



Introduction to "'From the great desire of promoting learning': Thomas Hollis's gifts to the Harvard College Library", Harvard Library Bulletin, Volume 19.1-19.2

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Introduction¹

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I

ON FEBRUARY 8, 1764, PRESIDENT EDWARD HOLYOKE of Harvard College sent a letter to Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn, London, describing a celebration and a disaster that had taken place during the preceding month.² The account of the celebration honoring the Hollis family gives no warning of the catastrophe and subsequent appeal to follow.

Sir,

I received your kind letter of May 17, together with the case of books, which (according to your usual goodness) you sent therewith; for which our corporation, in a grateful sense of your beneficence, send you their thanks, as in the enclosed vote. I had wrote you long before this time; but waited till I could inform you of the name of a new building added by our general court to those we have already. The account of which is as followeth:—Our college hath been of late so much increased by the number of students (at present 184 undergraduates) that we applied to our general court, that they would make us such a grant as would enable us to build such a house as we wanted; which grant, viz. £ 400. sterling, they readily made us; accordingly, we immediately proceeded upon the affair, and erected a very fair building, much more beautiful and commodious than any we had before, which was finished the last summer, and contains two-and-thirty chambers. About which time, I being in company (on a certain occasion) with a large number of our ministers, when (speaking of said building) it was moved by one of the company, since

¹ William H. Bond did not write a preface to his checklist, although he left brief notes and commentary towards one, generously shared with me by his daughters, Nancy and Sally Bond. I have endeavored to incorporate these into this introduction. I am grateful to the Bonds and to William Stoneman for encouragement, and of course to the memory of Bill Bond himself for his inspiration and friendship.

² Printed as Appendix LXX in Francis Blackburne, *Memoirs of Thomas Hollis*, 2 v. (London, 1780), 2:730-732. No holograph of the letter occurs in the correspondence of Hollis and Holyoke preserved in the Massachusetts Historical Society or the Harvard University Archives.

the house is now finished, what will the name of it be? I answered, that as Mr. Thomas Hollis, of London (your bountiful uncle) was by far our greatest benefactor, I thought it ought to have the name of Hollis, on which they all manifested their hopes it would be so called.

The overseers agreed “it would be a most proper name for it,” but thought it right that the Governor, Francis Bernard, should make the final decision. To him, Holyoke

shewed the great obligations we had been under to do honour to the name of Hollis, first with respect to Mr. Thomas Hollis, who was our greatest benefactor, as he had established with us two professorships and ten scholarships, besides gave us a great number of books, and a most valuable philosophic and mathematical apparatus; and with respect to Mr. Nathaniel Hollis, who established two scholarships, and others of the name who sent us an orrery, armillary sphere, &c. &c. &c. And further with respect to Mr. John Hollis, who sent us a large number of most valuable books; to which I added your own almost annual benefactions. I added, moreover, That though there was one of our towns which, for the honour of that family, was named Holliston, yet the reason of that name would not long be remembered; but if one of the colleges was so named it would perpetuate the memory of our great benefactor, and the honour of his house. Upon which I told the governor I requested that the new building at the college might be named HOLLIS. To which he readily answered, With all his heart.

On January 13, the Governor and Council, with the lower house, met in Cambridge (in Holden Chapel) with the express purpose of viewing the new building.

And when they were well seated . . . I rose up and said: “As there are here present his Excellency the Governor, the Honourable his Majesty’s Council, and the Honourable House of Representatives, who by their vote gave to the College the new building in our view, it cannot therefore be an improper time to ask a name for it: wherefore I apply to your Excellency to give the name.”

Upon which the Governor, standing up, said:— “I now give to this new building the name of HOLLIS-HALL.”

After this there was a gratulatory oration in English, given by one of the students, and that in a handsome manner. And after an agreeable entertainment of the whole court (who dined in the College-hall) they went to take a view of the new-named building; and then returned to Boston.

Holyoke concludes this portion of the letter to the point: “Sir, I write you this very

particular account of the whole affair, that you may see how very desirous we are to do honour to your worthy and munificent family.”

Holyoke’s combination of straightforwardness, transcription, flattery, and genuine gratitude transparently sets the stage for the dramatic report that follows.

But, however I rejoice in all I have said above, as done in honour of your generous and charitable house, the holy providence of GOD calls me to bewail the great, and, in some regards, irreparable loss, we have sustained by fire, since the 13th of January above-mentioned.

The small-pox coming to Boston, and beginning to spread, the general court were much alarmed (for that the greatest part of them, by far, had never had it); and therefore desired the Governor to adjourn them to Cambridge; which he did; and they came up and sat here on Jan. 18. The Governor and Council in the Library and the Representatives in the Hall underneath, till the 24th, when it being very cold, they made large fires, and that in the library had (it is thought) in the day-time fired a beam which run under the hearth, which in the dead of night set fire to the library and the whole house, which was so increased when discovered, that no single thing could be saved, and was so raging, as to baffle all attempts to stop it, the wind having been, and then continuing, very strong. The other three buildings, viz. Massachusetts, Hollis and Stoughton, were much endangered, the fire catching upon them several times, but having a good engine, and well tended, none (by the good providence of GOD) but Harvard was lost; but then the treasure therein was vastly worth more than the building; viz. the whole library, which at least consisted of 5000 volumes; of which near 3000 were quartos and folios, every thing also in the apparatus, procured by the munificence of your family. It is true the general court immediately made us a grant for rebuilding the house; but at present we have no provision made for obtaining a library and apparatus, wherefore we are greatly at a loss what we shall do in that respect; and I am afraid must despair of those losses being made up, unless it be from your side of the water; but cannot have the face to ask your assistance, having continually received great benefactions from your bountiful hand; but this you will give us leave to hope for, that you would be pleased to move any gentlemen of your acquaintance, who are charitably disposed to assist us in the repair of these our great losses. There are others of our corporation who will write you on this matter, to beg your assistance, as above, with whose motions I know you will readily comply, whereby you may be a means of greatly serving us . . .

In the postscript, Holyoke informs Hollis that “the only ornament of our Hall was our benefactor’s picture,” and asks him, if he has one, to send a copy for the hall, along with

“an escutcheon of the arms of the family, which also was lost in the library.” With all of this dreadful news, Holyoke is able at least to reassure him “that the last parcel of books you sent, with your letter of May 17, have escaped destruction, as it remained in my house for want of boxes, and fitting a place for them in the library.”

II

President Holyoke’s pains to lead Thomas Hollis through the stages of building, proposing, viewing, naming, and celebrating not only convey the drama but also re-stage baptismal and commemorative rituals. Holyoke summarizes so explicitly the Hollis family’s previous benefactions, of course, in order to remind him of the great lineage of patronage by the Hollises, now materially disrupted and virtually erased, except for the shell of the new building. His description of the hall as a temple-monument in honor of his ancestor, bare except for portrait and family arms, might appeal to the recipient’s vanity, as well as a sense of paternal responsibility. Yet Thomas Hollis was not a vain man, nor eager to have his name celebrated; he did believe, however, in the power of material objects to hold iconic significance and symbolic meaning, whether intellectual, political, or social. Such significance and meaning were usually accrued and imparted through gift or exchange between members of a like-minded network, both contemporary and cross-generational. In his appeal to Hollis, Holyoke must have sensed Hollis’s commitment to such a system of significance. The loss of the gifts from, and the remembrances of, the benefactor from the mother country exposed the institution and its students to a vacuum of identity and heritage. While the naming of a building in his honor certainly pleased him, the materials of study, consultation, and ownership—of identity formation—were Hollis’s committed interests. Thomas Hollis was uniquely positioned to compensate Harvard for the crippling loss, one which effectively made it impossible to continue a proper educational mission. As we shall see, he was just the person to call upon, and he was already actively gathering books to send.

The fire constituted a great tragedy. The library was the largest in the British colonies, possibly anywhere in North America. “An Account of the Fire at Harvard-College,” a long, articulate, and detailed notice, was published as a broadsheet in Boston the following day, and it was picked up by the *London Chronicle* for March 20-22, 1764.³ The London version includes two alterations that reveal the likely intervening hand of Thomas Hollis. Following the notation in the account that many of the destroyed items had been given “by our great benefactor the late worthy Thomas Hollis, Esq; of London,” it removes the comment, “Some of the most considerable additions that had been made of late years to the library, came from other branches of this generous Family.” Doubtless he considered the remark too fulsome and personal; however, he

3 Vol. XV, No. 1131, pp. 273-74. Peter X. Accardo brought this reprinting to my attention.

4 *Thomas Hollis’s Gifts to the Harvard College Library*

allows the subsequent passage to stand: “the other [donation], of 56 volumes, by the present worthy Thomas Hollis, Esq; F.R.S. of London, to whom we have been annually obliged for valuable additions to our late library.” While he may not have wanted his enemies in London to know that he was sending books to the American colonies (though soon this did not seem to concern him in his efforts for Harvard, whereas it did in his activities of donations elsewhere in the world), nevertheless the example which he set for others could be useful in these circumstances, especially as the notice contains a factual, straightforward account of items sent and deliveries made in service to the institution. The *Chronicle* also adds one sentence, following the inventory of scientific apparatus lost in the fire, an addition Thomas Hollis was in the best position to make: “The value of the whole apparatus could not be less than 300l. sterling;”, inserted before the broadsheet’s “All destroyed!” Whether or not President Holyoke’s letter arrived in London before the broadsheet account reached Hollis is unknown; whenever he read it, Hollis quickly had it republished to sound the alarm for assistance.

