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Stocking a Library at the Turn of the Eleventh Century: the Case of Herbert Losinga, Bishop of Norwich

Abstract

This article asks how Bishop Herbert Losinga († 1119) obtained books and other material for the library of his new cathedral at Norwich. The bulk of the evidence comes from Herbert's correspondence, which survives in a letter-collection put together under his supervision. The essay interprets the hints available in his letters alongside other relevant bibliographical evidence. Extant manuscripts certainly or possibly at Norwich during Herbert's incumbency are also surveyed. It is suggested that Herbert regarded the creation of the library as one of his foremost achievements in office, and it is one for which he deserves to be remembered.[1]

Keywords

Herbert Losinga, Medieval libraries, Manuscripts, Textual transmission, Medieval letters.

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This essay asks how Herbert Losinga († 1119), bishop of Norwich, obtained books and furnished a library, a question that previous scholarship has only posed in a piecemeal fashion.[2] What follows is in essence a commentary on Herbert's letters, which provide the bulk of the evidence. Extant manuscripts identifiable as having certainly or possibly belonged to Norwich during Herbert's years will be surveyed at the end.

A man who seldom features in modern scholarship, Herbert needs a brief introduction. He was born at Exmes in Normandy around the middle of the eleventh century.[3] He entered monastic life at the abbey of Fécamp at an unknown date. Promoted to the office of prior, he was soon transferred to England at the request of the new King, William II Rufus († 1100) and appointed as abbot of Ramsey (Cambs) in 1087. Within three years or so, he was preferred to the

2. The most extensive previous commentary is found in Alexander 170–79, interspersed by observations on other subjects. See also Dodwell, "The Muniments and the Library" esp. 333. As for Herbert's name, Losinga was previously taken to be a toponym, hence the spelling "of [or de] Losinga" often found in previous research. Most medieval sources do not put "de" into his name, and it is now held that Losinga may not be a toponym.

3. For the most recent biography, see Harper-Bill.

bishopric of Thetford; his consecration took place in January 1091. In paying for that preferment, he committed the sin of simony. The case attracted public attention, such that an anonymous poem disparaged Herbert, mentioning his family by name (Licence, *Miracles of St Edmund* xcvi–cix and 352–55). In 1094 he left for Rome to seek absolution, which Pope Urban II granted him.[4] Herbert's greatest achievement in office was to oversee the transfer of his see from Thetford to Norwich, more conveniently situated for a grand ecclesiastical institution.[5] The relocation was a major operation, instigated soon after Herbert's return from Rome, apparently in 1095. For a period, Herbert was designated in documents as bishop of either place, Norwich or Thetford, suggesting that the transfer was a step-by-step project in progress for years. The process reached completion by 1103, or at least that year saw the establishment of the priory of St Mary in the church at Thetford under the auspices of Roger Bigod, one of the wealthiest men in England and Normandy.[6] Much of the construction project in Norwich was undertaken at Herbert's personal cost. An integral part of the development was the creation of a well-stocked library, the focus of the discussion below. Herbert died in 1119.

An elevated but not preeminent churchman in early Norman England, Herbert received occasional attention in the (near-)contemporary historical record. One aspect we are offered several glimpses of is his achievement in stocking with books the library of the new cathedral priory. He often gave attention to that business in his correspondence, and many of his related missives are included in a subsequently published letter-collection. This comprises sixty pieces, mostly out-letters and all from his years as bishop.[7] It has been persuasively demonstrated that Herbert was responsible for bringing the main body of the letters together and arranging them, although it is unclear to what extent he might have supervised their copying and potential editing (Wahlgren-Smith). We can take it for granted that a copy, prepared with his oversight and now lost, was made for the library of Norwich.[8] Be that as it may, Herbert intended the letter-collection as an instrument to shape his public persona.[9] One of its recurring motifs was his concern to create a library for the new cathedral at Norwich.

It should be emphasised that what Herbert established was a cathedral priory, whereas Thetford had been a secular cathedral. The former was staffed by monks, the latter by canons. Customs to be followed by the members of these two churches, within and without their precincts, were quite different, with more thorough discipline

4. For this move and Herbert's related machinations, see Licence, "Herbert Losinga's trip."

5. For the history of the foundation, see Dodwell, "The Foundation of Norwich Cathedral" and "Herbert de Losinga and the Foundation." See also Edgington 266–74.

