POETIC COMMONPLACE BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS OF THOMAS GRAY, 1716-1771

From Pembroke College, Cambridge

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Publisher's Note

Thomas Gray (1716-1771) made Pembroke College his Cambridge home for sixteen years from 1756 to his death in 1771 having left Peterhouse, where he had graduated, after failing to obtain redress from the college authorities following a student prank. He found the company at Pembroke convivial and in the year following his move, 1757, he completed his famous Odes which were printed by the Strawberry Hill Press and received considerable acclaim. Later in the same year he declined the Poet Laureateship and in the ensuing years he concentrated far more on the study of botany and history, examining and trying his hand at the verse forms of Welsh and Norse poetry and travelling about the country to visit friends. Visits to the Lake District in 1766 and 1769 prompted Gray to write an account of his Tour which was published posthumously in 1775 and did much to draw attention to the natural beauty of that region. In 1768 he co-operated with the publication of the first collected edition of his Poems and accepted the honour of being appointed Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. He delivered no lectures, but did pen his Ode for Music to mark the installation of the Duke of Grafton as the Chancellor of the University of Cambridge. Gray died in his rooms at Pembroke on the 30th July 1771, having been taken ill at dinner in hall six nights before. He was buried in the church yard at Stoke Poges which he had celebrated in his Elegy, written between 1742 and 1750. He shared a vault with his mother and aunt who had been laid to rest there some years before.

By the terms of his will, Gray left all of his "books, manuscripts, coins, music, printed or written, and papers of all kinds" to his friend, the Reverend William Mason, Precentor of York and a fellow at Pembroke "to preserve or destroy at his own discretion". Fortunately, Mason chose to preserve for the most part and the papers helped him to compile The Poems of Mr Gray, to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings by W Mason (York, 1775). The papers were subsequently passed to Richard Stonehewer, a friend of Gray, who presented the Commonplace Book to Pembroke. The remainder then passed to John Bright, a relative of Stonehewer, who had them sold at four auctions (Evans, 1845; and Sotheby's, 1847, 1851 and 1854). As a result of the sales, many of Gray's manuscripts were dispersed, but many also arrived back at Pembroke which can justly claim to have the most important collection of Gray's manuscripts and books in the world. This collection is now published in its entirety for the first time.

Pride of place must go to the Commonplace Book, bound in three large volumes, which Margaret M Smith, editor of the Index of English Literary Manuscripts vol III, 1700-1800. Part 2 (Gay-Phillips), (Mansell, London, 1989), describes as "the single most important repository of Gray's autograph verse and prose". It was started by Gray in about 1736 when he was an undergraduate at Cambridge with Horace Walpole. It was compiled following John Locke's recommendations, including notes and essays under all manner of headings, poems written by Gray and copies of verse that he admired, lists of books owned and read, and indexes. It was continued for the whole period of his literary career and Mason added transcripts of additional poems after Gray's death. It covers the three years, 1738-1740, when Gray travelled across Europe with Horace Walpole, visiting Paris, Rheims, Geneva and much of Italy. A highlight was the crossing of the Alps which impressed Gray deeply. "Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry". It covers the period of his first poetic output in 1741, the death of his friend and poet Richard West, Gray's fruitful sojourn in Stoke Poges, his fame with the Royal Society and his tutorship of undergraduate at Cambridge and his latter-day work on English, Welsh and Nordic poetry. The volumes include important autograph versions of the Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard (much revised, with the "Redbreast" stanza and notes), the Etion Ode (here entitled "Ode on a Prospect of Windsor, and the adjacent Country, in 1743"), the Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat ("who fell into a China-Tub with Gold-fishes in it and was drowned"), the Ode on Spring, and the Ode to Adversity. The volumes also include his transcriptions of poems by Walpole and Richard West, and numerous translations from the Greek and Latin classics by Gray. Also Essays on "the use of Rhyme", "Norman Architecture", and on Greek Literature and Philosophy, as well as notes on geography, natural history and English Metre. The detailed list of contents provides a description of further contents.

Additional, loose manuscripts held at Pembroke provide versions of another 11 of his poems and supplement the Commonplace Book with further prose writings such as his Latin Essays, notes on Roman history, notes on Melpomene, Muse of Tragedy, and on marriages. Two diaries include observations in the later period of his life in 1755-6 and 1760, making notes on callers and events, book purchases, natural catastrophes, his own health and the progress of flora.

The annotated volumes from his library reveal much about his reading habits and his interests. Johnson remarked "that his mind had a large grasp; that his curiosity was unlimited, and his judgement cultivated". In the words of Mason "There was hardly any part of human learning in which he had not acquired a competent skill, in most of them a consummate mastery".

The volumes include the Selected Remains of the Learned John Ray, Bergeron's Voyages faits principalement en Asie dans les XII, XIII, XIV et XV siecles, Pennant's British Zoology, Miller's Gardener's Dictionary, and further works concerning glaciers, British history, zoology, botany, geography and voyages of discovery.

Taken together, these sources allow for a thorough examination of Gray's development as a poet and prose writer and help us to understand his many influences, as well as providing insights into his accomplishments as a scholar and into his views on such subjects as poetry, travel and natural beauty.

This Guide provides both a brief listing of Contents of Reels (for quick reference) and a detailed list giving a breakdown of the major items included within the Commonplace Book. We have also provided a substantial chronology for the period from 1650 to c1825 which attempts to place English Literature in the broad context of European Literature, British and World History and major scientific and artistic achievements. For Gray (whose references appear in bold in the chronology) it illustrates his relationship to those who influenced him, his contemporaries, and those who he influenced. It is hoped that it will prove to be of value.

Special thanks must go to Clive Trebilcock, Fellow and Librarian, Pembroke College, Cambridge, for his comments on this guide, and to all of the Library staff at Pembroke, for their help in preparing this project.

Select Bibliography


James Downey and Ben Jones (ed) Fearful Joy. Papers from the Thomas Gray Bi-Centenary Conference at Carleton University (Montreal, 1974)


R W Ketton-Cremer Thomas Gray (Cambridge, 1955)

William Mason (ed) The Poems of Mr Gray, to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings by W Mason (York, 1775)


Clark Sutherland Northrup A Bibliography of Thomas Gray (London, 1917)


Thomas Gray Poems by Mr Gray (Published by Dodsley in London and Foulis in Glasgow in 1768 with slight variations)

The poet's own approved edition of his poems. Please refer to the chronology for details of the few other works published by Gray during his lifetime and for the major editions up to 1854.

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.contents of reels

reel 1

CB I Gray's Commonplace Book (in 3 volumes)
CB II See Detailed List for further description.
CB III

reel 2


L.C.II.85 A copy of Gray's Will; engravings; report on the Gray memorial; letters concerning Gray and his manuscripts; Gray's notes on "Marriages"; copies of French poems in Gray's hand; Poem – [Tophet]: Excerpt transcribed by William Cole; auction catalogue (Hodgson, 1916) including description of Gray's 1754 diary; portraits; copies of letters from Gray.

L.C.II.86 Note on the sale of Gray's works; letter from Gray to the Revd. Brown; Note by Gray on the "Bohemian Chatterer" (a bird); printed copy of an election squib written by Gray and entitled The Candidate; Autograph poem – In D (iem): 29am Mai; List of books bought by the College from 1774 to 1775; letter from Gray to George Birkett; Autograph poem – In Stam Novemberis; Eight autograph Latin essays, and other notes and clippings.