The disaster prompted Hollis to increase several-fold his shipments to Harvard, determining the books to which the young men should be exposed and (both implicitly and explicitly) helping to design their education and curriculum. Furthermore, the library’s collection was also available to members of the public, which Hollis clearly recognized in his inscriptions to the “publick” library of Harvard College. The surviving eighteenth-century records show many members of the public withdrawing books.⁴ In other words, Hollis’s books were also intended to educate a full contingent of (primarily) men from the colony, beyond the Harvard community proper. Most of these books and authors had never before been read on the shores of North America. Hollis’s response to the fire also enabled a vigorous connection to the leaders of Harvard and important colonial divines, especially in Boston and New England, which would prove influential, both in North America and in England, through the tumultuous decade following the Seven Years’ War and the build-up to the American Revolution. Reflecting later upon “the Plan adopted by me in regard to Books intended to be presented to that College,” Hollis would write to Edmund Quincy, in Boston, on October 1, 1766:

I confess to bear propensity, affection toward the People of North America; those of Massachusetts and Boston in particular, believing them to be a good and brave People. Long may they continue such, and the Spirit of Luxury, now consuming Us to the very marrow here at home, kept out from them!

One likeliest means to the End will be, to watch well over their Youth, by bestowing on them a reasonable, manly education; and selecting thereto the wisest, ablest, most accomplished of Men, that art or wealth can obtain: for Nations rise and fall by Individuals not Numbers, as I think all History proveth.

4 Kenneth Carpenter, *The First 350 Years of the Harvard University Library* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Library, 1986), 14-15, 32, 33.

With Ideas of this kind have I worked for the Public Library at Cambridge in N. England; neither caring too exactly to remember, how the last, best Library in all America was lost there; nor, a sober, retired Person, without a by-view, not long to be unearthed, acting surely from Vanity; nor sparing toward it Expence, Labor or Time.

It is certain the last winter I passed in Town, against Inclination, Health and Conveniency, on account of the Stamp-act; and this Summer, with much preceeding time, time the most valuable of all things, on account of that Library.⁵

III

Hollis's aims for Harvard College have received careful attention from historians and bookmen, but have never been examined or delineated in the detail they deserve, principally because the actual books have never before been located and an inventory published.⁶ With the publication of W. H. Bond's comprehensive checklist, such an examination can now be undertaken, briefly in this introduction, and more fully by contemporary scholars. But before we examine Thomas Hollis's program, we should attempt to understand something of the man himself and the origins of and reasons for his extraordinary connection to Harvard College, which neither he nor his ancestors ever even saw.

Much has been illuminated about Thomas Hollis's history in recent decades through the research of W. H. Bond.⁷ The Hollis family had been successful cutlers and later amassed a considerable fortune as manufacturers and merchants. They were an

5 W. H. Bond, ed., *Letters from Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn to Andrew Eliot* (Cambridge, Mass.: Houghton Library, 1988), 92-93.

6 In addition to Bond's work, most notable among existing studies are those by Caroline Robbins, esp. "Library of Liberty—Assembled for Harvard College by Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn," *Harvard Library Bulletin* 5 (1951), 5-23, 185-96, reprinted in her *Absolute Liberty*, ed. Barbara Taft (Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1982); and Annabel Patterson, *Early Modern Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), passim. Much of Bond's work of assembling the information in the checklist and gathering information concerning these efforts required a thorough examination of the accession lists in the Harvard University Archives, correspondence (much unpublished) between Hollis and his contacts at Harvard and in Boston, and, of course, his unpublished diary from the years 1759-70, at Houghton Library. I have relied on Hollis's diary in my description of his activities and aims throughout this introduction.

7 W. H. Bond, *Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn: a Whig and His Books* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), esp. ch. 1.

old Dissenting family and predictably “Real” or “Old” Whig in politics.⁸ From early on, they supported Dissenters’ charitable and educational causes, and Dissenting worship in general. The first Thomas Hollis prospered as a whitesmith and cutler in Rotherham in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He founded the Sheffield Hospital, a charity to maintain sixteen poor cutlers’ widows, and was a leader in the Upper Chapel in Sheffield before his death in 1663. His son Thomas the second (1634-1718) was apprenticed to a cutler and was eventually sent to London, where he became an independent merchant. In Bond’s words, “He and his wife, Anne (Thorner), worshipped at Pinner’s Hall, London’s leading Independent Meeting House, and in 1679 he secured a ninety-nine-year lease of the Hall, which was served during most of the eighteenth-century by a line of distinguished Dissenting ministers including Isaac Watts and Caleb Fleming, all closely associated with the Hollis family” (30). While in London he met Increase Mather, who had come there in 1688 to negotiate a new charter for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Mather was at this time Rector of Harvard College, which was in considerable danger of collapse, its governing boards having been eliminated and with no charter that explicitly protected its rights and existence. Thus began the Hollises’ connection to Harvard, as Increase Mather actively sought out leading Dissenters in London to support the struggling young Dissenting institution in the American colonies. Thomas the second’s brother-in law, Robert Thorner, who also became acquainted with Mather, left a sizable bequest to Harvard. This Thomas Hollis also generously founded and supported Dissenter interests and charities in Sheffield. Thomas the third (1659-1731), eldest son of Thomas the second, established the Hollis Professorships in Divinity and in Natural Philosophy, the oldest chairs in North America, and gave them donations totaling at least £5,000. He gave other gifts, including books, and Hollis Hall was chiefly, as we have seen, named in his honor. Along with his brothers Nathaniel (d. 1738) and John (d. 1735), Thomas Hollis the third was also very active in supporting charities in England, including Baptist and Independent religious societies. John Hollis also gave books to Harvard. Nathaniel was the father of Thomas the fourth (d. 1735), a supporter of charitable causes himself. Thomas the fifth (1720-1774, the Thomas Hollis who concerns us here) was the son of Thomas the fourth and his wife, Sarah (d. before 1735).

Thomas the third had amassed a considerable fortune, which he left at his death to his brother Nathaniel and son Thomas the fourth. Thomas Hollis (the fifth) was heir of both these brothers and came into his fortune at an early age: his father died when he was only fifteen, his uncle when he was eighteen. Immensely wealthy, Thomas the fifth

8 On this designation, see, e.g., John Sainsbury, *Disaffected Patriots: London Supporters of Revolutionary America, 1769-1782* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens’s University Press, 1987), 7-12, 125-9, passim; Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 1-18; Colin Hayden, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth-century England, c. 1714-80* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 184-97, passim.

now had options open before him other than the commercial career for which he had been educated (partially in the Low Countries); having received his father's bequest when he was still in his minority, he was no longer obliged to make money. "A career in public service," writes Bond, "seemed to open before him, and a liberal education was now to be added to the practical training he had already acquired" (6). Thomas Hollis was reoriented by his guardians to a classical education; he studied Greek and Latin with his tutor, John Ward, Professor of Rhetoric at Gresham College.

As a Dissenter, Hollis would not be groomed for Oxford or Cambridge, but he seems to have found his educational model early on in John Milton's remarkable prescriptions for education written in his letter to Samuel Hartlib, published as *Of Education*. Milton's precepts are intended to fit "a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war."⁹ Milton sets out the requirements for education into a moral life of public service, acting deliberately and tirelessly to support religious and political freedom (concerning what to read, what languages to learn, what sciences, what travels and formal studies, and so on, and in what order). Hollis's career followed Milton's plan (Hollis always referred to it as the "MASTER tract") with remarkable consistency; the most significant divergence is an important one, however: Hollis always insisted on remaining a private subject rather than a public figure (despite his constant intervention in public causes behind the scenes).

When he came of age, he bought extensive farmland in the southwest of England (Milton had advised his reader to study agricultural science), some thousands of acres, five or six farms, and he would eventually farm them or have them farmed by tenants. Beginning at age twenty, Hollis read law (as prescribed in Milton's letter) in Lincoln's Inn for around six years, after which, as Milton had insisted should be the culmination of a proper education, he embarked on two grand tours, traveling throughout Europe, from Scandinavia to Malta and as far east as Poland and Vienna. While in Italy, where he spent many months, he met numerous members of the intelligentsia, as well as book dealers and collectors and amateurs in art, and he began purchasing coins, medals, classical antiquities, and books, collecting for himself and as gifts for others. It was in Italy where he seems to have developed his interest in and commitment to the distribution of objects connected with political, religious, and moral positions he valued. The importance of objects as signifying allegiance and as conveying and performing a commitment became nearly obsessive for Hollis all his adult life.

