

Lining Papers from Corpus Christi College

By A. J. B. WACE

THE two lining papers here illustrated were recently discovered in charter-boxes belonging to Corpus Christi College and Dr. J. G. Milne has kindly given information about them.¹ It was believed that the charter-boxes were made about 1627 in connexion with a classification of the college muniments. A transcription of these was made and the first volume is dated 1627. The labels on the boxes, however, are in the hand of W. Fulman, who was elected scholar in 1647, later ejected by the Parliamentary Commission, but restored as Fellow in 1660. His work on the muniments seems to have consisted chiefly in tidying them up and in annotating the transcripts. All his arrangement and labelling of them appears to have been done between 1660, when he was restored to his place in the College after the Restoration, and 1669, when he accepted the living of Meyseyhampton and vacated his fellowship. The latter is therefore the latest possible date for the construction of the charter-boxes.

The first of these papers (FIG. 27) is known in two other examples, a trunk lid bearing the date 1671 in brass nails, which belongs to my wife and myself, and a triangular oak box of Charles II date recently in the possession of Messrs. Mallett and Son. A fourth example,² differing slightly in minor details, is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. If therefore the lining at least of the charter-boxes at Corpus, if not the boxes themselves, can be attributed to the activities of Fulman, the date 1660-1669 for the lining paper would agree admirably with that of the dated trunk lid, 1671. The other examples in the triangular box and in the Victoria and Albert Museum would fall in well with this dating.

The other Corpus paper (FIG. 28) is identical in design with an example illustrated by Mr. Jenkinson from the Court of Wards Deeds.³ He says that no more exact date than *ante* 1645 can be assigned to it. Another example, he says,⁴ lines the patent box containing the original foundation charter of 1622

¹ The papers have been deposited in the Ashmolean Museum on permanent loan by the President and Fellows of Corpus Christi College.

² No. 500-1898, *Cat. of Wall Papers*, No. 7.

³ *Antiquaries Journal*, v (1925), 246, fig. 2.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 253. The lining paper in the Victoria and Albert Museum (No. 501-1898, *Cat. of Wall Papers*, No. 6) is similar to *Antiquaries Journal*, v (1925), pl. xxv a, and not as apparently implied (*op. cit.*, 7 note 5) to *Antiquaries Journal*, v (1925), 246, fig. 2.

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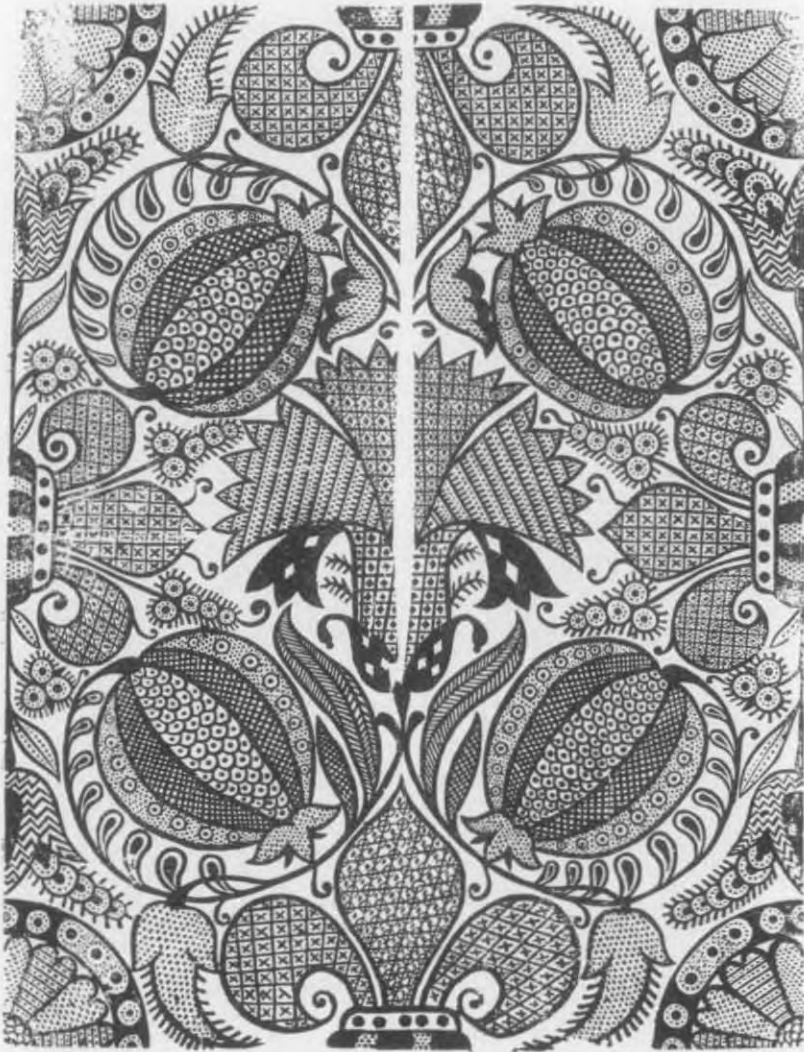