L.C.II.90 Nos. 5, 24, 42, 44, 52
Letters to Horace Walpole including autograph verse (Lines Spoken by the Ghost of John Dennis at the Devil Tarvern; Lines on Beech Trees; Ode on the Spring; De Principiis Cogitandi, Liber Secundus; Hymn to Adversity)

L.C.II.90 Nos. 88a-b, 106, 107, 108
Autograph poems by Gray (Corrections to Walpole's Portrait of Lord Granville; Translation from Statius Thebiad; Alcaica; The Gaurus)


L.C.II.92 Bergaron, Pierre. Voyages fait principalement en Asie dans les XII, XIII, XIV et XV siecles... (2 volumes in 1, Le Haye, 1735). Gray's own annotated copy.

reel 3


L.C.II.155 The Gentleman's and Tradesman's Pocket Assistant or Daily Remembrancer for the Year MDCCCLV (London, 1755). Diary containing numerous entries and notes by Gray, including a note on his admission to Pembroke on 6 March 1756, a book list, a note on eloquence, observations on nature, and other items.

L.C.II.156 The New Daily Journal; or, Useful Memorandum and Account Book for the Year 1760 (London, 1760). Diary containing numerous entries and notes by Gray, including accounts, notes of callers and book purchases, observations on nature, the progress of flora, and notes on translations of works on exploration and travel.


reel 4


reel 5


reel 6


reel 7


REEL 8
L.C.II.269–70 Seba, Albertus. Locupletissimi rerum naturalium thesauri... Volumes III-IV (Amsterdam, 1734-1765). Annotated.

REEL 9

REEL 10

REEL 11

REEL 12
10.7.7 Gesner, C. Historiae animalium, Volume I (Tiguri 1551). Gray's own annotated copy.

REEL 13
10.7.8 Gesner, C. Historiae animalium, Volume II (Tiguri 1551). Gray's own annotated copy.

REEL 14
10.7.9 Gesner, C. Historiae animalium, Volume III (Tiguri 1551). Gray's own annotated copy. If Gray possessed a copy of the fourth and final volume of Gesner, it does not survive at Pembroke.

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Poetic Commonplace Books and Manuscripts of Thomas Gray, 1716-1771 from Pembroke College, Cambridge

DETAILED LISTING

REEL ONE

The Commonplace Book (in 3 volumes)

Gray’s Commonplace Book was started in about 1736 and he continued to add notes to it until the end of his life. His first editor, Mason, also copied some additional materials into the volumes (fair copies of poems and some notes) between 1771 and 1775. The volumes contain a variety of notes and essays under headings, many poems by Gray, copies of other poems that he liked (especially by Richard West and classical authors), book-lists and other items. The volumes are numbered consecutively from A-H and 2-1112, with some omissions.

Gray adopted “The Method of Mr. Lock’s Commonplace Book” as detailed on page 2 under Adversaria. That is, each item entered is given a heading. If the item continues on the next page a “V” appears at the bottom of the page. If the item continues on a later page (as is bound to happen when additional notes are added on the same subject at a later date) the “V” is accompanied by a number giving a page reference. Where the item is continued from an earlier page a “V” appears at the top of the page together with the earlier page reference. Gray also drew up Locke’s recommended index grid at the beginning of the Commonplace Book, but he did not add much to this. However, he did add a 5 page index at the end of what is now the first volume (after page 428). This is worth referring to although it is hoped that the following listing will also provide a useful overview of the contents.

The following list of major entries makes much use of the work of Margaret M Smith (Ed) Index of English Literary Manuscripts Vol III, 1700-1800 (Gay-Phillips) (Mansell, London, 1989). To help those working with the manuscripts we have also included the Author code from the Index, to which scholars should refer for further details, such as the page references of the appearance of the items in other works (e.g. in Mason, Lonsdale or Starr and Hendrickson). This code takes the form (GrTxxx) and is ranged to the right in this listing. The numbers given to the left of the Commonplace Book entries are the relevant page number references. Only the starting page reference is given where items continue for two or more pages, but items split between two or more separate pages are individually noted.

CB I Commonplace Book, First Volume

C Book List (GrT175)
2 Notes: Adversaria concerning the method of compilation of the Commonplace Book
3 Notes: Affectus (on emotions) (continued p144)
4 Notes: Livy on the price of liberty and on sovereignty
- Missing number (please note that there are occasional gaps in the numerical sequence. All openings have been filmed unless it is noted that there are large passages of blank pages)
8 Poem: Immortalitas by Sir John Davis
10 Notes: Gloria (Tully and Socrates on Glory)
Notes: Liberalitas (Cicero on actions being better proof of friendship than money)

Notes: Comparatio (passages from Virgil, Milton, Tasso, Homer, Horace and others) (continued pp 88, 92, 98)

Notes: Pecunia (on Roman money)

Notes: Pondera et mensurae (on Greek and other weights and measures) (continued p141)

Notes: Geographia (and on many pages following)

Notes: Libertas (on generosity of spirit) (from p12)

Notes: Lingua (on language)

Notes: Historia (GrT196)

Notes: Histrio (et Saltatio) (GrT197)

Notes: Emmendatio (Clark’s correction to Homer) and Ecclesia (on rents of the Catholic Church)

Notes: Meinoria Technica (on Dr Grey’s comments on assigning numerical values to letters and their value in remembering Roman History) (continued pp 42, 54)

Poems: Epigramma by various artists

Poems: French poems in Gray’s hand

Notes: Methodus (on philosophical method)

Notes: Scientia

Notes: Symbolum (on the Turkish crescent)

Notes: Rhythmus

Notes: Musica

Poem: Play Exercise at Eton (Latin verses) (GrT78)

Poem: Glaucias Favonio suo S (by Richard West?)

Poem: Ad C: Favonium Aristium, lines 1-40 (continued p90) (GrT1)

Notes: Antiquitas (on serving meals)

Notes: Anglia (historical notes continued p106)

Notes: Navigatio (on Greek and Roman vessels)

Notes: Genealogica (various family trees)

Notes: Deus

Notes: Mr Lock’s Demonstration of the existence of God

Notes: Delos (on the Greek island)

Notes: Persia

Notes: Superstitio

Notes: Propagatio fidei (on a missionary in China) (continued p140)

Notes: Graeca Lingua (on the Greek language)

Notes: Genealogia

Notes: Homo (Livy on Man)

Poem: Untitled, starts “Quod mihi tam gratiae misisti
dona Camaenae..." ("Favonius" is Richard West)

Poem: Ad C: Favonium Aristium, lines 41-52
(continued from p53) (GrT1)

Poem: (Alcaic Fragment, starts "O lachrymarum," ) (GrT5)

Poem: Ad Amicos (by Richard West) (continued p104)

Poem: From Tasso. Canto, 14, Stanza, 32
(Translation from Tasso) (GrT143)

Poem: Imitated from Propertius, Lib: 3: Eleg: 5: (GrT66)

Notes: Convivium (on seating plans)

Notes: Libri (on the Lettres Persanes de Montesquiou)

Notes: Libri (Xenophon, Apologia, Socratis) (GrT271)

Poem: Ode (starts "Seeds of poetry, and rhyme...")
(by Celadon)

Poem: Imitated from Propertius El: 15: Lib: 3: 
Nunc, oh Bacche, tu is &c (by Richard West)
(continued on p114)

Poem: Ad Amicos (by Richard West) (continued from p91)

Notes: Amicus (on friends)

Notes: Imitated from Propertius... (by Richard West)
(continued from p103)

Notes: Carthago

Poem: (The Gaurus, starts "nec procul infelix...")
Lines 1-52 (continues p128) (GrT57)