Hollis was an ardent republican, as well as Dissenter, yet this designation requires some refining. Hollis was not necessarily anti-monarch and actively promoted "Revolution" (i.e., 1688) values. Hollis believed that the will of the people and the constitution should be protected more forcefully from corrupt powers within the

9 Blackburne, 1:84; J. G. Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century*, 6 vols. (London, 1812), 3:20.

government and the Crown. He looked back to Lord Molesworth, Milton, and Algernon Sidney for his justifications for the protecting of the rights of subjects and institutions. Hollis republished several classic prose texts of the seventeenth century (concerning law, the state, the church, and liberty) and had them specially bound and distributed to destinations and individuals all over Europe and some in the colonies. He gave most of these to Harvard and also, in the colonies, to Princeton (his first donation appears to have been ten guineas to “the newly erected college at Prince’s-town, in New Jersey” in 1754), Columbia, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania.¹⁰ He also gave them to individuals whom he wanted to support and to win to his causes, in America and throughout Europe, where many remain in libraries to this day. Besides Harvard, the most frequent recipients, who retain the books in their collections, were the Zentralbibliothek Bern, Switzerland, with a magnificent collection of nearly 400 remarkably pristine volumes, including Hollis’s “canonical” books; the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, with a unique collection of anti-Jesuit publications; Christ’s College, Cambridge, with books including spectacular copies of *Paradise Lost* and Locke’s own copy, with annotations, of his *Two Treatises on Government*; and Dr. Williams’s Library, London, the famous Dissenting institution.

Harvard’s collection is the largest, especially because of efforts following the fire. Yet there were other reasons as well. Hollis was motivated by the strong historical tie between members of his family and Harvard College, by the unique role of Harvard as the premier institution in the English-speaking world for training Dissenting preachers and leaders, by its increasing importance in the colonies, and by its centrality to the sovereignty and religious issues so close to his heart and, no doubt eventually, to its geographical importance to the growing struggle with the home country. Furthermore, as he increasingly lost confidence in the mother country’s ability to resist the forces of arbitrary authority that would constrain freedom and (one of his recurrent words, following Milton) “manliness,” Hollis appears to have thought that the English colony in the New World, educated in the right spirit, might be the only remaining hope to perpetuate the spirit of English liberty. That Hollis intended his gifts to establish a great library for Dissenting young men, one which should continue to educate generations for years after his death, is demonstrated by his bequeathing of £500 in his will to establish Harvard’s oldest endowed book fund, still active today.

IV

Hollis had already begun giving many books before the fire, as we have seen. He seems to have given important books including a first edition of Vesalius and books on classical architecture and a variety of subjects (unlike the strictly theological books given by his ancestors), many of which were destroyed. The library had outgrown its quarters in

¹⁰ Blackburne, 1:60.

Cambridge and therefore when a shipment of books arrived late in the year before the fire, the packing cases, as Holyoke confirms, were stored apparently unopened in the President's house so they survived the fire. Furthermore, some other books that Hollis had given to Harvard earlier, such as the Vesalius, were so beautiful that the President kept them in his house too, so some important things survived.

By the time news of the fire arrived in London, Hollis was already collecting books and raising money for the college. He knew the booksellers in London intimately and canvassed them for their cooperation in donating books to the college, which some of them did. As we can trace in his diary, Hollis gathered books from all over the place for a year or more. He made a daily round of all the bookshops that he knew in London and picked up books that would be good for the college to have. By examining Hollis's diary, Harvard library records, and the books themselves, we can estimate that Hollis sent at least thirty shipments across the Atlantic at various dates. Some of them were undated and must be inferred.

Hollis's activities in preparing and shipping books can be summarized from W. H. Bond's thorough descriptions in his *Thomas Hollis of Lincoln's Inn*.¹¹ The great majority of the books Hollis gave to Harvard after the fire, unless they were in fine or sound bindings already, he had rebound in London by two binders, John Matthewman and John Shove (his earlier master-binder was Richard Montagu, who executed beautiful bindings on books, such as Hollis's edition of Milton's *Works* [in prose], some of which are still preserved at Harvard). It is hard to imagine that these binders could have done much work for anyone else at these times. Several other binders did a very few of the volumes. In some cases, books in fine or simply sound bindings would be "vamped" by inserting new endpapers, headbands, and other details, structural and decorative, including adding Hollis's own emblematic tools to any existing decoration. Some of the books Hollis sent have fine emblematic bindings, and many are well preserved. Most are relatively plain and simply decorated, if at all; these are often well-worn, some with readers' annotations, showing they were actually taken down and consulted. As he prepared his books, another catastrophe of fire struck, this time in London. Hollis books were once again destroyed in June 1764, when a fire devastated Matthewman's shop, destroying a large number of books as well as the beautiful tools designed by Cipriani. On June 6, Hollis records:

Lamented this misfortune on many accounts; but cheered Mathewman all I could. I have lost by it a large and very fine collection of books, relating chiefly to Government, which were there for binding, and were intended to be sent to Harvard College in N. E.; besides much time and thinking. I will not be discouraged, however, but begin collecting a finer parcel for that College; and I

11 Esp. ch. 2.

thank God, that it was not my own house that was consumed; a Calamity that would have mastered my poor Philosophy!

He immediately began to collect books that had been lost and submitted want-lists to dealers. Eventually new tools were cut, in late 1764 and early 1765, and the stamping continued again.

V

Hollis's donations to Harvard represent what must be the largest gift of books to one destination during the eighteenth century; his efforts far exceed those of any other private individual. In fact, when we consider the entire program of distribution, to sites in Europe and North America, it becomes clear that his network of gifts has perhaps never been matched by an individual. In total, he must have given at least four thousand volumes, many of them rare and valuable, many comprising multiple pamphlets and other fugitive pieces bound together. The full nature of the propaganda campaign is resembled only by the mass production and distribution of books in more recent history.

Analyzing the individual gifts, their contents, binding, and inscriptions, together with any relevant comments by Hollis himself, we can trace a map of Hollis's intentions and beliefs concerning the donations to Harvard. One particularly fascinating glimpse into one aspect of Hollis's project—virtually an epitome of it, debating, then resolving, his beliefs concerning the power of books and scholarship—can be found within the volume of John Ray's *Select Remains* (1760). The flyleaf contains the following quotation, apparently in the handwriting of previous owner and editor George Scott, from Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas, the Prince of Abyssinia*:

The Life that is devoted to knowledge passes silently away, and is very little diversified by Events. To talk in publick, to think in Solitude, to read and to hear, to inquire, and answer Inquiries, is the Business of a Scholar. He wanders about the World without Pomp or Terrour, and is neither known or valued but by Men like Himself.—Prince of Abyssinia Vol. i. p. 43.

Hollis adds the note: “written by Mr. Johnson.” On the back flyleaf, Hollis responds, with a quotation from Hobbes:

“Desire of praise disposeth to laudable actions, such as please them whose judgment they value; for of those men whom we condemn, we condemn also the praises. Desire of praise [Fame] after death does the same. And though after death, there be no sense of the praise given Us here on Earth, as being

joyes, that are either swallowed up in the unspeaka[ble] joyes of Heaven, or extinguished in the extreme torments of Hell; yet is not such praise vain: Because men have a present delight therein, from from [*sic*] the foresight of it, and of the benefit that may result thereby to their Posterity, which though they now see not yet they imagine, & any thing that is pleasure in the sense, the same also is pleasure in the Imagination.” *Leviathan*, 1651, in folio, p. 48.

The quotations do battle over the memory and the soul, as it were, of John Ray and like-minded erstwhile scholars. Johnson (with whom Hollis is happy to disagree) proposes the first position, Hobbes the second. The quotation from *Rasselas* alludes to Ray’s scholarly life, at Cambridge and afterwards as tutor, emphasizing the slow, modest, narrowly effective life of words. The quotation from Hobbes stakes out the territory of the scholar as inspired by self-belief and the power of pleasing worthy successors and readers, of consciousness of the world and the effects of one’s efforts within it, and the power of words before and after the death of the author. Ray’s work is his “Remains,” that which is left, especially the accounts of his travels through Britain (“Mr. Ray’s Itineraries,” pp. 105-319). Hollis insists—as against George Scott’s invoking of Johnson’s deflating image of the scholar—that “actions” of authors, specifically their words, retain a life, and that praise of authors—one of Hollis’s activities, praising those in his Pantheon, giving them fame—incites them to bold and great deeds that live on after the author’s death. (Ray’s work in natural theology would notably influence later scientists; he is sometimes considered the father of British natural history.) Therefore, it is important to praise them and hold them up to public worth. Hollis is also concerned about the legacy of the books themselves, which continue to do their author’s work, as living things—*pace Areopagitica*—even after his or her death. Note his care to cite the location of the passage in the specific edition of Hobbes, the folio edition which he, of course, had already sent to Harvard in 1764; on p. 48 of that book, Hollis has written in the margin, “Love of Vertue, from Love of Praise.” Hollis is always interested in the network of, and dialogue and connections between, books; in this regard, he frequently points the reader to a particular truth on a particular page to be gleaned from a volume. In this case, the dialogue is pursued among Johnson, Hobbes, Ray, and ultimately Hollis himself, who choreographs it. The significance of the quotation taken from Hobbes’s *Leviathan* to Hollis’s own practice is clear: Hollis was apparently pleased to receive praise from those in Harvard and Boston, who knew he was engaged in a grand donation. It is part of his intention to maintain a public and celebrated connection between the colonies and the old country, one that would have mutual political, religious, and intellectual benefit, and would establish an example for others. In the course of donation or exchange, and of publishing and financing other works, the political, moral, and intellectual allegiances are established. In this regard, he is concerned about his own legacy and that of his family for what they represent, as much

as anything. (In the great majority of donations in Europe, especially to Bern and Zürich, he preferred to work anonymously and assiduously protected his anonymity.)

