The exhibition is loosely organized by themes. It begins in the large flat wooden case to the right of the front door, continues clockwise around the room, and finishes in the large flat wooden case to the left of the front door. The exhibit was curated by Karen Beck, Legal Information Librarian and Curator of Rare Books. It will be on view through June 2005.

**First Flat Wooden Case (Labeled Cabinet I):**

**SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LAW PRACTICE**

One of the special features of the books on exhibit here is that they were all essential to a seventeenth-century lawyer’s daily work. Beginning in this case and continuing in the wall cabinets to your right, the books are arranged in the order that a lawyer would consult them to begin a legal action. The seventeenth-century books in this case are supplemented by several more recent books and documents that owe a debt to these early works.

**STEP 1: THE WRIT**

Every action had to be commenced with the correct writ. If a lawyer used the wrong writ, or did not follow the exact wording of the writ, his case was thrown out of court. To select the correct writ, lawyers consulted collections of writs which were arranged by subject, sometimes alphabetically. A common title for these collections was *Natura Brevium*, or the *Nature of Writs*.

**REGISTRUM OMNIUM BREVIUM**

London, Printed by the assigns of John More, 1634.

Opened to a beautifully ornate title page, this book features a handsome early leather binding with gilt ornamentation on the front and back covers.

*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.*
WILLIAM WEST, *THE FIRST PART OF SYMBOLEOGRAPHY: WHICH MAY BE TERMED, THE ART, OR DESCRIPTION, OF INSTRUMENTS AND PRESIDENTS*
London, Printed by the Assignes of John More, 1632.

A classic collection of legal forms. The book is opened to the last page of the Table, which shows that a sample contract for the sale of a ship can be found in section 658 of this volume. On the page following the Table, on the right (recto) side, the author describes “What Symbolæography is: Symbolæography is an Act of cunning, rightly to forme & make written Instruments.” He goes on to explain that the First Part contains sample forms that show lawyers how to draft contracts, wills and other documents for issues not yet in controversy.

*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet.*

WILLIAM WEST, *THE SECOND PART OF THE SYMBOLEOGRAPHY*
London, Printed for the Companie of Stationers, 1618.

The Second Part (exhibited closed) contains forms to commence a litigation, recover fines, and handle other legal disputes. Both Parts feature their original seventeenth-century bindings.

*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet.*

ANTHONY FITZHERBERT, *THE NEW NATURA BREVIIUM*

This book is an updated version of the *Natura Brevium* (sometimes called the *Old Natura Brevium*), translated into English. It is as easy to use today as it was three and a half centuries ago. It begins with a list of writs contained in the volume, followed by an extensive alphabetical table that directs lawyers to the correct writ. For example, this book is opened to an explanation of the Writ upon the Statute of 23 Ed. 3, which pertains to the treatment of servants. At the lower third of page 406, shown here, Fitzherbert gives the form of the writ to use when a master wishes to compel the services of someone who “hath not Lands nor Tenements to live upon, nor other Art or Trade.” The writ, written in Latin and printed in italics, follows at the very bottom of the page. On pages 408-09 (not shown), Fitzherbert lists other conditions of the statute, such as: “An Infant of 12 years of age shall be bound by his Covenant to serve in Husbandry” . . . “He who hath not sufficient Lands of his own to occupy, shall be compelled to serve” . . . “And keeping from the Servant meat and drink, is a good cause for his departure from his service” . . . “If the Masters Wife do beat the Servant, it is a good cause for the Servant to depart and leave his service.”

*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet.*

ANTHONY FITZHERBERT, *LA NOVEL NATURA BREVIIUM*
London, Printed for the Companie of Stationers, 1616.


*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet.*

INDENTURED SERVANT CONTRACT
New York, 1797.