Notes: Etymologia

Notes: Lombardy

Indulgentia (on Catholic Indulgences)

Notes: Byzantium

Notes: Saxones (continued on p130)

Poem: (The Gaurus, starts "Pabula sufficere ardori...") Lines 53-61 (continued from p115) (GrT57)

Poem: Ad C: Favonium Zephyrinum (GrT2)

Poem: (Alcaic Ode, starts "O Tu,...") (GrT6)

Poem: De Principiis Cogitandi. Liber Primus.
Ad Favonium. Lines 1-27 (continued p138) (GrT23)

Notes: Saltatio (on Pantomime and Greek Drama)

Notes: Histrio (GrT197)

Notes: Hispania

Notes: Pacuvius – The Epitaph of this ancient Roman Tragick Writer

Notes: Parliament (on the Long Parliament etc.)
(continued pp148, 172)

Poem: De Principiis Cogitandi. Liber Primus.
Ad Favonium. Lines 28-79 (continued from p129
Poem: *From the Greek of Posidippus* (by Richard West)

Poem: *Imitated* (from Buondelmonti) together with the original

Poem: *Farewell to Florence*, starts “…oh *Faesulae amoena…”*

Poem: From Petrarch. Lib I: Sonett: 170 (see also p254)

Notes: *Vestalis* (on the conditions for being a Vestal)

Notes: *Ventus* (on the winds and their names)

Notes *Athena* (with a pen sketch) (continued pp184, 252)

Notes: *Italia*

Notes: *Palmyra* (on the city of Solomon)

Notes: *Normanni*

Notes: *Magna Charta* (continued p160)

Notes: *Cephalonia* (on the Homeric island)

Notes: *Leucadia*

Notes: *Lebadea* (on the Greek hill)

Notes: *Cythera* (on the island)

Notes: On *Tenus* and *Theophratus*

Notes: *Theatrum*

Notes: *Chios*

Notes: *Cicero*

Notes: *Delphi*

Notes: *Dani* (on Denmark and the Danes)

Notes: *Monarchia*

Notes: *Sacerdotum*

Notes: *Sadoletus*

Notes: *Educatio*

Notes: *Lacedaemon* and *Lacedaemonii* (GrT201)

Notes: *Thebae*

Notes: *Teresa*

Notes: Small strip like notes on various books and subjects relating to the Classics (these continue to p251, then p268ff)


Poem: *Ode*, starts “Dear --, that still within my Heart Possessest for the better Part…” (Inscribed “Favon: May, 1742 at Pope’s in Hartfordshire”. By Richard West)

Poem: Untitled, starts “Ante omnes morbos importunissima tussis…” (by Richard West)
Poem: Quaeris quot mihi basiationes? (English poem by Richard West, starts “You ask, how often must you kiss…”)

Poem: Untitled, starts “While surfeited with Life each hoary knave…” (by Thomas Ashton)

Poem: Untitled, starts “Ergo desidiae videor tibi crimine dignus…” (by Richard West) (continued on p272)

Notes: Cynthus

Notes: Paupertas

Notes: Solitudo

Notes: Stephanus

Notes: Megara

Poem: Untitled (by Richard West, continued from p257)

Poem: Untitled, starts “Ipse Pater Thomisinus aquas jam frigare vinci…” (by Richard West)

Poem: Untitled, starts “Oh, mia jucunda comes quietas!” (by Richard West)


Poem: Noon-Tide, An Ode (Ode on the Spring) (continued p278) (GrT99)

Notes: Impressio

Notes: Infernum

Poem: Inscription for a Wood in a Park. (GrT74)

Poem: Ode, on a distant Prospect of Windsor, & the adjacent Country (the Eton Ode) (continued p284) (GrT89)

Notes: Arabes

Poem: Sonnet (On the Death of Richard West) (GrT133)

Poem: Ode. To Adversity. (GrT103)

Poem: De Principiis Cogitandi. Liber Secundus. (GrT25)

Poem: From the Greek (Anthology I) (GrT149)

Poem: From the Greek of Antiphilus Byzantius in Medae Imaginem, nobile Timomachi Opus (Anthology II) (GrT150)

Poem: Imitation of the Greek, of Paul Silentiarius. In Bacchae Furentis Statuam (Anthology III) (GrT151)

Poem: From the Greek, of Posidippus. In Alexandrum, aere effictum (Anthology IV) (GrT152)

Poem: From the Greek. (Anonymous) In Niobes Statuam (Anthology V) (GrT153)

Poem: From the Greek, of Lucian, offering a statue of herself to Venus (Anthology VI) (GrT154)
Poem: From the Greek of Statyllius Flaccus. 
*In Amorem dormientem* (Anthology VII) (GrT155)

Poem: From a Fragment of Plato (Anthology VIII) (GrT156)

Poem: From the Greek of Marianus. *In Fontem aquae calidae* (Anthology IX) (GrT157)

Poem: From Lucilius (Anthology X) (GrT158)

Poem: Imitated from the Greek of Posidippus. *Ad Amorem.* (Anthology XI) (GrT159)

Poem: … of Bassus (Greek anthology XII) (GrT160)

Poem: … of Rufinus (Greek Anthology XIII) (GrT161)

Poem: *De Principiis Cogitandi. Liber Primus. Ad Favonium.* Lines 80-151 (continued from p138 and continued p438) (GrT23)

Notes: Lutherus

Notes: More short notes on Classics

Notes: Silphion (on a medicinal plant)

Notes: Adoptio

Notes: Astrologia

Notes: Provincia (on the administration of Roman provincial government)

Notes: Metalla (on the silver mines of Carthage)

Notes: Druides

Notes: Ravenna

Notes: Ramusio

Notes: Latium

Notes: Avernum

Notes: Vesuvius

Notes: More short notes on Classics

Notes: Hellenes (on Hellen, son of Deucalion)

Notes: India

Notes: Opinio

Notes: Excommunicatio

Notes: Civis (Romanus)

Notes: Philosophia

Notes: Itinerarium (on the travels of Rabbi Benjamin, 1160, and others) (continues to p369)

Notes: Imperator

Notes: Genealogia

Poem: On the Death of Selima, a Favourite Cat, who fell into a China-Tub with Gold-fishes in it, & was drown’d (GrT92)

Poem: (Untitled starting “oh ubi colles…”) (GrT107)

Notes: Genealogia, then more short notes on
Classics

398 Notes: Genealogia (continued to p417) (GrT190)
418 Notes: Aegyptus
420 Notes: Siphylis (Gray notes that “Columbus returning from his first Voyage brought the Pox into Europe”)
422 Notes: Polus (on Marco Polo)
424 Notes: Genealogia
428 Notes: More short notes on Classics
- Index to the Volume by Gray
457 Notes: Genealogia

End of CB I (461pp)

CB II Commonplace Book, Second Volume

460 Book List
462 Notes: List of Elizabethan Poets
463 Notes: (On Socrates and Plato) (continues sporadically through to p798) (GrT246)
479 Notes: Aldhelm
499 Notes: Manuscriti (a list of manuscripts) (continued p529)
505 Notes: Bibliotheca (on the Library of the King of France) (continued pp511, 531)
513 Notes: Cultura (on the cultivation of vines and hops in England)
515 Notes: Literae (Taylor on marble inscriptions) (GrT203)
531 Notes: Bibliotheque (continued from pp505, 511)
533 Notes: Sciences
537 Notes India (Ancient descriptions of…) (Smith describes this as the beginning of a section on Geography, although it is fair to say that much has gone before that would fit under that head. The section on India continues to p560) (GrT189)
561 Notes: Persia (continues p701) (GrT189)
571 Notes: Authors here cited in comparing the ancient and modern Geography of India and Persia
585 Notes: Theatrum (List of best French dramas, from 1708 backwards)
605 Notes: Commentarii (Petropolitani)
617 Poem: Elegy, written in a Country-Church Yard. 1750, including Redbreast stanza and extensive notes(GrT34)
619 Poem: (The Alliance of Education and Government.)
A Fragment headed Essay 1st) (GrT9)