Hollis transcribes the same quotation from *Leviathan* (with minimal variations) onto the back flyleaf of John Ward's *A System of Oratory* (1759), underlining the phrases "yet is not such fame [sic] vain" and "and of the benefit which may redound thereby to Posterity." Ward was Hollis's unassuming tutor. On the first flyleaf, Hollis quotes from "Lycidas":

Fame is the spur, that the clear spirit doth raise,
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights & live laborious days;
But the fair guerdon where we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Furie with th'abhorred shears,
And slits the thin-spun life; But not the praise
Phebus repli'd, and

Milton's Lycidas¹²

See the Note at the end of this book. [i.e., the passage from Hobbes]

On the second flyleaf, in Hollis's hand:

The free and ingenuous sort of men were evidently born to study and love learning for itself, not for lucre or any other end, but the service of God & of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame & perpetuity of praise, which God & good Men have consented shall be the reward of those whose publish'd labours advance the good of mankind.

Milton's Areopagitica.

Hollis's appeal to these quotations and the qualities of "praise," "fame," and "reward" has implications both for Hollis's own activities and for the role the books and authors will play in succeeding generations, as indeed for the students who are reading the works and preparing for their own lives. "Praise" in this context involves attention and attributed value, attributed specifically by those who come afterward; this is what gives the words life. Citing them publicly, presenting the book as gift, adorning it appropriately physically, remembering, through a kind of litany, other workers laboring for similar causes—all these acts give value to the object and enable

12 Hollis copied the same passage from "Lycidas" onto the flyleaf of a copy of Milton's *Works* [in prose] he donated to Geneva, plus the three previous lines of the poem: "Were it not better done as others do,/To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,/Tied in the tangles of neera's [sic] hair?"

the object to express and demonstrate its value through its “fame.” Milton’s words even imply a quasi-sainthood for those who would write in such service. In the passage from Hobbes, “praise” also involves a sense of self-worth. Ward is an important figure in this regard, as a man who lived modestly and made few claims for himself, but who influenced—again, in a modest manner—the debates of the day, especially concerning the relation between science and religion. As Hollis’s tutor, Ward imparted his own spirit, knowledge, and commitment through intellectual exchange. Hollis further points, embraces, usurps, and sends along the accumulated font of wisdom and a sign of solidarity.

When Hollis has the books of which he approves vamped, rebound, or otherwise altered at his direction, he takes over the books—their contents as well as materials themselves—for his own purposes. In such a way, he recruits or dragoons the work to his own efforts of propaganda and influence, as if it has been written to the cause, to the minute. Yet the archaic or otherwise old-fashioned quality of some of the books—their lettering, for example, or their paper, or layout—is also rhetorically useful for communicating to the recipient and reader (especially when old and new elements are juxtaposed) the message that the causes are the same over time, and that current crises and concerns were anticipated by the great writers of the past, from Aristotle to Cicero, to Algernon Sidney, John Milton, or John Locke. Hollis’s vamping is his own form of creation and collaboration, enlisting in the ranks of great men and their causes. In symbolic terms, Hollis creates a kind of shrine in which the spirit of the author and his cause is handed over for preservation and inspiration. The work is itself treated as if it were a living being, resurrected or enlivened for new life. Hollis’s traces (gilt-stamps, smoke prints, special endpapers and ribbons, as well as annotations and inscriptions) partake of a ritual syncretism between creators—of the original work and the re-created work. Thus, the volumes enact a collaboration between like minds, a type and model for what occurs during the donation to a specific source. The exchange and transformational aspects of the books are thus visible on and within the books themselves. Even anachronistic aspects of the book decoration inscribe the collaboration.

Furthermore, Hollis was inspired by Milton’s stirring words in *Areopagitica*, words he copied into several books given to Harvard and elsewhere: “For books are not absolutely dead things . . . They are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon’s teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men.”¹³ The intent for the colonists was clear, and perhaps more successful than Hollis could have imagined or, indeed, would have hoped (he would have been devastated to know of the outbreak of war with the mother country). Hollis is concerned about the Bostonians and actively seeks word of and from them, often in the New England Coffee

13 Richard Baron, ed. *The Works* [in prose], 2 v. (London, 1753 [i.e., 1756]), 1:151; this edition of Milton’s prose is one of Hollis’s favorite “liberty books,” sent to many destinations.

House in London and from ships' captains after transatlantic voyages, and he attempts to support their grievances against the mother country. The diary documents his concerns and activities for the colonists, with something done on their behalf virtually every day over more than ten years.

In a most evident way, Hollis is involved in promoting a kind of "identity formation," as Benedict Anderson phrases it, based on writing, reading, and ownership.¹⁴ The identity of the American colonists was, in a manner of speaking, still immature and unformed, in the process of being formed, even while its character was more or less set. We are reminded of Edmund Burke's great "Speech on Conciliation with the Colonies," in which he turns his attention to the American character and spirit, concluding with rhetorical force that this spirit is set and is fierce, proud, unbending, and accustomed to confrontation. There was a great deal to fight over, and Hollis enters the lists.

VI

Hollis's activities as educator and propagandist, as distributor and publisher of books and pamphlets for the Americans' concerns, should be seen as part of a larger program of propaganda and influencing public opinion. Hollis's monitoring of news and opinions in the printed press was a daily affair, as we know from his diary, and he very often inserted for anonymous publication articles, letters, or notices reflecting his interests. The diary is full of references to his journalistic and pamphlet publications, and the scholar can identify hundreds of likely published pieces from his hand, though it is impossible to be certain of all of them. Every act was intended to influence public opinion towards the causes he cared about. He also distributed in England works published in the American colonies, most of them unavailable and controversial, sent him by American friends. Many of these are tracts written in the midst of controversies raging in the colonies concerning British policies towards them. Some of them he sent back to Harvard with his own binding and notes. He also arranged for republication in England of colonial tracts, some of them incendiary. And as we can see from the checklist, Hollis sent the Americans copies of British tracts concerning American affairs almost as soon as they were written.

Hollis's "transatlantic patronizing"¹⁵ may be observed in the case of John Adams, who probably encountered Hollis's "liberty canon" (Milton, Sidney, Harrington, Locke, et al.) while on a Hollis scholarship (funded by Thomas Hollis the third) as a student at Harvard College in the 1750s. His *A Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law* (1765) praised Hollis's core writers for establishing and protecting religious and

14 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Nationalism. Reflections on the Spread and Origin of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

15 John S. Tanner and Justin Collings, "How Adams and Jefferson Read Milton and Milton Read Them," *Milton Quarterly* 40 (2006): 210.

political principles. Hollis arranged to publish the tract in England, though ignorant of its author. As recent scholars have claimed, Hollis's donations of "liberty books" to Harvard

had supplied the Whig view of British history adopted by Adams in the *Dissertation*. Thus, Hollis had in effect disseminated seeds of liberty to America, from which sprang Adams's *Dissertation*, and then transplanted fruit from the American tree of liberty back on English soil . . . He placed republican texts, Milton's biography [by Toland] and prose foremost among them, in the hands of extraordinary readers such as Jefferson and Adams. They in turn spread these libertarian ideas in the Colonies and eventually back to England and the Continent, and ultimately forward into history.¹⁶

Adams writes of these authors and their effect on him in his *Thoughts On Government: Applicable to the Present State of the American Colonies*:

A man must be indifferent to the sneers of modern Englishmen, to mention in their company the names of Sidney, Harrington, Locke, Milton, Nedham, Neville, Burnet, and Hoadley. No small fortitude is necessary to confess that one has read them. The wretched condition of this country, however, for ten or fifteen years past, has frequently reminded me of their principles and reasonings. They will convince any candid mind, that there is no good government but what is Republican.

In an earlier version of the *Thoughts* (a letter to William Hooper) he affirms that "In my early Youth, the Works of [these writers] were put into my hands."¹⁷ Not only does Adams credit these writers (Hollis's liberty canon) with value, he also implies the scarcity of works. Adams invokes their unfashionable names, saved from complete ignorance in the colonies by Hollis, in order to strike back at the political realities he was encountering and attempting to resist.

Similarly, Andrew Eliot writes to Hollis in 1767, upon receiving a shipment of books destined for Harvard, as follows:

Harrington, Sydney, Locke, almost any man may study his whole life to advantage. I am particularly obliged to you for Milton's prose works. They who consider that very great man only as a poet of the first rank, know less than half his character. He was every thing. I have often read detached pieces of his,

¹⁶ Tanner and Collings, 210.