Moving ahead to 1797 America, we still see the influence of the English statute and writs governing servants in this contract that bound four-year-old Benjamin Evans, “a Pauper apprentice to Nicholas Hoffman” of Shawangunk, New York. Benjamin was to live with Hoffman until age 21 and was to “well and faithfully serve his Master in all lawful business according to his wit power and ability and shall honestly and orderly in all things behave and demean himself toward his said Master during said term.” In return, Hoffman agreed to teach the boy to read and write, and to provide him with “competent and sufficient meat drink apparel washing and lodging.”

*Gift of Robert E. Brooker III.*

THE ENGLISH PLEADER, BY A GENTLEMAN OF LINCOLN’S INN

Arranged like its predecessor the *Natura Brevium*, this collection of legal forms and declarations is opened to a “Declaration for depriving the Plaintiff of ancient Path or
Way.” In this sample declaration from 1733, one William Grove sued James Reed for 20 Pounds for depriving Grove of access to a parcel of land called Cow-Leaze, which Grove “for Time Immemorial” was accustomed to use “to drive all manner of Cattle at his own Liberty.”

EASEMENT
American, probably 1844.

Moving forward once again across time and continents, this small document illustrates America’s links to English law and the legal forms found in the Symbolæography and the Natura Brevium. In this easement the parties sought to avoid a dispute similar to the one that brought Grove and Reed to court as described in the English Pleader. Here, the author writes that “J. Burrell & others have the privilege to go pass & repass on the old cart way too and from their land forever. N.B. the old cart way by the house to be keep open forever.” Though it looks like an informal document, handwritten in pencil, it still preserves the language found in the earlier books of writs and pleadings.

Gift of Robert E. Brooker III.

THESAURUS BREVIIIM. A COLLECTION OF APPROVED FORMS OF WRITS


Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

REGULA PLACITANDI: A COLLECTION OF SPECIAL RULES FOR PLEADING

This small volume, exhibited closed, directed the daily activities of a seventeenth-century lawyer; it gave him the rules for pleading an action. Such procedural rules remain essential today, and many of the terms listed in the Table of Contents are still in use: continuance, rejoinder, rebuttal, estoppel, interpleading, demurrer, and error. Presaging judges and civil procedure professors by several hundred years, the author in the Preface exhorted that “to have the Science of good Pleading, in Actions Real and Personal, is one of the most Honourable and Laudable Things in our Law; And therefore he Counsels us especially to employ our Courage and Care to Learn it.”

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

WRIT
Portsmouth, New Hampshire, 1804.

This American writ of attachment again shows its debt to English legal forms and practice from centuries before. Here, Judge William Parker directs the Sheriff to attach the property or person of Samuel Nutting and bring him before the court to answer Jacob Rowell in an action on a plea of the case for a debt of $6.66.

Gift of Robert E. Brooker III.

First Wall Cabinet (Labeled Cabinet II):

STEP 2: CHOOSE THE PROPER COURT

After using a Natura Brevium to select the proper writ, a seventeenth-century lawyer’s next task was to bring his action in the correct venue. Seventeenth-century England had many courts, including the Court of King’s Bench, Court of Common Pleas, Court of Exchequer and others, and without some guidance a lawyer could easily bring an action in the wrong court. Lawyers consulted Crompton, Kitchin and similar works for guidance.

THOMAS ROWLANDSON, ENGRAVER, COURT OF COMMON PLEAS
London, Rudolph Ackermann, 1808.

This beautiful print is part of a series of thirteen, which is collectively titled the Microcosm of London. This print features one of London’s busiest courts, the Court of Common Pleas.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

JOHN KITCHIN, JURISDICTIONS: OR, THE LAWFUL AUTHORITY OF THE COURTS LEET, COURTS BARON, COURT OF MARSHALSEYS, COURT OF PYPOWDER, AND ANCIENT DEMESNE
London, Printed by T. Roycroft, 1651. An important guide to the minor courts.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.
Second Wall Cabinet (Labeled Cabinet III):

STEP 3: DO LEGAL RESEARCH

After selecting the proper writ to commence the legal action, and choosing the correct court in which to file it, a seventeenth-century lawyer began the all-important task of legal research. Then as now, lawyers consulted a variety of sources. Although today’s lawyers find many of their materials online, the content has not changed much over the years. Seventeenth-century lawyers began their legal research in books of annotated statutes, such as Plowden’s, and in abridgments, which gathered summaries of cases and arranged them by subject, much as a modern-day digest or Westlaw Topic and Key Number search does. After locating citations to promising cases in an abridgment, lawyers would then read the full text of the cases in the early Year Books or the later nominative reporters, such as Dyer’s Reports.