621 Notes: Animalia (on Fish)

623 Notes: Boyle (on Robert Boyle)

625 Notes: Erythraeum (Mare) (an account of the Eastern coast of Africa)

651 Poem: A Long Story (GrT83)

657 Notes: Gemmae (on diamonds)

687 Notes: Inscriptions (Mem: de l'Academie des)… (continued p691)

689 Notes: Aesopus

701 Notes: Persia (continued from p570 and continues sporadically)

707 Notes: Transcript of a slight sketch by Pope on the History of English Poetry (continued p735) (GrT262)

727 Poem: Ode, in the Greek manner (The Progress of Poesy) (GrT114)

729 Notes: Sciences

735 Notes: Poesis (continued from p707) (GrT262)

741 Essay: Lydgate (includes extensive poetic extracts, continues to p756) (GrT269)

753 Notes: Edifantes (Lettres) (continues pp763, 793)

757 Essay: Metrum (On Metre) (continues to p770) (GrT260)

771 Essay: Pseudo-Rhythmus (continues to p774 and then starts again at p791) (GrT261)

775 Notes: Gothi (on the Goths) (GrT191)

783 Notes: Philosophica

785 Notes: Bibliotheca (continued from p531)

791 Essay: Pseudo-Rhythmus and Additional Observations on the Use of Rhime (continued from p774 and continues on p801) (GrT261) & (GrT268)

799 Essay: Cambri (On British Poetry and Rhyme) (continues to p816) (GrT182)

807 Notes: Saxones

817 Notes: Persia (continued from p571 and continues to p833)

835 Notes: Bibliotheca (a list of old English books, these notes continue sporadically on ensuing pages)

837 Notes: Romance (on Chaucer, Caxton and others)

843 Notes: Sepulchra. Monuments of the Royal Family of England that remain at this day undestroy'd, from the Conquest, 1066) (continues to p858) (GrT267)

859 Notes: Sepulchra. Monuments and Places of residence belonging to the present nobility of


**England.** (Continues p890)

891  Notes: *Ecclesiae* (on English Cathedrals – these notes continue through to p932 (the last numbered page) and start again near the beginning of the third volume)  (GrT183)

932  Poem: *(The Bard, the argument only)*  (GrT14)

932  Notes: *All, that Men of Power can do for men of Genius. Theme for an unwritten poem.*  (GrT270)

932  List: Cathedrals &c: their several parts ranged according to the time, when they were built.  (GrT184)

End of CB II (476pp)

**CB III**  Commonplace Book, Third Volume

933  Notes: Heights of various mountains

933  Notes: *Ecclesiae* (continued from previous volume, p932, and continues sporadically to p952)

943  Notes: *Gothica Architectura* (on Norman architecture)  (GrT186)

953  Notes: *Insignia. Names & Arms of those barons, who subscribed the letter to Pope Boniface asserting the liberties of the Crown of Scotland…* (continues to p1006)

1007  Notes: *List of such noble families, as have born a single Lyon rampant in their arms…* (continues to p1010)

1011  Notes: *The Differences used in bearing the Royal Arms of England & to what persons the several coats belong*

1014  Notes: On the Linnaen classification of animals (continues to p1026)

1029  Notes: Notes on a small history book by an Italian in sixteenth century England

1033  Notes: *Arma* (on French Infantry, Cavalry, etc)

1037  Notes: *Venetia* (a list of Venetian writers)

1041  Preface to *The Fatal Sisters*  (GrT53)

1041  Poem: Latin text of the Song

1043  Poem: Latin text of *Vegtams Kvitha* from Bartholinus, the basis of *The Descent of Odin*

1044  Notes: On the Valkyries for *The Fatal Sisters*  (GrT54)

1047  Poem: Fragment of the Biarkarnaal by Thormod Kolbrunarscald

1049  Notes: *Palatia* (continues to p1062)  (GrT264)

1067  Poem: *The Song of the Valkyries* *(The Fatal Sisters)*(GrT52)
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<td>1097</td>
<td>Poem: Fragment of an Ode... (On Vicissitude). Transcribed by Mason (GrT95)</td>
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<td>1101</td>
<td>Poem: A Character (by Horace Walpole?) (transcribed by Mason from Gray’s manuscript)</td>
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<td>1103</td>
<td>Poem: Hymn to Ignorance. A fragment transcribed by Mason (GrT61)</td>
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<td>1105</td>
<td>Song. Transcribed by Mason (GrT123)</td>
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<td>1106</td>
<td>Song (2). Transcribed by Mason (GrT128)</td>
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<td>1106</td>
<td>Poem: Inscription on a portrait (Tophet). Lines 1-2, 5-8, 3-4 transcribed by Mason (GrT136)</td>
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<td>1107</td>
<td>Poem: Stanzas to Mr Bentley. Transcribed by Mason(GrT134)</td>
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<td>1108</td>
<td>Poem: Epitaph on Sr W J Williams (GrT46)</td>
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<td>1110</td>
<td>Notes: Transcript by Mason of part of Gray’s Journal for 1754 (now at the Huntington Library) (GrT290)</td>
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<td>1110</td>
<td>Poem: Extract from Mr Gray’s Pocket Book... (Part of the Ode on Vicissitude). Transcribed by Mason(GrT96)</td>
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<td>1110</td>
<td>Poem: Fragment starting “Gratitude...” (GrT165)</td>
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<td>1111</td>
<td>Notes: Transcript by Mason of The province of eloquence from Gray’s Journal for 1755 (see L.C.II.155) (GrT292)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1111</td>
<td>Notes: Transcript by Mason of part of Gray’s Journal for 1760 (see L.C.II.156) (GrT294)</td>
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<td>1111</td>
<td>Poem: (Sketch of his own Character, (starts “To poor for a bribe...” transcribed from Gray’s pocket book for 1761 (GrT122)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1112</td>
<td>Notes: Extracts or notes from Gray’s pocket books of 1764, 1765, 1766, 1767, 1768, 1769 and 1770</td>
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<td>1113</td>
<td>The volume is blank from here until page 1400 (the last page)</td>
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End of CB III (467pp)

L.C.II.85 A copy of Gray's Will; engravings of Gray; report on the Gray memorial; letters concerning Gray and his manuscripts; Gray's notes on "Marriages"; copies of French poems in Gray's hand; Poem – *Tophet*: Excerpt transcribed by William Cole (GrT237)

L.C.II.86 Deighton's account with the Master and Fellows of Pembroke Hall of the sale of Gray's works; letter from Gray to the Reverend Brown; Note by Gray on a bird called the "Bohemian Chatterer"; printed copy of an election squib written by Gray entitled *The Candidate*; Autograph poem – *in D(iem): 29am Maii*; (GrT73)

List of books bought for the College Library from 1774 to 1775 from the Library Accounts; letter from Gray to George Birkett; Autograph poem – *in 5tam Novembris*; (GrT72)

Eight autograph Latin essays:

Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri;
Quisnam igitur liber? sapiens, sibi qui imperiosus
Quem neg pauperies neq mors, neq vincula terrent;
Dulce est desipere in loco;
Honos alit artes;
Materia est proba, probum adhiebas artificem;
Amantium irae, amoris integratio; Gray—Nil habet
infelix paupertas durius in se Quam quod ridiculos
hominis facit; Possunt, quia posses videntur. (GrT202)

Other notes:

*Pisces*; (GrT239)
(On Roman Rulers); (GrT252)
Amphibia; (GrT239)
Melpomene (The Tragic Muse); (GrT238)
Other letters, clippings and notes:
(On Greek literature/philosophy); (GrT227)
(On Latin authors); (GrT252)

L.C.II.90 Letter to Horace Walpole, [8 December 1734]
No.5 including [Lines Spoken by the Ghost of
John Dennis at the Devil Tavern]. (GrT80)

L.C.II.90 Letter to Horace Walpole, [August 1736], including
No. 24 [Lines on Beech Trees]. (GrT81)
L.C.II.90 Letter to Horace Walpole, 20 October [1746],
No. 42 including [Ode on the Spring]. (GrT100)

L.C.II.90 Letter to Horace Walpole, [8 February 1747], including
No. 44 [De Principiis Cogitandi. Liber Secundus]. (GrT26)

L.C.II.90 Letter to Horace Walpole, 8 September [1751],
No. 52 including Hymn to Adversity (the Ode). (GrT104)

L.C.II.90 Horace Walpole's Portrait of Lord Granville in
Nos. 88a-b Gray's autograph with an explanation of his
corrections. (GrT113)

L.C.II.90 Translation from Statius Thebiad, IX.319-26
No. 106 Autograph draft of lines 1-13; (GrT141)
   Autograph fair copy of lines 1-13 and revision of
   lines 14-16. (GrT142)

L.C.II.90 Autograph fair copy of Alcaica [Ad C: Favonium]
No. 107 Zephyrinum] (GrT3)

L.C.II.90 Autograph fair copy of [The Gaurus],
No.108 a fragment in the style of Virgil. (GrT58)

L.C.II.91 Gruner, Gottlieb Sigmund. Histoire naturelle des
   glaciers de la Suisse, translated by M de Kéralio
   (Paris, 1770). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT322)

L.C.II.92 Bergeron, Pierre. Voyages fait principalement en
   Asie dans les XII, XIII, XIV et XV siècles…
   (2 volumes in 1, Le Haye, 1735). Gray's own

L.C.II.155 *The Gentleman's and Tradesman's Pocket Assistant or Daily Remembrancer for the Year MDCCLV* (London, 1755). Diary containing numerous entries and notes by Gray, including a note on his admission to Pembroke on 6 March 1756, a book list, a note on eloquence, observations on nature and other items. (GrT291)

L.C.II.156 *The New Daily Journal; or, Useful Memorandum and Account Book for the Year 1760* (London, 1760). Diary containing numerous entries and notes by Gray, including accounts, notes of callers and book purchases, observations on nature and notes on translations of works on exploration and travel. (GrT293)

L.C.II.188 Lister, Martin. *Historiae animalium angliae…* (London, 1678). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT335)


L.C.II.247 Wallis, John. *The Natural History and Antiquities*
of Northumberland… (London, 1769). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT369)


REEL SEVEN

L.C.II.260-6 Isle, Guillaume de l’. *Atlas Nouveau, Volumes I-VII* (Amsterdam, 1735). Gray’s copies. (GrT326)


REEL EIGHT


REEL NINE

L.C.II.272 Rovillius, G. *Historia generalis plantarum, Volume I* (Lugduni, 1587). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT360)

REEL TEN

L.C.II.273 Rovillius, G. *Historia generalis plantarum, Volume II* (Lugduni, 1587). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT360)

REEL ELEVEN


REEL TWELVE

10.7.7 Gesner, C. *Historiae animalium, Volume I* (Tiguri, 1551). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT321)
REEL THIRTEEN

10.7.8 Gesner, C. *Historiae animalium, Volume II* (Tiguri, 1554). Gray’s own annotated copy. (GrT321)

REEL FOURTEEN

10.7.9 Gesner, C. *Historiae animalium, Volume III* (Tiguri, 1558). Gray’s own annotated copy. If Gray possessed a copy of the fourth and final volume of Gesner, it does not survive at Pembroke. (GrT321)
Entries referring directly to Thomas Gray appear in bold type-face.


1662 Publication of Butler’s “Hudibras” begins. The Royal Society is chartered. Death of Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), mathematician and philosopher. Charles II marries Catherine of Braganza and receives Tangier and Bombay as part of the dowry. Peter Lely appointed Court Painter. Louis XIV commences building at Versailles with Charles Le Brun as chief adviser.


1668 Publication of Aphra Behn’s “Oroonoko”. Newton constructs a reflecting telescope. Leeuwenhoek describes red corpuscles.

Birth of William Congreve (1670-1729), dramatist. Publication of Milton’s “Historie of Britain”. John Dryden made first Poet Laureate (from 1670 to 1689). Publication of “Pensées” by Pascal and “Tractatus Theologico-politicus” by Spinoza. The Hudson’s Bay Company is chartered. Minute hands are added to watches.


Death of Jean Baptiste Poquelin, better known as Molière (1622-1673). Production of Wycherley’s “The Country Wife” and Dryden’s “Marriage à la Mode”. Test Act excludes Catholics from office.


Death of Samuel Butler (1612-1680), author of “Hudibras”. Death of John Wilmot, Second Earl of Rochester (1647-1680), poet. Birth of Susanna Freeman (1670?-1723), actress and dramatist, known as Mrs. Centilevre. Publication of Robert
Filmer’s “Patriarche, or the Natural Power of Kings”. Death of Sir Peter Lely (1618-1680), artist. Death of Bernini (1598-1680), architect and artist. Louis XIV founds the Comédie Française.

1681 Le Salle explores the Mississippi. Birth of Telemann (1681-1767), composer. Death of Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681), dramatist, successor to Lope de Vega. Wren completes the Tom Tower, Christ Church, Oxford.

1682 Dryden’s “Absalom and Achitopel” completed. Otway’s “Venice Preserv’d” is performed. The Advocate’s Library in Edinburgh is founded. Louis XIV moves the French Court to Versailles. Huguenots are persecuted in France. Sir Edmund Halley observes the comet which is named after him. Peter I “the Great” becomes Czar of Russia (reigns 1682-1725). Deaths of the artists Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Murillo (1617-1682) and Jacob van Ruisdael (1628-1682).


1686 Dryden converts to Roman Catholicism. Vanbrugh joins the army. Birth of Thomas Tickell (1686-1740), poet and translator. Birth of Allan Ramsay (1686-1759), poet.


1689 Death of Aphra Behn (1640-1689), dramatist. Birth of Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), novelist. Swift enters the household of Sir William Temple, to educate Esther Johnson (“Stella”). Thomas Shadwell succeeds Dryden as Poet Laureate (from 1689 to 1692) as Dryden falls from favour. John Locke restored to public office by William III, Samuel Pepys thrown out. The Bill of Rights is enacted. Louis XIV declares war


1691 Death of Robert Boyle (1627-1691), scientist. Death of Sir George Etheredge (1634?-1691?), dramatist. Congreve studies law in England. Production of Purcell’s “King Arthur” with words by Dryden. Production of Racine’s “Athalie”.