6. Archbishop Anselm referred to Herbert as Bishop of Thetford as late as 1108, Anselm, *Ep*. 464 (ed. Schmitt). Cf. Dodwell, "Herbert de Losinga and the foundation" 40–41.

7. Their printed edition, by Anstruther, is substandard. Several corrections are provided in Goulburn and Symonds vol. 1, 418–23. A new edition is being prepared by Nicholas Karn.

8. See note 17 below.

9. This was a well-established function, deployed in Christian Latin literature since the late antique period (Sogno and Watts 394) and acknowledged as a premise in modern medieval scholarship (*e.g.* Engen 375–418).

at Norwich. A point of variance was that reading was part of the discipline of a monk's life. The *Rule of St Benedict* enjoined brothers to read one book a year at minimum. It was, in theory if not necessarily always in practice, a heavier literary diet than secular clergy were given. And yet monks owned no property and therefore a corporate collection of books was a necessity for the fulfilment of this chapter of the Rule. Secular clerks, on the other hand, were bound to their churches by statutes and not by a rule of life. They owned property in their own name and could therefore buy, sell, and bequeath books from their own private collections. Corporate collections were slower to form in secular cathedrals as a result. Benedictine communities of substantial means in Norman England could in general boast fine libraries, even if Benedict's injunction might have been treated as something of a dead letter on occasion (Sharpe 271). So, what Herbert sought to achieve with the library at Norwich was in all likelihood something rather more ambitious than Thetford's collection of books, an entirely unknown entity today. What books and how many might have been brought from Thetford to Norwich cannot be known, but many more had to be acquired. For another contributing factor was the Normanisation of the church in England, which came with the imposition of new literary tastes from the late eleventh century onwards and a standardised view of what a library ought to contain (see Thomson, *Books and Learning*). The Fathers and canon law came to new prominence, a reorientation to which Herbert's letters, with their concern for securing copies of patristic literature, bear witness. The piece that opens his letter-collection explicitly states the same thing in reference to the Fathers. Citing a lost letter from his addressee and *Genesis* 1, Herbert wrote:

> You indeed say that canonical books and commentaries by illustrious men of the holy church are an absolute requisite. Most true. These are those lights that God set in the firmament, the greater light to enlighten the day, the lesser light to enlighten the night.[10]

To gain a sense of his task in context, it might be compared with the situation at Lincoln, a secular cathedral. Lincoln, like Norwich, was a Norman foundation, one transferred to a prestigious, old Roman site from a smaller place, in this case Dorchester on Thames in Oxfordshire in the far south of the diocese, removed in the latter half of the 1070s or soon after. Although Lincoln emerged as a prominent intellectual centre in the course of the twelfth century, its library re-

10. Herbert, *Ep*. 1: "Dicis inquam canonicos libros et illustrium tractatus virorum sanctae ecclesiae omnino esse necessarios. Nihil verius: hii sunt ea luminaria quae Deus in firmamento posuit, luminare maius ut illuminet diem, luminare minus ut illuminet noctem."

mained small in comparison with those of monastic cathedrals, of which Christ Church, Canterbury and Rochester are the best recorded cases for the early twelfth century, the period relevant to this essay. In a league of its own, discussion of Christ Church, the seat of the primate, should be put to one side here. But for Rochester, a catalogue of the library from 1122 or 1123, which lacks one folio at the beginning, records ninety-nine items (*English Benedictine Libraries* 471–92). By the 1140s, Lincoln's library housed, by way of contrast, a communal collection of forty-nine (*Libraries of the Secular Cathedrals* 428–40). The first fifty-one volumes in the Rochester list mainly contain works by the Fathers, suggesting that these were of especial importance to the community (*English Benedictine Libraries* 470). The library Herbert made is unlikely to have been a match for contemporary Rochester's (*English Benedictine Libraries* 465). Rochester's institutional connexion with Christ Church – its bishop was the archbishop's chorepiscopus – would have been of particular benefit to the library.[11] A more instructive analogy would be with Lincoln's library in the 1140s, when patristic volumes numbered around twenty. That might be taken to represent the sort of number Herbert could have achieved by the time of his death in 1119, given that his new cathedral was of similar size and age to Lincoln's. It is also worth noting that no volume extant or attested for Lincoln can be shown to have come across from Dorchester. The collection was built up *ex novo*.

11. The adaptation of the famous angular Christ Church script at Rochester suggests some sort of scriptorial collaboration or at least influence.