SIR JAMES DYER, LES REPORTS DES DIVERS MATTERS & RESOLUTIONS DES REVEREND JUDGES & SAGES DEL LEY
London, W. Rawlins and others, 1688.
A magnificent copy of one of the earliest and most influential English law reports, with a superb frontispiece portrait of Dyer.
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

THOMAS IRELAND, AN EXACT ABRIDGMENT IN ENGLISH OF ALL THE REPORTS OF SIR JAMES DYER, KNIGHT
London, Printed for Matthew Walbanck, 1651.
This small volume provides access to Dyer’s Reports by subject, almost exactly as a Digest or a West Topic and Key Number search does today. It is open to a Table which refers readers to specific case summaries in the volume. At the top of the right-hand page is item 428: “By the grant of a Forest the game passeth.” A lawyer interested in this subject would turn to item 428 in the text (not shown), which summarizes the case in one paragraph. If the case looked relevant, the lawyer would then turn to Dyer’s Reports and read the case in full.
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

LEX LONDINENSIS OR, THE CITY LAW. SHEWING THE POWERS, CUSTOMS AND PRACTICE OF ALL THE SEVERAL COURTS OF LONDON
London, Printed by S. Roycroft for Henry Twyford, 1680.
Note the unusual (to our eyes) list of courts on the title page, including the Courts of Hustings, Wardmotes, Conscience, and even a Court of Conservancy for the River Thames.
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

LEGAL TREATISES

In addition to consulting cases, statutes and the abridgments used to locate them, seventeenth-century lawyers could consult treatises on particular subjects, just as they do today. Here are two important works by William Noy, Attorney General under King Charles I.

WILLIAM NOY, THE COMPLEAT LAWYER: OR A TREATISE CONCERNING TENURES & ESTATES IN LANDS OF INHERITANCE FOR LIFE
London, Printed and sold by John Amery, 1674.
This small volume features a handsome frontispiece portrait of Noy.
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

WILLIAM NOY, A TREATISE OF THE PRINCIPALL GROUNDS AND MAXIMES OF THE LAWES OF THIS KINGDOME
This volume is bound in paper wrappers. Booksellers generally sold their books in this form, and buyers, if they could afford it, would then bind the books in leather or cloth to suit their tastes. This book must not have been heavily used; some of its pages have never been cut, as shown here.
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

RICHARD CROMPTON, L’AUTHORITIE ET JURISDICTION DES COURTS DE LA MAIESTIE DE LA ROYGNE
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.
Cabinet IV:

THE LEGAL CLASSICS

A few early English legal works and authors have formed the basis of English law and influenced centuries of lawyers and legal writers up to the present day: Glanville, Bracton, Britton, Fleta, Horne’s Mirror of Justice and St. Germain’s Doctor and Student. Thanks to the generosity of Professor Daniel R. Coquillette, the Boston College Law Library is fortunate to own nearly every significant edition of these works. This collection, one of the relatively few complete sets in the world, permits faculty and students to study the original texts in Latin, Law French and English. Many earlier editions have been exhibited here in recent years. This year, we are delighted to introduce the seventeenth-century editions of these important classics.

Together, these great medieval treatises form the most important expression of the “unwritten” English Constitution. Their subsequent editions played a great part in the ideological struggles that preceded the English Civil War and the American Revolution, and indeed, in almost all fundamental ideological struggles that have confronted the English Commonwealth or America, including the civil rights movement, the debates over abortion, and – most recently – the jurisdiction of federal courts over the detention of terrorists. It should not surprise us, then, that Bracton was cited by the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade and invoked in Rasul v. Bush and Al Odah v. United States.