1700  Death of John Dryden (1631-1700) following the publication of his “Ancient and Modern” and “Secular Masque”. Publication of “The Way of the World” by Congreve, Birth of John Dyer (1700?-1758), poet. Birth of James Thomson (1700-1748), poet. String orchestras are established at about this date and the horn is introduced. Berlin Academy of Science founded with Leibniz as President.


1702  Publication of “The Shortest Way with Dissenters” by Defoe results in his imprisonment (and changes his name from James Foe to Daniel Defoe). The death of William III and accession of Queen Anne. Marlborough appointed Commander-in-Chief of Allied forces. The War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713) begins in support of the Grand Alliance. The “Daily Courant” is published, the first daily newspaper.


1707  Death of George Farquhar (1677-1707), dramatist, in the same year that his “Beaux’ Stratagem” is produced. Birth of Henry Fielding (1707-1754), journalist and novelist. Publication of “Blenheim” by John Philips. The publication of “Archaelogia Britannica” by Edward Lhuydd revives interest in the Celtic language. Publication of “Hymns and Spiritual Songs” by Isaac Watts. The Act of Union of England and Scotland. Handel...
meets Scarlatti in Venice. The birth of Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778), who devised the system of binomial classification. Publication of Sir Hans Sloane’s “Natural History of Jamaica”.


1710 Sir Robert Walpole serves 2 year period as Treasurer of the Navy. Publication of Congreve’s “Works”. Publication of Berkeley’s “Principles of Human Knowledge”. Appearance of “The Examiner”. Approximate date at which the Kit-Cat Club is active, which included Addison, Congreve, Steele, Vanbrugh, Jacob Tonson (the publisher) and Sir Samuel Garth (physician) as members, and which met at the London House of Christopher Cat, pastry cook, whose mutton pies (or Kit-cats) were widely praised. The Kit-Cat Club was immortalised by Kneller’s portrait of the group (which started a fashion for less than half length, or Kit-Cat-sized, portraits). Handel becomes Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover. Births of the composers Thomas Arne (1710-1778), William Boyce (1710-1779) and Pergolesi (1710-1736). Wren completes rebuilding of St. Paul’s Cathedral. Meissen Pottery works established.

1711 Joseph Addison and Richard Steele collaborate to produce “The Spectator” (1711-1712). Publication of Pope’s “Essay on Criticism”. Pope and Addison become friends. Publication of Swift’s “The Conduct of the Allies” and “Miscellanies”. Birth of David Hume (1711-1776), philosopher. Matthew Prior serves as secret agent in Paris. Marlborough is dismissed as Commander-in-Chief of the British forces. Publication of Shaftesbury’s “Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times”. Handel’s “Rinaldo” is the first of his operas to be performed, at Queen’s Theatre. Queen Anne opens the first races at Ascot.


1716 Thomas Gray (1716-1771) born at No. 41, Cornhill, London, the son of Philip Gray, a scrivener, and his wife Dorothy (née Antrobus) on 26 December 1716. Their fifth child, he was the only one of twelve to survive infancy. His father is a brutal tyrant, beating his wife and refusing to support either wife or child. Gray’s mother keeps a milliner’s shop with her sister, Mary Antrobus, at the same address to provide means for herself and her son who lives in Burnham, near Stoke Poges, with his uncle (Dorothy’s brother) Robert Antrobus, a Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge, assistant master at Eton. Death of William Wycherley (1640?-1716), dramatist. Publication of Benjamin Hoadly’s “The Principles and Practices of the Non-Jurors”, which causes tumult in the Church of England. First recorded visit of an English theatrical troupe to America (to Williamsburg, Virginia). Foundation of the Dr. Williams Library. Establishment of the “Sinking Fund” to reduce Britain’s National Debt. John Law founds the Banque Générale in Paris. Death of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), mathematician and philosopher. Birth of James Brindley (1716-1772), father of the English canal system. Vivaldi completes “The Four Seasons”. Peter the Great tours Europe. Britain signs the Treaty of Westminster with the Holy Roman Emperor. Mineral springs discovered in Cheltenham. Birth of Lancelot “Capability”Brown (1716-1783), landscape gardener.

“The Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ” sermon stating that sincerity is the only requirement of the Christian Minister and tests for conformity should be abolished. In consequence, Parliament prorogues the Convocation which does not meet again until 1852. Birth of Jean Le Rond D’Alembert (1717-1783), writer. The combination of wool-workers in the West Country starts move towards unionisation of workers. The Triple Alliance formed between England, France and Holland to uphold the Treaty of Utrecht. Peter the Great visits Paris.


1734  **Gray enters as a pensioner (4 July) at Peterhouse, Cambridge and gains formal admission (9 October). He continues there until 1738. Thomas Ashton has already been admitted to King’s (11 August) and Walpole also joins King’s in 1735. Gray concentrates on history, modern languages and European Literature. He is ridiculed by his fellow students for his supposed effeminancy. Gray completes “Lines Spoken to John Dennis”, his first extant poem, and sends it to Walpole. **


Gray and Horace Walpole renew their friendship at about this time. Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745), first Earl of Orford, (continued)


Gray writes “Ode on the Death of a favourite Cat” (in memory of Horace Walpole’s cat). Gray’s “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College” is published by Robert Dodson in an anonymous pamphlet. Walpole settles at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, and fashions it into an exotic gothic mansion. Birth of Samuel Parr (1747-1825), classical scholar and theologian. Thomas Warton’s “Pleasures of Melancholy” appears. Publication of Johnson’s “Plan” for the Dictionary. Publication of “Zadig” by Voltaire. David Garrick takes over management of Drury Lane theatre (for thirty years to 1776) and makes it a success. The Biblioteca Nazionale founded in Florence.


1749 (continued)


1753  Robert Dodsley publishes “Designs by Mr. R Bentley for Six Poems by Mr. T Gray”, the first authorized attributed volume of poetry by Gray, including the Eton Ode, the “Ode on Spring”, the “Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat”, the Elegy, a “Hymn to Adversity” and “A Long Story”. Gray’s mother dies (11 March) at Stoke Poges and is buried there. Death of George Berkeley (1685-1753), philosopher and cynic. Edward Gibbon studies in Lausanne (1753-1758). Publication of Hogarth’s “Analysis of Beauty”. Publication of Smollett’s “Ferdinand, Count Fathom”. Voltaire leaves Potsdam for Switzerland. Birth of Samuel Crompton (1753-1827), inventor of the spinning “mule”. Publication of “Species Plantorum” by Linnaeus. Birth of Thomas Bewick (1753-1828), engraver. Death of Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753), virtuoso and collector, who had served as President of the Royal Society from 1727 to 1741, succeeding Sir Isaac Newton. Act passed enabling Sloane’s great library to be bought for the nation, providing the foundation of the British Museum with the Cottonian and Harleian collections and the Royal Library.

1754  Gray completes “The Progress of Poesy”. Cowper called to the Bar. Death of Henry Fielding (1707-1754), journalist and novelist. Richardson’s “Sir Charles Grandison” completed (1753-1754). Death of Edward Cave (1691-1754), publisher. Publication of Rousseau’s “Discourse on the Origin of Inequality” and Diderot’s “Pensées sur l’interprétation de la nature”. Birth of

1755

Gray declines offer to become Secretary to the Earl of Bristol in Lisbon. Publication of Johnson’s “Dictionary of the English Language” including rebuke of the Earl of Chesterfield (continues to 1772). Publication of Fielding’s “Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon”. Goldsmith travels in Europe (1755-1756). Birth of Sarah Kemble (1755-1831), actress (becomes Mrs. Siddons). Shenstone’s “Pastoral Ballad” is published. Publication of Tobias Smollett’s translation of “Don Quixote”. Kant completes his doctoral thesis on “The True Measure of Forces” and becomes a lecturer at Königsberg (1755-1770, then becoming Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, 1770-1804). Gilbert White settles in Selborne. Birth of John Flaxman (1755-1826), artist and engraver. Death of Montesquieu (1689-1755), philosopher. Birth of Marie Antoinette (1755-1793). British forces defeated at Fort Duquesne. Paoli’s first revolt in Corsica against the Geneoese rulers. Lisbon is destroyed by an earthquake and 30,000 are killed.