¹⁷ Robert. J. Taylor, et al., *Papers of John Adams*, 14 v. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1977-2008), 4:87, 74.

and shall never be weary of his *Defensio Populi Anglicani* . . . I blush to own that I have never gone through the whole of these prose works. I have lost a great deal. Perhaps my pleasure is the greater now . . . His sentiments are so just, and his attachment to liberty so firm, that he ought to be open to every Englishman.¹⁸

Milton had been the test case for political freedom, and the battle over his reputation and his actual works could take the form of his case for rebellion. The prose, which was kept out of print in England and only through Hollis's efforts republished and copies sent to North America—these very volumes at Harvard read by many influential figures—is uncompromisingly concerned with the right and duty of the individual to protect individual rights even if it means rebelling against the monarch. The importance of Hollis's success in introducing these volumes of republican writing, Sidney, Locke, and others, but especially Milton, cannot be overestimated in relation to the development of the ideas in the colonies that lead to the break with England, the founding of the United States, and the early years of Federalism.¹⁹

Not everyone was, or would have been, pleased with Hollis's transatlantic activities. It seems likely that such an important publication as Samuel Johnson's *The Patriot*, for example, is intended to answer Hollis and his activities (in addition to Wilkes et al.) as much as anyone else. (Hollis's book distribution activities became known in England, despite his efforts to keep them anonymous, and he was considered suspect and perhaps dangerous to the authorities in London. James Boswell had discovered republican books Hollis had sent all over Europe, especially to Bern, describing and ridiculing them in his journal account on November 30, 1764, and had probably written to Johnson about them, although the donor was not yet known to him. Soon thereafter, it would appear, they put two and two together.) Johnson's pamphlet answers Hollis's positions on several points without mentioning his name: it calls the accusations concerning the activities of the Catholics in Canada lies and intolerance; the accusations against bishops in the colonies unfounded; the penalties exacted by the British against all Bostonians, despite the innocence of some, justified; and so on. This pamphlet appeared in 1774, and second and third editions were printed in November 1774 and May 1775. The piece was collected in Johnson's *Political Tracts* of 1776. In other words, an effort was made to keep the physical pamphlet circulating.

On the title page of *The Patriot*, quoting from Milton's sonnet that begins "I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs," Johnson usurps the following lines in an

18 *Letters from Andrew Eliot to Thomas Hollis*, in *Massachusetts Historical Collections*, 4th series, 4 (Boston, 1858), 412-13.

19 For an account of attempts to control Milton's reputation in the 18th century and the ideological uses to which Milton and other authors could be put, see Allen Reddick, "Johnson Beyond Jacobitism: Signs of Polemic in the *Dictionary* and the *Life of Milton*," *ELH* 64 (1997): 983-1005.

incendiary and ironic use of Milton's words against the "patriot" champions of Milton: "That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,/And still revolt when Truth would set them free./Licence they mean when they cry Liberty;/For who loves that must first be wise and good" (ll. 9-12, with "They" for "That" (l.9), and "Yet" for "And" (l. 10)). It is no coincidence that John Adams implicitly answers Johnson and his rhetoric with lines from the same poem ("those lines of the immortal John Milton"), placed rhetorically at the conclusion of his famous tract, *Thoughts On Government: Applicable to the Present State of the American Colonies*, published as a pamphlet in Philadelphia in April 1776, reprinted immediately thereafter in Boston: "I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs/By the known rules of ancient liberty,/ When straight a barbarous noise environs me/Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs" (ll. 1-4). Both Johnson and Adams knew how to use Milton to insult the opposition, and insult it they did. Adams repossesses and reifies Milton's text as a claim for the rights of the colonists and the "clogs," or defenders, of the British government. There is clearly a battle over the use of Milton; and Hollis and his books were the source of Milton in the colonies. The battle over Milton's significance and alliance was waged through Hollis. In the words of two recent scholars of this subject, "Hollis was midwife to the knowledge of republican Milton not only for both Adams and Jefferson but for the eighteenth century generally, and on both sides of the Atlantic."²⁰

VII

With the checklist before us, it is possible to consider in some detail the kinds of books Hollis sent to Harvard College. It is possible, as well, to examine Hollis's intentions as revealed through his attention to the book as a physical object and the importance of its publishing history and availability. Hollis's attention to the physical nature of the book is especially obvious when we see that he had most, or many, of the books sent to Harvard bound in quality bindings. Some of them are the famous emblematic bindings, often in beautiful morocco, decorated with his extraordinary symbols. These tools are often reproduced within the book on the flyleaves as well, usually as smoke-prints. The educational program concerning the symbols will be discussed below, but the emphasis on acquiring and sending the best editions is worth considering here. He is preoccupied with keeping crucial books in print (especially those considered politically contentious, such as Milton's *Works* [in prose], Algernon Sidney's *Discourses concerning government*, and John Locke's *Letters on Toleration*, among many others) and with distributing them and making sure that specimens of earlier printings, if they are the only ones surviving, are preserved. If we note the frequency with which he inscribes a comment such as "it is very scarce," "libro raro," "very scarce," "very rare," "becoming more scarce," we perceive that Hollis is not only taking cognizance of

20 Tanner and Collings, 208.

the bibliographical detail and of the value of the book, but also of the entropy which causes books as well as the other creations of human beings to decay; furthermore, he is cognizant of the forces of destruction or control that would destroy such books and documents.

His note in the splendid copy of Henri Estienne's *Thesaurus graecae linguae* provides both an example and a *précis* of his efforts in this regard:

T·H has been looking out, above two Years, for a fine copy of Harry Stephens Greek Thesaurus for Harvard College. At length he purchased one out of the Library of the late learned Dr. Samuel Chandler. It is hardly to be imagined, what difficulty there is, even when money & industry are not wanting, to secure good Copies of the Old & best Editions of Classical & prime Authors. Time has consumed many of them. And many others, by common agreement of all our principal Booksellers, have been returning back for Years past, as they came on sale, to the European Continent from our Island. So much for the Dissipation, Ignorance of the times!

Time, laxness, "Dissipation, Ignorance"—the battle in Britain is virtually lost. It is in the New World, among liberty-loving freemen, that Hollis hopes for proper education, wisdom, and morality. On several occasions, Hollis notes in his diary that he spent time perusing the books from Chandler's library, searching for books to send to Harvard College, having them vamped and bound, then crated and sent away.

While Hollis is particularly interested in providing the basis, guidance, and materials for the proper education of young men in public morality, another reason he sends the books to Harvard, it seems probable, is that the New World was far enough away from England that the forces threatening liberty, which he saw everywhere, were less likely to destroy them in the colonies. Through scattering of the books—his motto, of course, being "ut spargam," from *Areopagitica*—they would be more likely to survive, if scattered widely enough, as all locations would be less likely to be overrun or fall into the hands of enemies. The apocalyptic character of his concerns for the state of human liberties should not be underestimated. Hollis's optimism for the improvement and education of society—owning and reading the right books will enable men and women to know the truths and to uphold them—should be seen as the counterpart of his suspicions, eventually verging on paranoia, of darker forces of destruction. These two partially contradictory sentiments powered his extraordinary activities throughout his adult life.

But the inhabitants of British dominions were also in danger. In particular, the Treaty of Paris (1763), ending the Seven Years' War, was seen by Hollis and his sympathizers as confirmation that not only would Catholics now be tolerated, but that the way was prepared for them to take over, in North America if not in Great

Britain itself. Hollis was furious at the allowance of the Crown that the “Papists” could keep a bishop in Quebec, as well as the enfranchisement of Catholics in the colonial legislature of Grenada. Even the plan (considered the brainchild of Archbishop Secker and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) of establishing Anglican bishops in the colonies—unwelcome and resisted by Hollis and his friends who assumed that the bishops would be used to further the powers and interests of the Crown and government ministers, and would disenfranchise the Dissenters—was in turn melded together as part of the plan for Catholic hierarchy as well. It was to be assumed that a covert plan for bringing popery into the colonies was underway. The cost to personal liberties, it was argued, would be enormous, and Hollis filled the popular press in London with outrage against these plans. As he would put it, “Popery is always the same,”²¹ the snake that never dies, and so writers against the “Papist religion” are to be resurrected to carry on in the never-ending campaign. Consequently, he sends many anti-Catholic books and pamphlets to Harvard, to warn them against the true aims of Catholics and of High Church Tories. His largest anti-Catholic shipment was to the library in Zürich, to which he sent a remarkable collection of anti-Jesuit books and pamphlets, collected throughout Europe. The activities of the Catholics, and especially the Jesuits, in North America, prompted a loud cry of alarm, which he replayed throughout his contacts.

His notes in the volumes of William Prynne’s *An exact chronological vindication* (known as *Prynne’s Records*) demonstrate his fears of Catholic forces in England. Prynne’s own note, explaining the rarity of the volumes, that “not 70 of them being rescued from the” Great Fire of 1666, seems to encourage Hollis’s suspicions of “papists” in his own day. As his inscriptions make clear, and the diary entries from September 20 and November 13, 1766, indicate, Hollis believed that a “papist” had stolen and disposed of the missing pages, pp. 848–993, from Prynne’s books when they were being rebound in John Matthewman’s bindery. He writes alarmingly: “It is supposed, that there are not six copies of this valuable work, at this time, in Britain!” Hollis suspects the infiltration of Catholics, especially Jesuits, throughout society, seeking to sabotage the work of ideas and information. In 1761, he offered the British Museum “a rare and master-print against the Jesuits” which the Trustees declined to display, Hollis’s condition for the gift, as likely to cause offence. He considered their behavior “strange, very strange,” i.e., suspicious and therefore monitory. The print he sent to Christ’s College, Cambridge, and the enormous collection of anti-Jesuit materials originally intended for the library of the museum, to Zürich.