Glanville is a very early English legal treatise originally written in manuscript form in 1180. A copy of Glanville accompanied Governor Winthrop over on the ship Arabella. The first settlers brought Glanville and other early English legal works to the New World so they could import the concepts of the rule of law and due process of law to their new land.

The bibliographer J.G. Marvin notes that “Glanville’s is the earliest extant treatise in which it was attempted to collect the customs, and practical workings of that system of jurisprudence, that has since exercised such an influence over the affairs of mankind and now governs half the globe; though it is not without some obligations to the Civil law. With the exception of the Decretum, it was the earliest systematic legal treatise that appeared after the dissolution of the Roman Empire.”

Glanville, Tractatus de Legibus & Consuetudinibus Regni Anglie
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

Glanville, Tractatus de Legibus & Consuetudinibus Regni Anglie
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

Glanville, Tractatus de Legibus & Consuetudinibus Regni Anglie

This special copy belonged to the library of Governor Christopher Gore at Gore Place in Waltham, Massachusetts, with Gore’s autograph on inside cover.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

The Regiam Majestatem, the Auld Lawes and Constitutions of Scotland

The fundamental book of Scottish Law, this work is based on Glanville but was adapted for use in Scotland. This magnificent copy features numerous engravings, including those on the pages shown here: the Table of Contents and the first page of the Laws of King Malcolme the Second. It is bound with two separate works: Ane Short Forme of Proces, a brief manual of procedure, and Of Crimes, and Judges in Criminnal Causes, a criminal law treatise.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.
Cabinet V:

**BRACTON**

Originally written around 1230 in manuscript form, Bracton has been published in numerous editions and remains relevant today. With the gifts received this year, the library now owns every early printed edition of Bracton. The Bracton treatise is significant because it sets forth ideas of due process and equal protection, and legitimizes England's legal system and the rule of law. Under the rule of law, even the King or Queen is subject to its force, since it is the law that gave them their power.

Bracton remains vital today. Both sides in *Roe v. Wade* cited to Bracton for its discussion of the fundamental notion of human rights. The treatise is also cited in the terrorist detention cases now before the Supreme Court.

**BRACHTON, DE LEGIBUS ET CONSUETUDINIBUS ANGLÆ**


This special copy once belonged to Isaac Parker, Chief Justice of Massachusetts (1814-1830) and the first Professor of the Harvard Law School, as the inaugural holder of the Royall Chair in 1817. The title page is signed “Isaac Parker, 1795.” This copy also features the signature of another former owner, “Josiah Pierce, Jr. Portland, 1851” inside the front cover. Interesting manuscript notes about Bracton (probably by Pierce) are visible on the page opposite the title page. Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

**FLETA**

“Fleta” (so called because the author was confined in the debtors’ prison of the Fleet in London) is a summary of English law which adds new developments in statutes and forms of action to the older work of Bracton. The law bibliographer J.G. Marvin explains that “Fleta, when written, was a concise account of the whole English law as it then prevailed, with the practice of the Courts, the forms of writs, and the explanation of law terms. Mr. Selden [see Exhibit Case X in this room] first called the public’s attention to this ancient treatise, and was instrumental in procuring its publication, to which he prefixed a dissertation, abounding in varied antiquarian learning.”

**FLETA, SEU COMMENTARIUS JURIS ANGLICANI**


Cabinet VI (across the room):

**BRITTON**

Although the authorship of this ancient work is in dispute, the consensus is that it is essentially an abridgment of Bracton, updated to reflect changes in the law since Bracton’s time.

**BRITTON**


**BRITTON, CONTAINING THE ANTIENT PLEAS OF THE CROWN**

**FLETA, SEU COMMENTARIUS URIS ANGLICANI**
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**FLETA, SEU COMMENTARIUS URIS ANGLICANI**
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**Cabinet VII:**

**MIRROR OF JUSTICES**
One of the most mysterious of all the old English texts. It has been described as “that incomprehensible work . . . a legal romance” by Holdsworth, and as an “astonishing book” by Winfield. Much of it has been discredited. However, recent scholarship by David Seipp has established that this was not a “practical joke,” but a kind of legal utopia—a vision of an ideal system. Its purported authorship by a fishmonger named Andrew Horne remains part of the mystery.