The Provision of Books

What follows discusses the evidence pertinent to Herbert's library-related activities. The first case comes from *Ep*. 10, which he addressed to *Ricardus abbas*, identifiable as the abbot of St Albans. Some contextualization is needed. The letter can be securely dated to 1097 × 1114. The termini are, respectively, the recipient's abbatial preferment, and the end of his subsequent epistolary exchange with Herbert.[12] With an acceptable degree of uncertainty, the opening terminus can be brought forward to *c.* 1109. That proposition rests on a reminder in *Ep*. 60, which Herbert sent to the same Richard in spring 1109 at the earliest, that certain books which Herbert requested in *Ep*. 10 had still to be dispatched to Norwich. It is unlikely that Richard would have failed to oblige over a period of several years.

12. Herbert, *Epp*. 59 (from Richard) and 60 (to Richard). The exchange must be later than *Ep*. 10 because *Ep*. 60 reminds Richard of his promise to send a copy of Augustine and a lectionary. This same note would imply my propositional *c.* 1109 terminus.

Although these secure termini have been suggested in previous scholarship, their validation must be restated here (see *e.g.* Thomson,

Manuscripts from St Albans vol. 1, 16). The reason is that a study that serves as a central point of reference for modern commentary on Herbert's correspondence misidentifies *Ricardus abbas*, maintaining that the best candidate is the abbot of Ely, and that the abbot of St Albans is a less likely possibility.[13] Herbert's *Ep*. 59, an in-letter from the same Richard, champions Herbert as worthy of succeeding the deceased Archbishop Anselm to the see of Canterbury.[14] That letter must have been written sometime during Canterbury's five-year vacancy, starting with Anselm's death on 21 April 1109 and ending with the appointment of Ralph d'Escures in April 1114. Abbot Richard of Ely in fact died before Anselm, in 1107, so Herbert's correspondent must instead have been Abbot Richard of St Albans, who died later, in 1119.[15] The identification receives further corroboration from the fact that although Herbert was not Richard's diocesan, they collaborated when St Albans created new churches. Herbert officiated at the dedication of six churches belonging to the abbey and at a general ordination (*ordines generales*) conducted in the abbey's new monastic cell at Langley (Herts), all planted under Richard's auspices (Thomas Walsingham, *Gesta abbatum* vol. 1, 148–49).[16] What is more, our only witness of Herbert's letter-collection was copied from a lost St Albans manuscript.[17] Given his prominence among Herbert's correspondents, it is natural to regard *Ricardus abbas* as having been part of the collection's target audience. It would explain how St Albans came to possess a copy.

We may now scrutinize *Ep*. 10. It ends with the following entreaty, obviously connected with Herbert's mission to obtain books for the library of his new cathedral in Norwich.

> Please, send me the Josephus for which you have made repeated excuses on account of the unbound nature of the book. Since the book is now corrected and bound together, there remain no grounds for making excuses. Please, lend me the letters of Augustine and the letters of Jerome, one or both. I fervently beseech you to do so, and even more that you lend me one of the [two] lectionaries that your diligence recently commissioned. In order to implement this, I send to you Gregory, your son and servant, who will also inform you of certain things about which my letter is silent and pass your response to me.[18]

The first of the quoted requests to the abbot of St Albans is for Josephus, which aligns with a wider literary sentiment at the time. As im-

13. Goulburn and Symons vol. 1, 250 and 266–70. Their mistaken Ely identification is adopted in Harper-Bill.

14. Herbert, *Ep*. 59: "Pia mater erigatur ecclesia, ut quae orbata fuerat Anselmi patris ad coelos emigratione, Herberti episcopi corroborata suffragio equipollenter vigeat, eius munita defensione, ut quemadmodum supernis civibus admiscetur Anselmus, sic in coelesti requie, si non sede pontificali, Anselmus succedat Herbertus."

15. On whom, see Loyd.

16. Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans* 1, 16 points out that Abbot Richard of Chester would be a possibility if not eliminable on account of Herbert's especial connection with St Albans.

17. Herbert's letter-collection survives in Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale, 7965–73 (cat. 3723), f. 243r–78v. The manuscript is datable to the seventeenth century, possibly to the 1630s. At the head of the letter-collection, there are the insertions "Ex ms. S. Albani" and "Habemus etiam autographum codicem signatum ms. 73 pag. 108."