21 Cf. *London Chronicle*, August 13–16, 1768; Blackburne, 1:395.

VIII

Hollis is unusually concerned with what books are in print, where the copies have been acquired (see e.g., Hollis's notes in the copies of Giggeo and Ange), and how they should be appreciated. Harvard men should understand where certain books fit in the controversies and understand the correct positions. Hollis is determined that the record of past heroics and arguments from classical times through the Middle Ages and Elizabethan period to the seventeenth century and the present, not be lost and that they be presented as a coherent part of a curriculum for young men preparing themselves for public service and public morality. There is a certain archival emphasis in many cases, as he assembles a record of publications and especially disputations. Hollis is trying to keep in front of the eyes of his readers and recipients arguments of the past, which are, in a way, the arguments of the ages: religious toleration for Protestants, the dangers of the Catholics, the abuse of arbitrary power through the monarchy and the Established Church, etc. These voices are resurrected or kept alive by Hollis to do battle in the present and future ages. As Caroline Robbins points out, he sent the catalogue of the library of Anthony Collins in part because it identified the authors of so many useful pamphlets.²² Classical writings concerning tyranny were given, such as Caesar's commentary, with Hollis's clear call to its future readers: "Very Rare, Very Curious, Very useful, it might be, to the Trained Bands of Massachusetts." He even concerned himself with evidence concerning the proper way to die and the understanding of the nature of the soul and its existence after death. This is, of course, a predictable concern for a Dissenter and a topic often debated, especially with Catholics and High Churchmen; but in Hollis's activities, it is joined with an admiration of anti-tyrannical Stoical writings concerning the relation between body and soul.

It is astonishing that Hollis was able to shape such a coherent list of books with such a coherent project. Many books and their arguments were long forgotten. It must have been through discussions with like-minded people in London and elsewhere in Great Britain that he assembled a list of books worthy and consistent with his work. He wrote to Jonathan Mayhew in May 1766, "The effigies which you desire, may be seen at this time on the library of Harvard College, feature by feature; though indeed it would require an exact eye and some time to cull out and put those features together."²³ An example of an unlikely candidate might be Arthur Wilson's *History of Great Britain*, which covers the reign of James I, and particularly the entanglements of the Crown with foreign concerns. There is no obvious indication from the book's title that it would be useful to Hollis: *The History of Great Britain, being The Life and Reign of King James the First, relating To what passed from his first Access to the Crown, till his Death*. Published in 1653, the history is a critical documentary of James I, aiming to rely upon

22 Robbins, "Library of Liberty," 17.

23 Blackburne, 1:322.

records and to steer a middle course between praise and damnation. In the process, it makes clear his mistakes, leading to present and future trouble, and the dangers posed by foreign interests, Jesuits, and so on. A book apparently little known or discussed, Hollis found it, perused it, had it bound, and sent it, a testimony to the importance of a careful scrutiny of kings and the dangers lurking for monarchs and the government and people.

Few if any of Hollis's contemporaries concerned themselves so with the physical details of a book, including illustrations, especially rare and/or specially-commissioned portraits, sometimes tipped-in. For Hollis, the book was a complete educational tool, emphasizing a community of like-minded believers. The publication record, as well as provenance and responsibility, form networks of connection and implication. Hollis "objectified" the book, reifying its significance, as well as preserving it for posterity, even if it is *not* read. The value added to a text through its "encrustation" provides an objectified presence, valued as physicalization of a kind of belief and a community of believers. It should be said, however, that the great majority of these Harvard books and pamphlets were to be *read*, not simply *preserved*, in counter-distinction to many books sent throughout Europe, in particular Switzerland, which give the impression of being representative possessions. The books are by no means all "precious" as objects (whatever their worth as useful and/or rare volumes), rather, except for those intended to make a symbolic statement (such as the beautiful Montague-bound green morocco, extra-illustrated volumes of Milton's *Works* [in prose]—sent before the fire—or the large paper edition of Sidney's *Discourses concerning government*, with proofs of Sidney's portrait tipped in, all bound in stunning, gold-embossed red morocco), the volumes are intended for student use and understanding.

The remarkable tools for gilt-stamping, which have been well described by W. H. Bond, but on which further research should be fruitful, were first designed by Giovanni Battista Cipriani, probably in early 1759.²⁴ The tools include the seated owl and the owl with wings spread with a palm branch in its talons, the cock, the Roman goddess Libertas, the harpy with a severed head, the liberty cap known as the pileus, the dagger, the lyre, the wand of Aesculapius, the club of Hercules, the trident of Neptune, and several others. These emblems can also be found as exquisite smoke prints inserted into volumes, usually among the front or back binder's leaves.

IX

In the copy of *Bibliotheca Literaria* (1722-1724) Hollis sent to Harvard, inscribed "palma, aug. 1, 1767," Hollis writes a short inventory and narrative of his furious gift-giving activities to that point:

²⁴ Bond, *Thomas Hollis*, 40-77.

T·H· has had the honor to send one Copy of this work to the Library of Harvard College, already. But the work is so curious, valuable, especially for The Memorial concerning the Desiderata in Learning; that he could not forbear sending another copy of it to the College. In the beginning, He sent Books on Government, beside stray Books, to Harvard College; for, if Government goeth right, ALL goeth right. Then, He sent Grammars, Dictionaries of Root and other Languages, with critical Authors; in hope of forming first rate Scholars, the NOBLEST of all Men! Now, he dribblets out the like. And thinks, to take his leave.

In an attempt to characterize more fully Hollis's donation, I have isolated several general categories into which most of the books in W. H. Bond's checklist may be divided. The categories are fluid and overlapping; others could have been isolated. The category headings in some cases are general and contain works in some ways different from one another. They are not intended to be exhaustive or conclusive. The great majority of books sent were in English, but a few were in other modern languages as well as in Latin.

1. CONTROVERSIAL PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING GOVERNMENT, ITS BASIS, AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS (e.g., Bodin, 1577; Trenchard; Priestley, 1768, *Liberty*, 1769, *Remarks*, 1769; including many 17th-c. works, e.g., Hobbes, 1651, 1682; Prynne; Neville, 1681, 1698, 1763; Nedham; *State Tracts* [justifying the revolution of 1688-89], 1692-93; Sidney; Campbell, 1747; [Wilkes controversy, e.g., Wilkes, *Complete collection of the genuine papers*, 1769; Tooke, 1770])
2. HISTORIES OF ENGLAND (especially Whig, illustrating ancient liberties, e.g., Arthur Wilson, 1653; Adam, ed. Hearne, 1727; White Kennet, ed., *Complete History of England*, 1706; Oldmixon, 1735-39; Ralph, 1744; Macaulay, 1763-65, 1766, 1767, 1768; Walpole, 1768)
3. ON THE AMERICAN QUESTION (e.g., Cumberland, 1724; Eliot, 1765; Mayhew, 1763, 1764, 1766; Chauncy, 1767, 1768; Jenyns, 1765; Pownall, 1766; Tucker, 1766; *An Appeal to the World*, 1770, published from colonial sources; *Horrid massacre*, 1770)
4. ANTIQUITIES (Classical: mainly Greek, Roman, Egyptian; medieval English; e.g., Gamucci, 1580; Basil Kennet, 1746; Marliani, 1622, 1544; Reinesius, 1682; Vaslet, 1732; Edward Stillingfleet, 1685; Malcolme, 1738; Venuti, 1749; Pancrazi, 1751; Pignoria; Piranesi; Philip Webb, 1756, 1760; Wise)
5. DESIGNS, ESPECIALLY MEDALS, COINS ("illustrating and upholding liberty"), civic architecture, prints (e.g., Vitruvius, 1521, 1584, 1590; Palladio, 1581, 1767; Savot, 1627; Patin, 1663, 1672, 1683; William Clarke, 1767; Caracci; Ames, 1748, 1749; Folkes, 1756, 1763; Wren, 1749; Christ, 1750; Jennings, 1764; Piranesi)

6. HISTORIES OF OTHER NATIONS AND THEIR DYNASTIC STRUGGLES (e.g., Contarini, 1591, and Limojon de St. Didier, 1680, on the Republic of Venice; Interiano (Genoa), 1551; Joseph Hill (Dutch and United Provinces, especially against the French), 1673)
7. ROMAN AND CLASSICAL HISTORY (e.g., Nicetas Choniates, 1562, Major, 1768; Edward Montagu, 1760)
8. LINGUISTIC/PHILOLOGICAL BOOKS (especially English [e.g., John Wallis, 1653, 1678]; but also, e.g., Accademia della Crusca, *Vocabolario*, 1746-1748, Perrin, 1767; and Latin, Greek, Persian, Syriac, Egyptian, Hebrew [e.g., George Ollyffe, 1750; Otho, 1675], Turkish [Megiserus, 1612], Chaldean [Münster, 1527], Celtic [Cleland, 1768, 1768?]; bilingual or English dictionaries, e.g., Baretti, *A dictionary of the English and Italian languages*, 1760; Edward Phillips, 1720, Martin, 1748, 1749, 1762, 1766; Ephraim Chambers, 1751-53)
9. BRITISH LAW AND LEGAL HISTORY (e.g., Daines Barrington, 1766, 1769; Bracton, 1640; Bonnaire, 1751; Coke, 1738; Hale, 1739; Simpson, 1765)
10. RELIGION (especially confession, religious toleration, establishment, nature of God and trinity, e.g., Whichcote, 1698; Tindal; Jeremiah White, 1712; Chubb; Nye, 1701, 1715; Collins; Woolston; Sykes; Hoadley, *Civil government and Submission*, 1710, 1719; Clayton; Chandler; Blackburne; Rotheram, 1767)
11. DEATH AND NATURE OF THE SOUL (e.g., Woolner, 1655; Baxter, *An enquiry into the nature of the human soul*, 1745; Layton; John Reynolds, 1725; Samuel Clarke, 1760; Broughton, 1766)
12. THE ENGLISH REFORMATION (e.g., Burnet, 1681-85; Benjamin Bennet, 1721, 1723; Bendlowes, 1768; Bowman, 1768)
13. THE DISSENTERS AND DISSENTING CHURCHES (e.g., Bastwick, 1646; Defoe, 1703; Calamy, 1703-1705, 1718; Fleming; Towgood, 1752, 1753, 1755)
14. WRITINGS AGAINST JESUITS AND/OR CATHOLICS (e.g., Bale, 1543; Perrault, 1667; Morton, 1679; Wake, 1688; Prynne; Barker 1735; Joshua Bayes, 1735; Earle, 1735; Chandler, 1745; Baron, 1752, 1768; *Authentic memoirs concerning the Portuguese inquisition*, 1769; Geddes, 1715)
15. AGAINST THE EARLY STUARTS, KINGSHIP, PRETENDER, CIVIL WAR, GLORIOUS REVOLUTION, EXCLUSION OF STUARTS (e.g., George Buchanan, 1689; Sherlock, 1691; Welwood, 1689; Calamy, 1718)