FIG. 27

Seventeenth-century lining-paper, printed in black on white from blocks, from a charter-box in Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

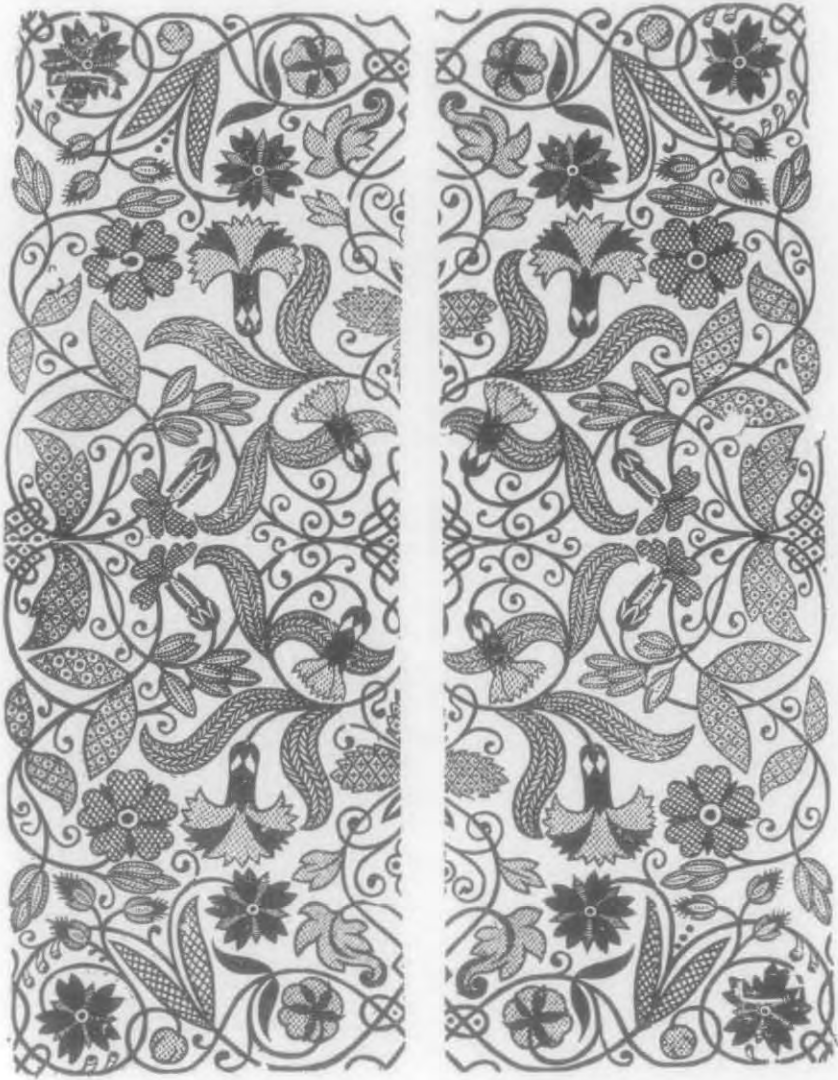


FIG. 28

Seventeenth-century lining-paper, printed in black on white from blocks, from a charter-box in Corpus Christi College, Oxford.

