

## Conclusion

What conclusions can be drawn from an examination of Theophilus Butler and his collection? Initially the analysis of Butler's life proved helpful in that it unearthed some of the more personal aspects of his collection. His time in Trinity College may have led to friendships with Jonathan Swift, Nicholas Brady and William Congreve. With this information interest is added to their inclusion in his library. The works of Swift, in particular are numerous with various pamphlets including *Tale of A Tub*, London, 1704 as well as his noted inclusion in *The Whimsical Medley*. Brady is included not only in his sermon in praise of music but also in a play entitled *The Rape or The Innocent Imposters*, London, 1692. Four volumes of the works of Congreve are included as well as his individual plays. Archbishop King also played a role in Butler's life, both in his political promotion and in his attempt to rescue his brother, Brinsley's career. He appears in the collection with *The Art of Cookery* and *The Art of Love*, London, 1712 as well as texts of religious discussion. Butler's political career is reflected in the collection with an interest in law, in journals of both Dublin and London parliaments and in Whig/Tory debates. Topics of particular English political interest can be seen in books and pamphlets on the trial of Sacheverell and England's war with France. Irish interests are also to an extent discussed in Molyneux's *The Case of Ireland being bound by Acts of Parliament Stated*, Dublin, 1698, in tracts on the economy of Ireland and on the possibility of a union with England. The number of anti-Catholic texts in the collection could also be seen as reflective of the particular fear of Irish Protestants living in a predominantly Catholic country. Butler's interest in music was discussed in his membership of the Musical Society in London and this is further displayed in the collection with texts relating not only to the festival of St. Cecilia's day but also to operas and collections of songs. It has also been highlighted that Butler himself may have attended performances during his time in London of some of the plays collected in the library. If this is the case they too can be seen as evidence of Butler's particular theatrical tastes.

The changes and benefits of the Dublin booktrade in the late 1600s onwards have been discussed. Did these, though, in any way benefit the Dublin book collector? On the basis of Butler's library it appears not. The vast majority of imprints included in the collection come from London with only a handful from Dublin. Of these most are pamphlets or texts dealing with religion or acts of the Dublin parliament. This highlights the fact that apart from reprints, with which bookcollectors had no interest, the Dublin printer offered little original matter for publication. In examining the imprints of Butler's books it is also interesting that aside from some texts from Oxford and Cambridge, no English imprints appear from outside London. Drawing on this evidence, then, despite the growing printing trade in provincial England London was still the most attractive location for the gentleman book-collector.

The library can also be seen as a reflection of Butler's status as a gentleman. His use of a book plate and bookstamp implies that he considered himself to be a gentleman book-collector. Like others of the time it displayed his coat of arms. Many of this collecting interests also are typical of gentlemen of the time. His numerous history and travel books, in particular, were seen as a characteristic of the gentleman book collector as were books on grammar and collections of the classics. Even Butler's miniature library, though interesting in itself, was not an unusual addition to a gentleman's collection. Though they were only briefly sketched the examination of some of the well known collectors in Dublin highlighted the similarities between their libraries and Butler's. Foreign titles appear in King and Bouhereau's library and in Butler's collection imprints appear from Paris, Frankfurt, Rome and to a large extent from Amsterdam. Scientific books appear in Marsh's, King's and Molyneux's collections. Unlike Butler, though, evidence can be found that they held some interest in the mainly specialised texts in their libraries. That Butler was not a member of the Dublin Philosophical Society and did not hold any professional interest in science adds weight to the argument that such texts were collected by him merely for their gentlemanly status. Political and religious tracts are also numerous in Marsh's library as they are in Butler's. Also similarly to Butler, these collectors received their books mainly from London rather than Dublin.

Theophilus Butler's family was discussed in order to get a clearer view of who had contributed to his collection. As a result it was found that his father, his wife, his brother, Brinsley and Brinsley's children had all made additions to the library. More importantly, however, this offered important clues as to when the collection was given to Trinity College library. Prior to this there had been little to establish an exact date for the donation. The basis for my argument lay in the presumption that the library was kept in the Butler home in St. Stephen's Green and by the evidence that those who contributed to the collection following Theophilus's death also, coincidentally, inhabited that house at the same time. There was little other evidence to examine on this matter. No records were kept in Trinity for gifts at this time and Butler's will only dates the collection to 1723 when it was left to his brother, James. No mention was made of the collection in the *Freeman's Journal* and many of the wills of Butler's family have been destroyed. The resulting date, 1780, is plausible and fits comfortably with Malton's description of his 1793 painting.

Of most importance has been the establishment of the catalogue. Now it is possible to place a more exact number on the amount of books in the collection as well as to define what is in it. The arguments outlined here are just some of the conclusions that can be drawn from the catalogue itself. Others equally as valid could be established by further examining the appendix. The point is, though, is that this can now be done. If nothing else this thesis has provided the opportunity for further discussion of the Butler collection because it has now been established just what the Butler collection *is*.