18. Herbert, *Ep*. 10: "Mittite mihi Josephum, de quo frequenter fecistis excusationem propter dissolutionem libri. Nunc autem correcto et ligato libro, nulla vobis relinquitur excusationis compositio. Epistolas Augustini et Epistolas Hieronimi vel alteras vel utrasque accommodate mihi: hoc magnopere ut faciatis obsecro; sed obnixius, ut alterum de lectionariis quos noviter vestra diligentia ordinavit, accommodetis mihi. Ad haec exigenda mitto vobis Gregorium vestrum et filium et servum, qui et quaedam in litteris meis tacita indicabit vobis et mihi vestram reportabit responsionem."

plied by the survival of a number of manuscripts from early Norman England, Josephus was an author of importance to that age's readerships (see Vincent 65–66). Although Herbert provided multiple details about the volume he was after, the case demonstrates the explanatory challenge the reader of medieval letters faces: how to merge epistolary witness with other pertinent sources, given that our evidence often comes in fragmented and ambiguous forms. We may begin with Herbert's primary designation for the work, *Josephus*. Did it embrace *Antiquitates Iudaicae*, *De bello Iudaico*, or both of them? The extant Josephus manuscripts from early Norman England are too diverse in content to provide a straightforward answer. Cambridge University Library (CUL), Dd. i. 4 and Cambridge, St John's College, A. 8 are twin volumes from Christ Church cathedral priory, Canterbury, bearing the *Antiquitates Iudaicae* and the *De bello Iudaico*. Durham Cathedral, B. II. 1, from Durham cathedral priory, conveys both works in a single volume. Cambridge, Trinity Hall, 4, from Herefordshire with a later medieval provenance at Monkland Priory, has only the *Antiquitates Iudaicae*. The two-volume set now London, British Library (BL), Royal 13 D. VI and Royal 13 D. VII, which carries both works, may at first seem to offer conclusive evidence since the manuscripts come from St Albans. Whether they might have constituted the copy Herbert had in mind, however, is a complex question.

The St Albans Josephus has been dated to *c.* 1125 and more broadly *c.* 1120 × *c.* 1140 by an eminent manuscript scholar (Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans* vol. 1, 99 and 23 respectively).[19] The copy would, then, belong to a surge of book production under Abbot Richard's immediate successor, Geoffrey de Gorron, abbot of St Albans from 1119 to 1146. If so, Herbert's reference to a Josephus would not have been to the extant St Albans copy but to one now lost. However, the dating cannot be taken as conclusive for the reason that it rests on palaeographical evidence, which is perforce relative and approximate, and which in this case has recently been contested. To begin with, the date-frame of *c.* 1120 × *c.* 1140 has been applied to a number of St Albans manuscripts on the grounds that several of the hands found in them resemble each other and in certain cases are identifiable as the same. Reliable indications of date have been sought and believed to be found in one manuscript of that group, the so-called St Albans Psalter, famous for splendid artwork and now Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, St. Cod. 1. Importantly, hands in the St Albans Josephus have been identified in manuscripts produced by the Alexis

19. See also Thomson, "Monastic and cathedral book production" 142, which is in agreement with the dating proposed below.

Master, responsible for several illuminations in the St Albans Psalter, and his team (Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans* vol. 1, 23–25). On the basis of certain interpolations in its calendar, the Psalter has frequently been dated to various points in the course of Abbot Geoffrey's years in office, often to the first half of his incumbency, *c.* 1120–30. Earlier and later date-frames have also been put forth, however.[20] The most recent sustained discussion of which I am aware argues that the likeliest candidate for the Psalter's commissioner was in fact Abbot Richard, Herbert's correspondent. In this scenario the writing was begun in about 1117, stopped after Richard's death, and was resumed in about 1124 (Morgan 48–58).

20. For the debate up to 2002, see *St Albans Psalter: The Debate*. For a subsequent suggestion of an early date (in or before 1121), see Matthew 405–6 and 415–16. For criticism of Matthew's proposition and a new potential *terminus a quo*, August 1129, see Thomson, "St Albans Psalter." See also Geddes 126–27, proposing the termini of *c.* 1129 and 1136.