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of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity (Abbott's Hospital) at Guildford. It may be held that the lining of a charter-box is *a priori* contemporary with the deed for which the box was made. This is not, however, always true. The Evesham charter, which bears the date 1605, is contained in a box lined with a paper which dates between 1661 and 1670, and an example of Mr. Jenkinson's plate XVIII, which dates probably about 1600, lines a William and Mary cabinet in the hands of a furniture-dealer in Cambridge. The paper in FIG. 28 from its finer and more naturalistically floral pattern appears earlier than the bolder pattern of FIG. 27. Thus if we attribute FIG. 27 to the third quarter of the seventeenth century and FIG. 28 to the second quarter of the same century the dating will probably not be very far wrong. In the lid of Messrs. Mallett's oak box were the remains of another paper of a floral character with a fine design¹ which at first sight would be assigned to an earlier date than Charles II. It is in any case interesting that two of the examples of FIG. 27 should appear in association with papers of finer and presumably somewhat older design. Portions of a paper of similar character but rather bolder than FIG. 28 line the patent box containing the pardon of William, Lord Russell, dated May 13th, 1689.²

Mr. Jenkinson put forward the view,³ with which I have elsewhere indicated disagreement,⁴ that the patterns of such lining papers were copied from embroidery and especially from the black work of the sixteenth century. This black work (embroidery in black silk on linen) is miscalled Spanish work and mistakenly supposed to have been introduced into England by Catherine of Aragon.⁵ It seems to me more probable that papers such as these lining papers were more likely to serve as patterns for embroidery than that the papers imitated embroideries. There must have been patterns for the embroideries and to suppose that the lining papers imitated embroideries which themselves were worked after patterns seems less reasonable than to suppose that the lining papers could serve both as patterns for embroidery and as lining papers. The motives employed in the patterns of the papers, carnation, pomegranate, fleur-de-lys, rose, pansy, strapwork, strawberry, acorn, certainly do occur in sixteenth and seventeenth century English embroidery, but they also occur in other forms of contemporary decoration.

The mere fact that the designs of the lining papers appear naturally in black ink on a white ground makes a comparison between them and the sixteenth

¹ It resembles in general plan but is by no means identical with a lining paper in the Victoria and Albert Museum, No. E, 1974-1927, *Cat. of Wall Papers*, No. 4.

² I owe my knowledge of this to Miss Scott Thomson, who has, with the Duke of Bedford's kind permission, sent me a photograph of the paper.

³ *Op. cit.*, 247, note 1.

⁴ *Walpole Society*, XXI, 64.

⁵ *Connoisseur*, XCVII (1936), 28.

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century embroidery in black silk on linen too tempting. We should not, however, allow this plausible likeness to mislead us.¹ Papers of the same general type as FIG. 28 with flowers freely introduced into the design would naturally make excellent models for embroidery in polychrome silks and gold and silver, and other similar papers reproduced by Mr. Jenkinson² would equally be most suitable as designs for multicoloured needlework. The bolder design of FIG. 27, with the great variety of hatched patterns which appear in the pomegranates, carnations, fleurs-de-lys, rosettes, and leaves, suggests rather a comparison with the designs of the crewel-work curtains of the middle and later seventeenth century. In these curtains, especially those worked in monochrome style in blue-green, or pink, the great variety of the hatching employed in the leaves and flowers is a most characteristic feature.³ In any case it would surely be much more natural that the designs of the embroideries should have been imitated from the lining papers. The latter must have been produced in considerable quantity and the surviving examples come from widely separated parts of the country and thus illustrate their wide distribution. The papers too were produced commercially by printers like Peter Stent who advertised in 1662 among pictures lately printed in sheets and smaller sizes '12 plats for to adorn tobacco boxes much in use.' The embroideries on the other hand were largely domestic work and would not travel far afield. Mr. Nevinson⁴ has shown that some of the sheets of patterns issued by Peter Stent and his fellows were used in embroidery and it is therefore reasonable to conclude that the lining papers could serve the same purpose. Further study and the collection of more examples of lining papers will certainly throw more light on this and kindred problems which are of much interest for the history of English printing and of English embroidery.

ADDENDUM.—An oak box of the mid-seventeenth century belonging to Mr. H. C. Wolton of Bury St. Edmunds is lined with yet another example of FIG. 28 which shows the whole design. With it is associated another example of Victoria and Albert Museum, *Cat. of Wall Papers*, No. 4: see above, p. 169, note 1.

¹ For instance the Victoria and Albert Museum *Catalogue of Wall Papers* loosely describes (e.g., 74 f.) lining papers as being of 'Spanish stitch design' following Mr. Jenkinson's view mentioned above. As stated, the misconception about 'Spanish work' has now been exploded by Mr. Nevinson, *Connoisseur*, xcvi (1936), 28.

² *Op. cit.*, 245, pls. xix b, xxi, fig. 1.

³ E.g., Victoria and Albert Museum, *Picture Book of English Embroideries*, Pt. II Stuart, pls. 12, 13.

⁴ *Apollo*, xxiv, 279 ff.