**LA SOMME APPELLE MIRROIR DES JUSTICES**
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**The Booke Called, The MIRROR OF JUSTICES: Made by Andrew Horne**
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**The Mirror of Justices**
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**The MIRROR OF JUSTICES: WITTEN ORIGINALLY IN THE OLD FRENCH, LONG BEFORE THE CONQUEST**
Third edition, translated into English by William Hughes. Manchester, William Willis, 1840. This copy is open to an engraved frontispiece of Alfred the Great.
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**DOCTOR AND STUDENT**
The great classic of secular equity jurisprudence – quite literally the link between the spiritual jurisdictions and the Renaissance courts. Of its author, Christopher St. Germain, Edward Coke wrote that “The author was a discreet man, and well read, I assure you, both in the Common Law, and in the Civil and Canon Law also. The *Doctor and Student* is one of the most esteemed of the ancient law books, and has been . . . constantly cited, from the time of Chief Justice Brooke to the present period.”

**CHRISTOPHER ST. GERMAIN, DOCTOR AND STUDENT: OR DIALOGUES BETWEEN A DOCTOR OF DIVINITY, AND A STUDENT IN THE LAWS OF ENGLAND**
Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet e.

**Cabinet VIII:**

**EARLY ENVIRONMENTAL LAW**
These fascinating books document the beginning of environmental law in England. Along with private ownership of land, there were two other ancient forms of land ownership. Forests were owned by the Crown. Each town had a commons, and every free person was entitled to use a share of the common land. In the seventeenth century, people became concerned about protecting the forests and commons from becoming polluted and overexploited.

The commons system still exists in New England. Boston Common is still a true commons, and cannot be walled off for private or commercial use. Cambridge and many other towns also retain commons.
The book is opened to Chapter 1, where Manwood begins at the beginning by offering the definition of a forest: “A forest is a certaine Territorie of woody grounds and fruitfull pastures, priviledged for wild beasts and foules of Forest, Chase and Warren, to rest and abide in, in the safe protection of the King, for his princely delight and pleasure.”

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

A Briefe Declaration for What Manner of Special Nusance Concerning Private Dwelling Houses, a Man May Have His Remedy


In this rare work, four famous English justices offer their opinions on nuisance and other topics. The book is opened to the second and third pages, which describe various situations and their legal remedies, including a neighbor who diverts water from a mill, or deprives another’s home of water or light, or “casts filth neere” another’s home. Even air rights are included: “If one who hath a horrible sickness be in my house and will not depart, an action will lye against him, and yet he taketh not any ayre from me, but infecteth that which I have.”

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

Cabinet IX:

Seventeenth-Century Political Works

Among the greatest seventeenth-century political philosophers were four with a special relevance to legal history: Jean Bodin (1530-1596), Richard Hooker (1554-1606), Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). Shown here are famous editions of the chief works of two of the four men.

Richard Hooker, Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie

London, Printed by William Stansbye, 1622. Hooker’s work introduced for the first time the notion of “Original Contract” as the basis of government, and “can thus be
considered the first statement of the principles behind the Constitution of England.” It also contains a discussion of a very timely topic today: the relationship between the state and religion regarding the law of marriage.

This magnificent early edition is in its original vellum binding. This copy contains six of Hooker’s works bound together. Each features a separate ornately engraved title page. The book is opened to the title page of Certayne Divine Tractates and other Godly Sermons (London, 1622).

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

THOMAS HOBBES, TRANSLATOR, HOMER’S ODYSSEY
London, Printed by J.C. for W. Crook, 1675.

This copy once belonged to John Masefield, O.M., Poet Laureate of England, and it contains his ownership label. This translation of the Odyssey is regarded as one of the best in English.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

THOMAS HOBBES, LEVIATHAN, OR THE MATTER, FORME, & POWER OF A COMMON-WEALTH
London, Printed for Andrew Cooke, 1651.