The current scholarly disagreement on the Psalter's dating has the corollary that the St Albans Josephus cannot be confidently assigned either to Richard's or his successor's abbacy. Furthermore, the making of the Josephus volume may have preceded the Psalter's; that is to say, even if Abbot Geoffrey commissioned the Psalter, Abbot Richard may well have contracted out the Josephus. Richard is known to have set up a campaign of book production within specifically allocated premises. The copyists were not professed monks of the abbey but professional scribes, for they did not eat with the brethren. The project was to last some time, for it was endowed with a steady income, diverted from the tithes belonging to the house (Thomas Walsingham, *Gesta abbatum* vol. 1, 76).[21] The collaboration between the Josephus scribes may have been part of that undertaking (Matthew 409).

21. For the most recent discussion on the arrangement, see Pohl 221.

Herbert remarked also that previously in a state of *dissolutio*, the St Albans' *liber* of Josephus was now *correctus* and *ligatus*. The most natural reading seems to be that the manuscript was intentionally left unbound to more easily allow its text to be corrected, and that Richard had not wished to release the book for copying in loose quires, which might easily have become disordered in transit to Norwich. An alternative reading would be that the binding was damaged, and after its disordered quires were set right ("correcto"), the book was rebound ("ligato") (see Thomson, *Manuscripts from St Albans* vol. 1, 16). This interpretation would understand the noun *dissolutio* to denote the result of breaking up, which is its literal sense. It relates the particle "correcto" to the binding, whereas the former, and my preferred, reading associates it with the text. Upon examining the British Library's digital reproduction of the St Albans Josephus, I did not detect codicological irregularities hinting at physical disintegration or confusion in the past about the sequence of leaves or quires. Be

that as it may, the odds must be that St Albans did not produce two hefty copies of the same text for its library. Herbert's articulations would, then, imply that the extant St Albans Josephus was the copy he requested Richard to lend.

Given the difference of opinion about the making of the St Albans Psalter, that identification has a bearing on scholarly understanding of the project at St Albans to restock the library. In my reading, the texts of BL, Royal 13 D. vi and Royal 13 D. vii had been copied but stood in need of correction a little before Herbert sent *Ep*. 10 to Abbot Richard. In other words, the set was completed *c*. 1109 × 1114. The date can be used as a provisional benchmark for the work of hands, found here, who have been identified as having collaborated with the Alexis Master, the famous artist of the St Albans Psalter. That team's inception, so it would seem, was Abbot Richard's achievement and was realized by the said date-frame, *c*. 1109 × 1114.[22] The proposition aligns with the fact that Richard is documented as having established a professional set-up for the production of books outside the monastic precinct.

Herbert's next request in the letter quoted above is for the letters of Augustine and those of Jerome, commonplace authors in medieval ecclesiastical libraries throughout the Latin west. Several manuscripts survive from early Norman England, but none can be linked with St Albans or Norwich. The extant booklists from the two houses are likewise silent. Not complete catalogues, they only record fractions of the collections, and as such cannot evidence the absence of individual titles from the said libraries.[23] The *Registrum Anglie*, a union catalogue compiled by Oxford Franciscans probably in Oxford in 1320 or thereabouts, reports Jerome's *Epistolae* at St Albans, but the book has left no other traces (*Registrum Anglie de libris* 90). The catalogue makes no mention of Augustine's letter-collection. Herbert's final request concerned two St Albans lectionaries of very recent making, of which he wished to borrow one. Apparently, they were identical in content. The pertinent volumes from St Albans and Norwich are not known to survive.

The final letter of Herbert's collection, *Ep*. 60, discloses that Abbot Richard, the recipient, had not fulfilled Herbert's entreaty on two accounts: Augustine's letters and the lectionary. Richard was reminded of his commitment to dispatch the two books to Norwich.[24] The silence on Josephus and Jerome's letters suggests that those books had been delivered as requested.

On both occasions, Brother Gregory was to act as the courier. In

22. The manuscripts in question, identified by Thomson, constitute Group 1 in his scheme. While associating that group with Abbot Geoffrey's time, Thomson likewise suggests that members of the Alexis Master's team may already have arrived at St Albans during the years of Abbot Richard (*Manuscripts from St Albans* 1, 24).

23. A list of borrowers and books borrowed from St-Albans datable to 1420 × 1437 itemizes a volume that included *excerpts* from Augustine's letters among other works; *English Benedictine Libraries* 556 (B87. 4).