1756

Gray moves to Pembroke College, Cambridge, leaving Peterhouse after an undergraduate prank was played on him (not for the first time, acting on Gray’s fear of fire, students call “Fire” late at night and Gray is embarrassed by appearing in the quad shaking with fear and wearing only his nightgown). Gray’s friend, William Mason, is a fellow at Pembroke. Completion of “The Election” series by Hogarth. Appearance of ‘The Critical Review’ (1756-1817), first edited by Smollett (1756-1759). Birth of William Gifford (1756-1826) journalist and critic. Birth of William Godwin (1756-1836), writer and political theorist. Death of Stephen Duck (1705-1756), poet. Publication of “Theatrical Records” by Robert and James Dodsley. Publication of “A Vindication of Natural Society” by Burke. Publication of Sherlock’s “Sermons” and Wesley’s “Twelve Reasons Against a Separation from the Church” arguing against splinter groups of the main Methodist movement. Beginning of the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763) with Britain and Prussia (under Frederick the Great) opposing the French, Saxons and Russians. Tragedy of the Black Hole of Calcutta. British forces, under General Braddock in Ohio, are heavily defeated. Casanova escapes from prison in Venice. Birth of Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), satirical artist. Birth of Mozart (1756-1791). Sèvres porcelain factory founded.

1757


1758


1759


1760


1761

Gray writes "The Fatal Sisters" and "The Descent of Odin" following his immersion in Nordic and Celtic literature. Gray writes "Epitaph on Sir W Williams" and "Song for Miss Speed who is married on 12 November."

1761 (continued)

pioneer bibliographer. Publication of Rousseau's "La Nouvelle Héloïse". Collected works of Voltaire begin to appear in English (translated by Smollett and others, completed in 1774). Production of "The Jealous Wife" by George Colman the Elder. Birth of John Rennie (1761-1821), civil engineer. Robert Adam made one of two


1765


1766


1767


1768

Gray appointed Professor of History and Modern Languages at Cambridge. Gray’s poems republished in London by James Dodsley in a small octavo, and Glasgow by Robert and Andrew Foulis in quarto. Both editions are entitled “Poems by Mr. Gray” and contain the same poems
1769


1770

Bonstetten leaves England. Gray visits the West Country with Norton Nicholls. Births of the poets William Wordsworth (1770-1850) and James Hogg (1770-1835), the “Ettrick Shepherd”. Death of the poet Mark Akenside (1721-1770). Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770), poet and brilliant fraud (the fabricator of the Rowley poems and documents which are not exposed as forgeries until 1777 – including a bogus “History of Painting” sent to Horace Walpole), is reduced to despair by poverty and takes his life by imbibing arsenic poison. Publication of Goldsmith’s “The Deserted Village”. The printers of the “Junius” letters are tried for libel. Anonymous publication of “Thoughts on the Causes of Present Discontents” by Burke concerning the American colonies. Goethe begins “Faust” (not completed until 1832). Birth of Hegel (1770-1831), philosopher. Wesley attacks Calvinist beliefs. General Baptist New Communion is first put into practice. The French Dauphin marries Marie Antoinette, daughter of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria. Grafton resigns and Lord North takes over for a 12 year term (1770-1782) as Prime Minister. Lord North repeals the Revenue Act to pacify the colonists but institutes a Tea Duty. The Boston Massacre takes place, increasing tensions in the American colonies. Joseph Banks names Botany Bay as Cook skirts Australia. Birth of Beethoven (1770-1827). Deaths of the artists François Boucher (1703-1770) and Giovanni Tiepolo (1696-1770).

1771

agent to the province of New York. Ministry of Lord North (from 1770 to 1782).
Publication of Goethe’s “Goetz von Berlichingen”, translated by Scott in 1799.
Publication of Klopstock’s “Odes”. Production of “The West Indian” by Richard
Cumberland. Newspapers are allowed to report parliamentary debates. The return of
HMS Endeavour to England. Houdon completes his sculpture of Diderot. Benjamin
West paints “The Death of Wolfe”. Gainsborough paints the “Blue Boy”.

1772 Birth of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), poet and conversationalist. Opening
of the Pantheon, designed by James Wyatt as a place for balls, masquerades and
popular entertainment. Death of James Brindley (1716-1772), father of the English
canal system. Widespread food riots. The Second Voyage of Captain Cook begins
(1772-1775) aboard the HMS Resolution. Kew Gardens founded by King George III
under the direction of Joseph Banks. Samuel Adams forms Massachusetts
Committees of Correspondence to spread political ideas. Publication of Herder’s “On
the Origin of Speech”. Rutherford and Priestley discover nitrogen.

1773 Boswell and Johnson tour Scotland and the Hebrides. Death of Phillip Dormer
Stanhope (1694-1773) Earl of Chesterfield, statesman and writer. Publication and
performance of “She Stoops to Conquer” by Goldsmith. Birth of Lord Francis Jeffrey
(1773-1850), founder and first editor of “The Edinburgh Review”. Birth of James Mill
(1773-1836), utilitarian theorist and father of John Stuart Mill. Foundation of the
London Stock Exchange. Burke travels to Burgundy and Paris with his son. Warren
Hastings made Governor-General of India and English law introduced to India. The
Boston Tea-Party causes the Port of Boston to be closed. The beginning of the waltz
craze in Vienna.

1774 Death of Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774), writer. Birth of Robert Southey (1774-1843),
Publication of Lord Chesterfield’s “Letters to his Son”. Burke becomes M.P. for Bristol
(1774-1780) and publishes pamphlet “On American Taxation”. Publication of
Goethe’s “The Sorrows of Young Werther”. America’s First Congress meets in
Philadelphia and the Declaration of Rights is issued. Revolution in South-East Russia
put down. Death of Robert Clive (1725-1774). Birth of Matthew Flinders (1774-
1814), explorer. Birth of Jean Lamarck (1774-1829), naturalist. Lavoisier
explains the composition of air. Birth of Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840), artist.
Death of Louis XV. Rules of cricket formalized.

1775 Publication of Gray’s Tour of the English Lakes. Publication of “The Poems of
Mr. Gray, to which are prefixed Memoirs of his Life and Writings by W. Mason”.
Publication of Johnson’s “Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland”. Sheridan
produces “The Rivals”, “St Patrick’s Day” and “Duenna”. Birth of Jane Austen (1775-
1817). Birth of Matthew Gregory “Monk” Lewis (1775-1818), gothic novelist. Birth of
Charles Lamb (1775-1834), writer. Birth of Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864),
writer. Birth of Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867), conversationalist, diarist and
friend of Wordsworth. Sarah Siddons first appears on the London Stage. Burke
publishes pamphlet “On Conciliation with America”. Publication of Crabbe’s
“Inebriety, a Poem”. Goethe accepts invitation by the Duke of Weimar to attend his
court. First performance of “Le Barbier de Séville” by Beaumarchais in France
causes uproar. Publication of “Sturm und Drang” by Klinger, concerning the
American Revolution. The Battles of

1775 (continued)

Lexington and Bunker Hill marks the beginning of the American
War of Independence (1775-1783). Liverpool seamen’s strike. The return of HMS
Resolution to England and the display of pictures and engravings of the southern
Romney becomes a fashionable portrait painter. James Watt improves his steam
engine. Priestley discovers Hydrochloric and Sulphuric acids.