16. LIBRARY AND SALE CATALOGUES, BOOKS, COINS, MEDALS (e.g., Stadtbibliothek Bern, 1764; Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, 1764; *Harleian miscellany*, 1744-46; Bridges, 1725; Anthony Collins, 1730/1; Haym, 1741; Fairfax, 1751; Dingley, 1753; Mead; Selbye, 1755; Perry, 1762; Clarendon, 1764; Letherland, 1765)
17. "LIBERTY" POETS (e.g., Milton; Marvell; Akenside, 1738; Thomson, 1752; Glover, 1760)
18. BOOKS ON LITERATURE, INCLUDING LITERARY CONTROVERSIES (e.g., Orrery, 1698; Milner, 1698; Bentley, 1699; Richardson, 1734; Pemberton, 1738; Trapp, 1742; John Mason, *Poetical composition*, 1749, *Prosaic numbers*, 1749; Daniel Webb, 1762, 1769, 1769; Hugh Blair, 1763; Lowth, 1763; James Macpherson, 1763, 1765; Percy, 1767; Elizabeth Montagu, 1769)
19. POETRY (e.g., Waller, 1711; Gay, 1712, 1721?; Philips, 1720; Shakespeare, 1728; Smart, 1752; William Mason, 1764)
20. SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERIES, SCIENCES, MEDICINE AND MATHEMATICS (e.g., Roger Bacon, 1659; Hooke, 1606, 1670, 1677, 1678; Digby, 1664; Cheyne, 1724; Harvey, 1766; Wallerius, 1759, 1768; Cornaro, 1768; Franklin, 1769; Isaac Barrow, 1670; Newton)
21. VOYAGES TO PRIMITIVE PLACES (e.g., Sandys, 1673; Cooke, 1712; Dobbs, 1744 [advocating settling of colonies to thwart the French]; Charlevoix, 1744, 1756; Casas, *Tears of the Indians*, 1756, [detailing massacres by the Spaniards in Mexico, West Indies, etc.; used as propaganda in England to support English supplanting the Spanish]; Ulloa, 1760; Griffith Williams, 1765; Alexander Dalrymple, 1767, 1770; Adanson, 1769 [translated into English for use, now that the British arms have reduced French influence in Senegal; also with natural and cultural history and description])
22. NATURAL HISTORIES (especially of America, e.g., *America, or an exact description of the West-Indies*, 1655; or with political implication, e.g., Borlase, 1754, 1758; Adanson, 1757)
23. MEMOIRS OR BIOGRAPHIES OF HEROIC FIGURES (e.g., Plutarch, 1758; Aretino, 1628, 1636; Anglesey, 1693; *A short . . . life . . . of Mr. Chubb*, 1747; Strype; Ludlow, 1751; Middleton, 1757)
24. CANONICAL PHILOSOPHICAL AND POETICAL WRITINGS, ESPECIALLY CLASSICAL (e.g., Plato, 1602, 1763; Aristotle, 1619; Cicero; Avicenna, 1609; Boethius, 1671; Longinus, 1694; Lucretius, 1725; Marcus Aurelius, 1749; Montaigne, 1759; Pascal, 1734; Petrarca, 1560; Tasso, 1737; Virgil, 1741)
25. EDUCATION (e.g., Milton; Priestley, 1765; Ainsworth, 1736; Rollin, 1735; Boswell, 1738; Sheridan, 1769, 1769; Smith, 1770)

26. SKEPTICAL AND EMPIRICAL PHILOSOPHICAL WRITINGS (e.g., Bayle; Descartes, 1749; Locke, 1752; Price, 1769)
27. PUBLIC ECONOMY AND COMMERCE (e.g., Petty, 1662; Gee, 1729; John Law, 1750; George Gordon, 1753; Beccaria, 1769; Mildmay, 1765)
28. EUROPEAN REFORMERS (e.g., Calvin, 1550; Beze, 1554; Luther, 1652; Erasmus, 1645; Jortin [on Erasmus], 1758-60)
29. PAINTING (e.g., Caracci; Du Fresnoy, 1716; Piles, 1708, 1715)
30. SYSTEMS OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY (e.g., Harte, 1736; Grove, 1749; Hutcheson)
31. CLASSIC ENLIGHTENMENT WRITERS, ESPECIALLY FRENCH (e.g., La Mettrie, 1748; Diderot, 1749; Montesquieu, 1758; d'Alembert, 1764-1767; d'Holbach, 1767)

Some of these titles we might think of as predictable considering Hollis's republican and Dissenting leanings and his intellectual pedigree: Milton, Sidney, Locke, Blackburne, Hoadley, as well as classical writings against tyranny, for example. Anti-Catholic works, especially pamphlets, are to be expected, along with anti-Stuart writings. But there are many surprises, especially at first glance, though few of these works are disinterested. The natural histories, for example, tend to pertain to current politics, such as lands falling into British hands, whose natural history will prove useful to a strong and free Britain or America. Similarly, the works of history (whether of England or of other countries) tend to confirm particular versions of history useful for Hollis's aims. Even the volumes from the *Ökonomische Gesellschaft des Kantons Bern* (The Economic Society of the Canton of Bern) on rural economy (*Recueil de memoires concernant l'economie rurale*, 1760-61) are intended to draw attention to the activities of a model society based on free republican values, the city and Canton of Bern, as Hollis's note intimates: "But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand," etc. (Hollis sends several books to Harvard pertaining to Switzerland.) In short, whatever their independent worth, virtually all of Hollis's gifts pursue a purpose, a coherent and wide-ranging plan. Nevertheless, it is clear from this list that Hollis intended Harvard men to be exposed to a wide variety of history, culture, and thought, despite being tailored towards a particular kind of intellectual leaning: Republican, tolerant in view of religious doctrine and practice (as always, with the exception of the Catholics), awareness of graphic representation for the perpetuation of certain beliefs and behaviors, from ancient Rome to the present. Furthermore, his dispersing of catalogues and booklists indicates that 1) he wanted the recipients to know the record of books published on certain subjects and existing in certain collections, and 2) he wanted to inspire them to collect or at least read the many extant books. Hollis is working for the present and the future, and he is attempting to leave a record of important works in preparation for troubled times.

X

The intricate relation between content, physical details (such as lettering or decoration), and annotations may be traced by examining any of a large number of books in the Hollis donation. A particularly eloquent example is the volume bound in red morocco stamped with startling gold emblems: the sermon tracts by Andrew Eliot (*A Sermon [for] the Anniversary for the Election of His Majesty's Council for the Province*, 1765) and Jonathan Mayhew (*The Snare broken . . . occasioned by the repeal of the Stamp-Act*, 1766) is a magnificent complete sign or compendium of signs. As W. H. Bond puts it, the volume “fully exploits its emblematic possibilities.”²⁵ First, Eliot’s sermon, delivered before the colonial governor, His Majesty’s Council, and the Massachusetts Bay House of Representatives, is stately, measured, glancing at and criticizing the Stamp Act as the author carefully delineates the virtues important to a good and Christian monarch and his government, and the rights and responsibilities of the governed. It sets the stage, in a way, for Mayhew’s characteristically direct and blunt tract, which speaks more to the moment of the repeal of the despised Stamp Act and embodies a warning against the forces of tyranny (Bond refers to Eliot as “a trifle cooler in his rhetoric than Mayhew”²⁶). Eliot’s sermon was printed—by Hollis?—in London, a more refined printing production than Mayhew’s, published in Boston: the pamphlets unite the centers of the communities, London and Boston, and unite causes between like-minded men—Eliot’s urbane, moderate address to the monarch and the governed, with a less-guarded, more personal and triumphant sermon of defiance, characteristic of Mayhew. These men were also Hollis’s main contacts in Boston and the conduit through which his books reached Harvard: first Mayhew, succeeded, at his early death in 1766 (not long after *The Snare Broken* was delivered), by Eliot. The volume therefore binds together successive Dissenting figures in the cause for religious and political liberty, Hollis’s own contacts and the conduits through which he sent books to Harvard, the two lands of England and American colonies, and the traditions of justification of monarchy and its abuse.