24. Herbert, *Ep*. 60: "Mittite mihi libros sicut promisistis, Augustinum et lectionarium, per servum et monachum vestrum Gregorium." In a forthcoming paper I argue that a paratextual phrase used in some of Herbert's letters must have been picked up from a copy of Augustine's letters, implying that Richard finally obliged.

his first letter to Richard, excerpted above, Herbert also entrusted to Gregory a confidential message to deliver by word of mouth; the man was apparently a reliable servant. Gregory was probably a monk of St Albans, rather than Norwich, or so Herbert's references to him would seem to indicate. In the first letter, Gregory is called Richard's "son and servant" and in the second his "servant and monk."[25] The slight uncertainty about Gregory's affiliation is due to the fact that such articulations might also be read as representing monastic politesse, stressing unity between the correspondents. In any case, Gregory must have sojourned at Norwich for a longer period or periods, an implication from his repeated service as Herbert's messenger and Herbert's words in the first letter to Richard: "I send to you Gregory." One factor behind monastic relocation was occasional liturgical reform. To implement perfectly the practices of one house in another, not only were service books required but also knowledge of how to administer the rites in accordance with the new manuals. Herbert's borrowing of a lectionary from St Albans implies that liturgical norms from there were to be instituted in his recently planted community at Norwich, and it may be that Brother Gregory had been sent to provide expert assistance.

25. See notes 18 and 24 respectively.

However, in establishing communal practices for Norwich, Herbert drew primarily on the orders at Fécamp, where he had first embraced the monastic life. A monk from that monastery, named Baldwin, went to Norwich to advise, as is noted in a letter Herbert sent to Abbot Roger of Fécamp. Additionally, Herbert expressed a desire to dispatch "one or two brothers to Fécamp" to gain fresh first-hand exposure to communal life there.[26] Although the letter makes no mention of such texts of practical instruction, it can be seen that at least one was brought to Norwich: a thirteenth-century Norwich Ordinal, now Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 465, often aligns with Fécamp's practices; the similarities are so striking that they betray direct transmission.[27] Based on Herbert's correspondence with Abbot Roger, it has been inferred that the source text came from Fécamp rather than any of the various monasteries reformed under the influence of William of Volpiano, Fécamp's renowned eleventh-century abbot (Chadd 318–24).

26. Herbert, *Ep*. 34: "[…] unde frequenter proposui unum vel duos fratres mittere Fiscanum, qui ipsis discerent rebus quae nostri fratris deferenda elegissent."

27. For an edition, see Tolhurst. Note that his categorization for the text, "customary," is somewhat misleading.

Herbert also obtained at least one library book from Fécamp. In another letter to Roger, datable to 1108 × 1119, he solicited Suetonius's *De vita Caesarum*, a rare text. Having failed to find it in England, he requested that Roger have a new copy made for him. The book was then to be consigned to Dancard the priest, presumably a broth-

er of, or a secular priest affiliated to, the cathedral priory, soon to return to Norwich from Normandy. Should that arrangement for some reason come to nothing, any suitable messenger would do.[28] Interestingly, the two surviving medieval booklists itemizing works in Fécamp's library are silent about Suetonius. The earlier, from the eleventh century, does not embrace Latin textbooks, in which class Suetonius would have been found. The later, from the twelfth century, lists 176 titles, some patently used in Latin instruction, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* and Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae* (Nortier 128 and 132). These silences cannot evidence Suetonius's absence from Fécamp. Booklists, as said, were seldom comprehensive catalogues of the holdings, a detail that applies especially to texts used in Latin teaching. Rather, Herbert's close relationship with Fécamp and straightforward instructions imply an informed conviction that the text was available in the abbey. It may be added that two Norman booklists of the twelfth century, both from Bec, record Suetonius.[29]

28. Herbert, *Ep*. 5: "Suetonium, quem in Anglia inuenire non possum, facite transcribi, et transcriptum mittite mihi per Dancardum presbyterum vel per alium quem volueritis servientem."

29. Cleaver 193 and 204 and Nortier 131. One is a mid-twelfth-century catalogue of Bec's library holdings; the other is a list of the books that Philip de Harcourt, bishop of Bayeux, donated to the house, including two copies of Suetonius. One of these is known to survive. This is Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 5802, datable to the mid-twelfth century and subsequently owned by Petrarch; Lecouteux, "À la recherche des livres du Bec" 269, note 13. For Italian humanists' admiration for the libraries of Bec and Fécamp, see Lecouteux, "Fécamp pendant la période ducale" 74. For a comprehensive discussion of the two booklists from Bec, see Pohl 29–31 and 237–41.