1777 Johnson embarks on “Lives of the Poets” (published 1779-1781). Sheridan produces “School for Scandal” and “A Trip to Scarborough” at Drury Lane. Birth of Thomas Campbell (1777-1844), poet. Thomas Tyrwhitt exposes the fraud concerning Chatterton’s “Rowley” poems, increasing the interest in them and resulting in their publication a year later. Completion of the Trent and Mersey canal system. Voltaire returns to Paris. Robert Adam’s shop-lined Pulteney Bridge is built in Bath. The British defeat the American colonists at the Battle of Brandywine, but Burgoyne’s troops are forced to surrender by the colonists at Saratoga.


1782  Publication of “Cecilia” by Fanny Burney. Publication of “Poems” and “John Gilpin” by Cowper. Publication of Joseph Warton’s “Essay on the Genius and Writing of Mr Pope” is completed (1756-1782). Coleridge sent to Christ’s Hospital (1782-1791). Lamb at school at Christ’s Hospital (1782-1789). Maria Edgeworth moves to her paternal home in Ireland. Rockingham dies, after a brief spell as Prime Minister replacing Lord North, and is replaced in turn by the Earl of Shelburne. Grattan’s Bill passed repealing British power over the Parliament of Ireland. Death of Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782), composer. Death of Richard Wilson (1714-1782), landscape painter.

1783  Death of Anna Williams (1706-1783), writer. Death of Henry Brooke (1703-1783), poet. William Blake’s “Poetical Sketches” published. Death of D’Alembert (1717-1783), philosopher. “The Village” by Crabbe is published. Scott attends Edinburgh University. Hazlitt in America (1783-1787). Publication of Kant’s “Prologomena to every future Metaphysic of Ethics”. Fox introduces his India Bill which is passed by the Commons but thrown out of the Lords. The Duke of Portland has a nine-month spell as Prime Minister, replacing Shelburne, but is then succeeded by the 25 year old William Pitt the Younger who serves as Prime Minister for 18 years until 1801. The Treaty of Versailles is signed between America, Britain, France and Spain, formally ending the American War of Independence (1775-1783) Independence (1775-1783) and restoring Florida and Minorca to Spain. First human flight in hot air balloon by the Montgolfier brothers, Births of Stendhal (1783-1842), novelist and Washington Irving (1783-1859), writer and humorist.


1784 (continued)


1786  Publication of "The Poems of Mr. Gray. With Notes by Gilbert Wakefield". Publication of "Vathek, an Arabian Tale" (1786-1787) by William Beckford, a pioneer "gothic" novel describing grotesque and terrible events in an oriental setting. Birth of Benjamin Haydon (1786-1846), artist. Publication of Kant's "Metaphysical Rudiments of Natural Philosophy". Lord Cornwallis is sent to replace Warren Hastings as Governor-General of India. Death of Frederick the Great. He is succeeded by Frederick William II (reigns 1786-1797). Invention of the threshing machine by Andrew Meikle in Scotland. First performance of Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro". Death of George Hepplewhite (1726-1786), cabinet-maker. Goethe visits Italy (1786-1788).


1789


1790


1791


Brest. Revolution in Poland put down. Paris commune abolished. Danton, Desmoulins, Robespierre and St. Just all executed as is Antoine Lavoisier (1743-1794), scientist. First telegraph line operational from Paris to Lille.

1795

1796

1797

1797 (continued)


1798
Publication of “Lyrical Ballads” by Wordsworth and Coleridge. Hazlitt and Coleridge meet. Publication of “The Castaway” by Cowper. Birth of Auguste Comte (1798-


1810 Wordsworth and Coleridge quarrel. Appearance of “The Reflector” (1810-1811) by Leigh Hunt. Keats, aged 16, is orphaned by the death of his mother and is taken under the guardianship of Richard Abbey. Publication of Scott’s “Lady of the Lake”. Birth of Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-


1822 (continued)

John Martin paints "The Destruction of Herculaneum".


1827 Death of William Blake (1757-1827), visionary artist and poet. Publication of Clare’s “Shepherd’s Calendar”. Publication of Heine’s “Buch der Lieder”. Death of Samuel Crompton (1753-1827), inventor of the spinning “mule”. Canning and Goderich were successively Prime Minister for brief spells, replacing Lord Liverpool. Combined British, French and Russian fleets destroy the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at Navarino Bay and end the Greek War (1821-1827). Baedeker starts publishing travel guides. Death of Beethoven (1770-1827).


1830 Death of William Hazlitt (1778-1830), critic and essayist. Cobbett’s “Rural Rides” collected and published. Thomas Hood commences “Comic Annual”. Appearance of “The
1830 (continued)


1831


1832


1833

Death of Hannah More (1745-1833), poet. Death of William Wilberforce (1759-1833), abolitionist, philanthropist and, together with Hannah More and Bishop Porteus, a leading member of the Evangelical Movement. Publication of Prometheus Bound by Elizabeth Barrett. Act passed to abolish slave trade in all British colonies. The First Factory Bill passed. John Keble’s sermon on national apostasy is later said by Newman to have started the Oxford Movement. Keble’s “Tracts for the Times” begin to appear. Death of Edmund Kean (1787-1833), actor.

1834


1835


1836


1837

George IV dies and Queen Victoria accedes to the throne. Invention of electric telegraph.

1838

Publication of “Oliver Twist” by Dickens.

1840

Death of Fanny Burney (1752-1840), novelist. Leigh Hunt’s “A Legend of Florence” produced at Covent Garden.
1842 Publication of “Poems” by Tennyson.

1843 Death of Robert Southey (1774-1843), Poet Laureate. He is succeeded by William Wordsworth (from 1843 to 1850).

1844 Death of William Beckford (1760-1844), pioneer of the gothic revival.

1845 Death of Thomas Hood (1799-1845), poet. Death of the Reverend Sydney Smith (1771-1845), writer and wit.

1846 Death of Benjamin Haydon (1786-1846), artist. Dickens becomes editor of the “Daily News”.

1847 Leigh Hunt awarded a pension.

1848 The Year of Revolutions in Europe. Women admitted to London University.

1849 Death of Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), novelist.

1850 Death of William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Poet Laureate. Laureateship is declined by Samuel Rogers and there is a seven year gap before Wordsworth is succeeded by Alfred Tennyson (from 1857 to 1892). Death of the Reverend William Lisle Bowles (1762-1850) who helped to make the sonnet form popular again.

1851 Death of Mary Shelley (1797-1851).

1854 Publication of “The Correspondence of Thomas Gray and William Mason”, edited by John Mitford.

NOTES ON THE CHRONOLOGY

This chronology does not claim to be exhaustive in coverage of all spheres of human endeavour. Rather it is intended to provide some idea of the context of Gray’s writing, of the period in which his formative influences thrived, and of the period in which his poems had their reception and influence. The main focus is on the period 1710-1825 with only summary details given outside of these dates. Where birth and death dates are given for individuals a category (e.g. “poet”) has also been added as an aide memoir, but no more than this. It is often impossible to summarise the talents and interests of individuals in one or two words.