This is the famous “Bear” edition – identical to the exceedingly rare first edition of the same year except for the bear illustration on the title page. This edition was secretly published in Holland and smuggled into England, where it proved quite controversial with members of the left and right wings alike. Totalitarian regimes used Leviathan to bolster their claims for legitimacy. Its premise that the interests of the government trump the interest of individuals and individual rights is still being debated today in the wake of 9/11.

This copy is complete with the famous engraved ornamental frontispiece showing a monarch made up of hundreds of tiny people.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

Flat Wooden Case (Labeled Cabinet X):

EARLY LEGAL HISTORIANS:
FORTESCUE AND SELDEN

FORTESCUE
Sir John Fortescue (1394-1476) was the first Englishman to systematically describe the English legal system in his classic De Laudibus Legum Angliae, originally written in Latin about 1470, allegedly for the instruction of the exiled Edward, Prince of Wales. The bibliographer J.G. Marvin describes the work as “a brief and popular historical account of the English law, and displays sentiments upon liberty, and limited government, which one would not expect to find in a writer of this period.”

JOHN FORTESCUE, DE LAUDIBUS LEGUM ANGLIAE

This beautiful copy features an engraved frontispiece showing Fortescue with Prince Edward in France. The frontispiece reads: “Chancellor Fortescue following King Henry’s Fortune, and attending his Son Edward into France, wrote this Book to recommend the Laws of England to the Esteem and Protection of that Young Prince.”

The book is structured as a series of lessons, and begins with a dialog between Fortescue and Prince Edward in which Fortescue convinces Edward of the importance of the English law.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.

SELDEN
John Selden (1584-1654) was the first scientific legal historian, for whom the famous Selden Society is named. The library is fortunate to own early editions of most of the important works by this noted historian.

JOHN Selden, DE IURE NATURALI & GENTIUM

This work includes Selden’s most important work on Jewish law. This copy features beautiful two-color printing.

Gift of Daniel R. Coquillette.
JOHN SELDEN, *TITLES OF HONOR*
Third edition, with author’s additions.
London, Printed for E. Tyler, 1672.

With a magnificent copperplate portrait of Selden, plus woodcuts of seals, crowns and costumes for people at different levels of nobility, this work explains the origin and relative rank of various noble titles, beginning with “King” and “Emperor” and descending from there. In Chapter VII (page 87), Selden explains the use of the royal “we” as a mark of “Greatness,” and discusses how that concept is “communicated to Inferiours.”

*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet.*

JOHN SELDEN, *TABLE-TALK, BEING THE DISCOURSES OF JOHN SELDEN, ESQ.; OR HIS SENSE OF VARIOUS MATTERS OF WEIGHT AND HIGH CONSEQUENCE; RELATING ESPECIALLY TO RELIGION AND STATE*

Organized along the lines of a commonplace book, which features brief entries arranged alphabetically on subjects of the author’s choosing, *Table Talk* remains one of the great legal classics – humorous, original, perceptive. On the subject of “Friends,” Selden writes, “Old friends are best. King James us’d to call for his old Shoes, they were easiest for his Feet.”

The book is opened to passages on “Money” and “Moral Honesty.” On money, Selden notes that “Money makes a Man laugh. A blind Fidler playing to a Company, and playing scurvily, the Company laugh’d at him; his Boy that led him, perceiving it, cry’d *Father, let us be gone, they do nothing but laugh at you. Hold thy Peace, Boy, said the Fidler, we shall have their Money presently, and then we will laugh at them.***

Selden adopts a more serious tone in his passage on “Moral Honesty,” arguing that morality without religion, or religion without morality, is inadequate: “What care I to see a Man run after a Sermon, if he cousens and cheats as soon as he comes home. On the other side Morality must not be without Religion; for if so, it may change, as I see convenience. . . .”

*Gift of Daniel R. Coquillet.*