Herbert's observation that copies of Suetonius could not be found in England appears to be accurate. There is no evidence for the presence or influence of *De vita Caesarum* in England before his letter and two manuscripts from around the same time, which will be discussed below. The first English author to cite Suetonius was William of Malmesbury († *c*. 1143), possibly a novice at the time that Herbert was writing. A keen student of classical literature, William referred to Suetonius in several of his works, including the *Gesta regum*, *Gesta pontificum*, and his collection of ancient military writings, now Oxford, Lincoln College, Lat. 100 (Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* 57–58). William's engagement with Suetonius reflects the beneficial impact of the search for books by Herbert and his generation.

Herbert's request holds significance for understanding the broader dissemination of *De vita Caesarum* during the Middle Ages. Key moments in its reception history in preceding medieval centuries may be highlighted to illustrate this (Winterbottom 399–405). The work experienced a resurgence during the Carolingian period after a hiatus following Isidore of Seville's use of it in the seventh century. Einhard fashioned his *Vita Karoli Magni* after Suetonius, while Lupus of Ferrières attempted to procure a copy from Fulda. Heiric of Auxerre probably extracted passages from the manuscript of Lupus, who had been his instructor. A Carolingian manuscript, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 6115, originating from Tours and dating back to the first half of the ninth century, has survived.

The trail then goes cold. A gradual resurgence began in the eleventh century, with two to four extant eleventh-century manuscripts (depending on how one takes the evidence, which is palaeographical). One manuscript originated in Germany while the others came from centres closer to Herbert's sphere of influence.

It will be seen that the known circulation of copies is sufficiently narrow as to beg the question whether any of the remaining manuscripts could be considered candidates for Herbert's copy. Indeed, two of the three may be in consideration.[30] Durham Cathedral, C. III. 18 has been dated variously to the end of the eleventh century and, more cautiously and probably more wisely, to the turn of it (Kaster 146 and Gameson 271 respectively). The volume is of Norman manufacture, from either side of the Channel, to judge by its script. Durham provides its later medieval provenance, as is shown by an inscription on the front flyleaf verso, which evidences the book's presence there in 1484 × 1494 but Durham need not be its place of origin or its first owner. Next, BL, Royal 15 C. iii has a fifteenth-century provenance from St Paul's cathedral, London, as is evidenced by an entry in a catalogue of 1458 (*Libraries of the Secular Cathedrals* 706). Its origin is less certain; suggestions include the early twelfth century in London and the late eleventh century in Normandy (see Gameson 563, Kaster 145; Gullick 93). It should be emphasized that neither manuscript can make a strong claim to have been Herbert's copy; his ownership merely remains a possibility that cannot be ruled out at present.[31] None the less, their divergent physical aspects may be cited here as the basis for further speculation concerning the copy Herbert would have received from Fécamp. From a palaeographical standpoint, the Durham Suetonius is at best of mediocre quality, a judgement which applies also to its parchment. Annotations in a near contemporary hand, primarily consisting of historical glosses, are interspersed in its margins.[32] The overall impression suggests a textbook designed for, and deployed in, a classroom setting.[33] The London manuscript is, by way of contrast, a library book of fine quality. There is a temptation to think that the abbot of a prosperous community would be more inclined to gift a bishop - particularly one who was an important collaborator - with a refined volume suitable for a library rather than a dishevelled schoolbook.

Herbert's response to a scribe identified only by his initial "F." introduces an assistant almost certainly employed in various projects related to the library. According to the letter, the recipient had requested that Herbert either return a psalter he had crafted or make

30. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 1904, from France, perhaps Flavigny, and apparently dating from the first half of the eleventh century, is not Herbert's copy and hardly Fécamp's.

31. Suetonius being a rare text at the time, Herbert's book is likely to be closely related to these two manuscripts textually, which represent the b transmission, a constellation embracing English and French manuscripts, in the stemmatic scenario of Kaster 145–159.

32. For instance, where Suetonius notes that Caesar married Calpurnia, his fourth wife, the annotator inserts in the margin: "Uxores Caesaris. Cossutia. Cornelia. Pompeia. Calpurnia." Durham Cathedral, C. III. 18, p. 6.

