

## The Hensleigh Wedgwood collection

This collection comprises about 550 books from the library of Hensleigh Wedgwood (1803–1891), an important philologist, grandson of Josiah Wedgwood and cousin and brother-in-law of Charles Darwin. The books were donated to the Mason College Library in 1892 by his daughter Frances Julia, a feminist novelist, biographer, historian and literary critic, who had nursed her father in his last years.

Wedgwood was educated at Rugby and then studied mathematics and classics at Cambridge, after which he read for the Chancery Bar and qualified as a barrister in 1828. However, he never practised, returning to Cambridge in 1829 to assume at first an appointment as a fellow of Christ's College. He then took posts in local government before resuming his career as a scholar, notably with his *Dictionary of English Etymology* (1859), a work which considerably advanced linguistic science. The copy of the 1878 second edition in this collection contains manuscript annotations of the new words that had been added, as well as a version of his text *On the origin of language*, printed here as an introduction.

In addition to the collection's numerous grammars, dictionaries and glossaries of ancient and modern languages from across the world, there are many rarities which reflect the range of Wedgwood's interest. Examples include:

- *The vulgar tongue* (1857) by Ducagne Anglicus, a wonderful dictionary of contemporary London slang
- *Tiomna Nuadh* (1813), a Gaelic New Testament
- *Evangelia ab Ulfila* (Stockholm, 1671), a Swedish New Testament.

Wedgwood also collected important books of:

- philosophy, such as an early edition of Kant's *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (1787)
- literature, such as John Urry's illustrated edition of the *Works of Chaucer* (1821)
- travel, such as Corneille Le Brun's spectacular *Voyage au Levant* (1700).
- A final highlight is Johann Schilter's monumental folio celebration of Germanic culture *Thesaurus Antiquitatum* (Ulm, 1728).