The exceptionally elegant volume belies the apparent humility of the tract format—although Mayhew’s is dedicated to Pitt—and is more pristine because there are no Hollis inscriptions. The “message” and paratextual information is provided through descriptive and graphic signs. On the spine are four imprints of the seated owl. A motto adapted from Sallust’s *Bellum Iugurthinum* x.6, is begun on the back cover: “DISCORDIA RES MAXIMAE DILABVNTVR” (Great communities fall to pieces through discord.); the front cover concludes it: “CONCORDIA RES PARVAE CRESCVNT” (Small communities grow great through harmony.). Above the first (“DISCORDIA”) part of the motto on the back is the short sword point downward,

25 Bond, *Thomas Hollis*, 60 (illustration of binding on p. 61).

26 Bond, *Letters*, 79.

signifying conflict; below it, the owl and palm inverted, signify the end of peaceful pursuits. On the front cover (“CONCORDIA”) the owl and palm are in normal position over the Latin motto and the sword is point upward (inverted) beneath.

The message of the covers is intricate. “CONCORDIA” is of course associated with the American colonies and Boston as well as their people. But it also refers to Harvard and its connection with Hollis. The volume begins with the images of concord on the front cover, opening the way to Eliot’s temperate sermon, published in London, signifying both an example and a warning. It continues, around the column of wise, adjudicating owls on the spine, to the back cover, with the clearer warning signified by the dagger and the inversion of natural peace. The back cover (with “DISCORDIA”) is contiguous with the second tract, Mayhew’s hot sermon. Mayhew and others believed that the Stamp Act was prelude to a larger design of tyranny instigated from the crown and government ministers. Therefore, the progression incorporates a threat, from moderation (Eliot) to outspoken and general opposition (Mayhew). The clauses from Sallust are reversed from their usual order, thus drawing attention to the two parts of the rhetorical whole. Furthermore, the “great community,” with its discord and subsequent disintegration (a typical Hollis preoccupation), certainly glances at Britain, while the “small community” refers to the colonial settlements.

XI

After the fire, the books were kept together in the old library in special alcoves devoted to Hollis’s gifts. They filled almost two large alcoves, each consisting of four large bookcases. Some of the very large books, such as a set of Piranesi prints of Rome, were kept in cupboards, which had shelves big enough to hold large sheets of paper.²⁷ Some earlier books bore Hollis’s letterpress book labels: small capitals with full stops placed at hyphen height, in the manner of classical inscriptions: EX DONO/THOMAE HOLLIS, ANGLI./HOSPIT • LINCOLN • /REG • ET ANT • SS • LOND • /SODALIS” (an Englishman, a member of Lincoln’s Inn, and a Fellow of the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries). Books were customarily marked upon their arrival in Cambridge by the insertion of an engraved college bookplate designed and cut by Richard Hurd of Boston, with the donor identified in manuscript. Hollis sent Harvard a metal plate with a finer engraved imitation of Hurd’s bookplate, incorporating Hollis’s letterpress book label, to discourage manuscript additions.²⁸ All books not already in the Library (with the exception of those kept in the President’s house for his perusal), and most duplicates as well, were apparently placed on the shelves, although interestingly some were restricted. Kenneth Carpenter notes that, “The list, begun in 1765 and in use up to

27 W.H. Bond and Hugh Amory, *The Printed Catalogues of the Harvard College Library 1723-1790* (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1996), xvi.

28 Bond, *Thomas Hollis*, 89-90 (illustrations on p. 90).

1789, that records gifts of Thomas Hollis in the order in which they stood on the shelves noted that P meant “absolute prohibition” and that an * designated a book prohibited “to undergraduates.” . . . There seem to be three absolute prohibitions and of them only one book that would have been considered dangerous, Francis Hutcheson’s *Moral Philosophy* . . . Many more were prohibited to Undergraduates.”²⁹ Of these, the Hollis gifts of Bolingbroke, Shaftesbury, and Mandeville may be examples. Hollis would not have approved of such scruples.

Eventually, the library exceeded its space once more, at which time (1838) Harvard built Gore Hall solely for the purpose of a new library. But the Hollis books would be irredeemably dispersed. The college had already begun expanding into a proto-university, with a medical school, law school, and other divisions. Medical books (including Hollis’s gifts) went into the medical library, law books to the law library, and so on. After the building of Widener Library in 1915, the Hollis books were simply dispersed to the Widener stacks. Eventually, appropriate books found their way to the Fine Arts Library, the Map Collection, and the other libraries and collections where, for the most part, they remain. By tracking the distribution of these books, we can mark the change that came over the college as it became a university: from a college aimed primarily at producing more Dissenting ministers to the establishing of separate schools appropriate to a university. Hollis’s books denote the various interests necessary for a complete education; their eventual (and current) distribution exemplifies the multifaceted aspect of the great university Hollis prefigured. The collection shows what a well-educated man (with substantial resources and a particular turn of mind, devoted to liberty causes!) would have collected in the eighteenth-century, as well as an index to the great change in the Harvard Library and Harvard College. Hollis, however, would neither have imagined, nor approved of, the departmentalizing of a person’s education into separate schools. He would have insisted on a liberal and broad education for a life of intelligent and informed service and public morality.

Hollis sent a copy of James Harris’s *Hermes* to Harvard, from an edition he designed and sponsored for publication in 1765. In the entire text of this book, he marks only one passage, the penultimate paragraph:

In truth, each man’s Understanding, when ripened and mature, is a composite of *natural Capacity*, and of *super-induced Habit*. Hence the greatest Men will be necessarily those, who possess *the best Habits*. Hence also moderate Capacities, when adorned with valuable Science, will far transcend others the most acute by nature, when either neglected, or applied to low and base purposes. And thus for the honour of CULTURE and GOOD LEARNING, *they are able to render a man, if he will take the pains, intrinsically more excellent than his natural Superiors*.

Hollis writes in the margin, in his clear, tireless hand, a message to these faraway students: “Mark, Youth, mark well, the justness, beauty of this closing Passage!”

Thomas Hollis’s importance to eighteenth-century British culture and the dissemination of “liberty” throughout the world is being uncovered to an extent never before possible, even in his own lifetime. This checklist is a crucial step in the process of discovery. Hollis’s donations to Harvard College form a cornerstone of his activities, and the inventory and description of these books will allow scholars to piece together the extensive network of activities, institutions, individuals, and ideas, to which Hollis was dedicated. It should, for example, considerably augment efforts to assemble a reliable list of books Hollis sponsored and in some cases designed. With the current checklist in print, the descriptive and analytical catalogues of the donations to Bern, Zürich, and other destinations—being carried out by the present author, to be published as subsequent volumes by Harvard—can contextualize and cross-list their material more comprehensively and intelligently. These volumes will in turn open up one of the largest and most important international networks of republican ideas, iconography, and thinking in modern history. Hollis’s interest in forming or influencing the political mind should be considerably illuminated: through contributing to periodicals, dispersing propaganda through gifts and iconographic images, developing arts and sciences, circulating ideas, texts, artifacts, and books between countries and communities, participating in the communities of the London coffeehouses, and corresponding with recipients within Great Britain, Continental Europe, and the American colonies. The immense task of editing Hollis’s unpublished diary now at Harvard should be made easier, many of the references illuminated through the information contained in Bond’s Harvard checklist.

Once we are attuned to the presence of Hollis, he seems to be everywhere, in eighteenth-century British culture, American colonial culture, and even on the Continent. We even find him in the foreground of two paintings by Canaletto, whom Hollis supported during his extended stay in England with six important commissions. Hollis’s friend Joseph Smith, the British Consul in Venice, presumably initiated the arrangement.³⁰ In turn, Smith (and others) channeled publications from the continent to Hollis: he specifically exploited Smith as a source for collecting books and pamphlets against the Jesuits (a part of the collection now in Zürich). The links among Great Britain, the American colonies, Switzerland, the Republic of Venice, and other

30 See Bond, *Thomas Hollis*, 14, including n. 1. Hollis, his traveling companion Thomas Brand, and Hollis’s servant are apparently the conspicuous figures in the foreground of Canaletto’s “The Piazza del Campidoglio” and “Old Walton Bridge.”

European centers of Protestantism or republicanism allow further insight into the circulation of ideas and the notions of identity formation within these societies. Hollis distributes the graphic and printed record for his causes and places books in lands where they were previously unknown, hoping they will “spring up armed men.” For no place were his efforts more energetic than for Harvard College. W. H. Bond’s great accomplishment illuminates the way.

Contributors

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Prof. Reddick's publications include *The Making of Johnson's Dictionary, 1746-1773* (Cambridge, 2nd rev. ed., 1996) and *Samuel Johnson's Unpublished Revisions to his Dictionary of the English Language* (Cambridge, 2005). At present, he is compiling a multi-volume descriptive bibliography, with accompanying analysis, of books (mostly republican and/or radical) donated by Thomas Hollis to institutions throughout England, Continental Europe, and the American Colonies. This project is supported through a grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation.