* 96, pp. 101–2).

⁴⁰ Alfred Hackman *et al.* (ed.), *Catalogus librorum impressorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae in Academia Oxoniensi* (Oxford, 1843–1851).

⁴¹ Thomas Hyde (ed.), *Catalogus impressorum librorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae in Academia Oxoniensi* (Oxford, 1674).

with the Thucydides now at Christ Church, this appears to have left the library between 1620 and 1674, either lost, or disposed of in favour of the later edition. Another loss from this period is an edition of Robertus Anglicus's *Astrolabii canones*, quarto, Venice, 1512. It appears in the 1605 and 1620 catalogues under the shelfmark W 1.10 Art., but is not listed in the 1674 catalogue and is no longer present in the library. The library had acquired an earlier edition of 1488 by 1620, which perhaps rendered it redundant.

All of these substituted books were almost certainly part of Ambrose's original collection, bound in the distinctive limp vellum with gilt edges, and may yet be recognised elsewhere. But several of the books acquired by Michael rather than Ambrose are also no longer present in the library. A quarto edition of Gerrit de Veer's *Diarium nauticum itineris Batavorum* (Paris, 1598) seems to have been an early disposal, as it does not appear in the 1605 or any later Bodleian catalogues. Gamucci's *Dell'antichita* (Venice 1569) is listed in the 1605 catalogue with shelfmark 8° G 20 Art., and the 1620 catalogue at 8° G. 66 Art., but the copy now present has a Selden shelfmark (8° G 25 Art.Seld.); there is no trace of an earlier shelfmark, and as Selden owned a copy, this is likely to be his rather than Dormer's.⁴² Johannes Posthius's *Tetrasticha* is listed in the Benefactors' Register under Dormer's gift as quarto, Frankfurt, 1564. But the 1605, 1620, and 1843 catalogues list this title only in an edition of 1569 (shelfmark 4° P 20(1) Art.). This is a volume of multiple items, in a seventeenth-century reversed leather binding, with each item bearing a different earlier shelfmark on the title-page, and this particular item with an early English manuscript note. If the date is wrongly recorded in the Benefactors' Register (JISC Library Hub Discover, WorldCat, and USTC list editions of 1563 and 1569 only) and this is Michael's copy, with signs of stab-stitching, a worn title-page, and a seller's code, it seems to have been unbound for some time until it formed part of this volume and was bound with non-Dormer items. Likewise, there is a copy of Dubravius's *De piscinis*, (Zurich, 1559) bound with five other items at shelfmark 8° R 32(2) Art.Seld., the last of which has Selden's motto written on it. This is perhaps the copy owned by Michael, unbound, until it joined items from other donations in a mid-seventeenth-century binding (the book does not appear to be listed in Selden's catalogue). It is unclear whether this was also the case for Dormer's copy of Sancho de Londoño's *De la disciplina militare* (Brussels, 1589). The entry in the Benefactors' Register suggests the Spanish language edition of this year, but the only one listed in the 1605 catalogue has a French title (and shelfmark 8° S 35 Art.). The 1620 catalogue gives both Spanish and French language editions, both 1589, but the former in quarto, the latter in octavo, with shelfmarks M 4.10 Art. and 8° S 86 Art.; the 1674 catalogue gives only the French version, at 8° S 86 Art.. This same shelfmark is given in the 1843 catalogue, alongside (another copy of?) the Spanish version in quarto, with the shelfmark 4° M 54 Art.. The only copy listed in the current library catalogue is at 4° M 54(2) Art.; that is, the Spanish quarto edition, annotated in an early Spanish hand, and bound with books bought from the Carey donation (although it is not listed among the Carey books in the Benefactors' Register). It remains unclear whether Dormer's was the copy at 8° S 86 Art. that disappeared after 1843, or whether his was the edition in quarto, either the surviving copy bound with Carey items, or that lost between 1620 and 1674.

⁴² Catalogue of Selden's books, Bodleian Library, MS. Add C 40, fol. 131 recto.

Unlike Ambrose's books, the nine probably added by Michael (that is, the Munster, those printed after 1553, and certainly those after Ambrose's death in 1566) have no distinguishing features that allow secure identification. None of them are signed, and they are not in distinctive bindings. If the copies of Posthius, Smyters, Munster, Londoño, and Dubravius that are in the library today were Michael's, they were likely given unbound, and bound later by the library with books from other sources. The heart of the Dormer collection is that purchased by Ambrose Dormer on the continent in the 1550s, in limp vellum bindings with cover extensions, green ties, and gilt edges over red, in which both father and son wrote their names. It is hoped that the publication of these observations may result in the location of similar bindings, both to resolve the problem of where and by whom Ambrose's books were bound, and to bring to light Dormer books no longer in the Bodleian Library.

Francesca Galligan
Bodleian Library