33. It measures 295 mm × 190 mm, web.

the agreed payment of three *solidi*. Preferring to retain the book, Herbert opted to pay for it. However, he did not send money, since "monks are not to possess" it, but instead dispatched "wood and ink." Previous scholarship has attributed to Herbert a lapse of memory in that the letter's last words "to give a scorpion to one who asks for a fish" mix two scriptural clauses together (Goulburn and Symonds vol. 1, 199).[34] Luke 11: 11 and 12 contrast a fish with a snake, and a scorpion with an egg. The mixing may well have been deliberate, for Herbert was making an exegetical joke, and a learned one at that. He construed F's petition by allusion to Matthew 17: 26, or more precisely its medieval gloss; it is of course possible that Herbert's word-game was already played out in the missive he had received from F. The relevant matter of Matthew 17: 26 reads: "that *fish* which shall first come up, take: and when thou hast opened its mouth, thou shalt find a *stater*." The emphases, which are mine, are key: a fish yields an ancient coin. Medieval glosses of the quoted passage valued a stater at three *solidi*. (*Glossae Biblicae* 79 and 291).[35] So, as implied by Herbert's last words, "piscem petenti," F had either asked for a fish or a stater. In other words, F had jokingly pretended to be a professional scribe seeking payment and Herbert responded in kind. Compensation in "wood and ink" hints that the man was engaged in another scribal commission from the bishop, either ongoing or forthcoming. Ink was for the words, wood for the boards of the binding. It has been suggested previously that the wood was for tablets, a writing surface. However, this explanation seems inadequate as tablets would not have been necessary for copying books, which is the subject of the letter.[36]

The recipient, identified as "F.," was in all likelihood Brother Felix, who received two other letters from Herbert and is known to have written martyrologies, breviaries, "furtiva scripta," whatever those may have been, and, importantly, psalters.[37] Felix had previously been engaged in copying an unidentified work of Augustine's without having completed the task. Herbert's instruction was for Felix to resume copying Augustine and focus on his grammatical studies, thereby relinquishing his other scribal projects. Failure to do so would result in his remaining "the scribe of follies of our whole house."[38] Patristic literature is here juxtaposed with practical liturgical books to an almost absurd effect; the latter were indispensable tools for proper monastic conduct. Amicable jesting seems to have been applied also here. The joke betrays that a patristic collection was absolutely central to Herbert's vision for the library.

34. Herbert, *Ep*. 46: "Mandas tuum psalterium vel pactum pro tuo psalterio reddi tibi; at ego non psalterium, sed pactum pro psalterio reddo tibi, tres videlicet solidos, in ligno et atramento, quos etiam in nummis reddidissem tibi, sed non est monachorum habere argentum, et non est patris nato porrigere scorpionem piscem petenti."

35. The evidence comes from two manuscripts, Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, Voss. Lat. F. 24 and Milano, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, M 79 sup., datable to *s*. ix^{ex} and xi$^{4/4}$ respectively.

36. Goulburn and Symonds 1, 198 translate "ligno" as "tablets," a writing surface. Their suggested allusion to Juvenal, *Sat.* 16, 40–41 is of interest, although all the details do not perfectly match.

37. Herbert, *Epp*. 23 and 43, of which the latter makes mention of his copying. Anstruther, the editor of Herbert's letters, was first to propose that identification, for which see his notation to *Ep*. 46 at p. 83.

38. Herbert, *Ep*. 43: "[…] totius nostrae domus fatuitatum scriptor […]."

One other case in which Herbert sought to obtain books seems to have incited a breach of monastic conduct. The details, known from a letter from Herbert to Prior Ingulf of Norwich, are few and not entirely clear. Brother Alexander had moved around, something of which Herbert did not approve, holding Alexander accountable for desertion of the Benedictine commitment to *stabilitas*. In the course of his expedition, Alexander had offered scribal services, although we are not informed whether these had to do with the production of documents or books. He duly denied Herbert's charge that money had been paid for that work. Alexander also maintained that it was his superiors' neglect, or *ignavia*, that had caused his failure to live up to the monastic rule. The context is hard to construe precisely. One explanation would be that Alexander had been sent to other churches to make copies for Norwich, but, not having been sufficiently well provisioned - at least by his own estimation - he had also worked for external parties.[39]

In addition to all these cases, Herbert's letters make other remarks pertinent to books and texts. He asked for boxwood tablets, which were used to teach boys to read and write (*Ep*. 54). He held Prior Ingulf and his other obedientiaries responsible, accusing them of indolence, for several thefts of books and other valuables from the cathedral (*Ep*. 52). Often advising his brethren on what to read, his letters mention several authors by name such as Pompeius Trogus, Sedulius, Donatus, Servius, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great, Aesop, Ovid, Boethius, Virgil, and Aristotle (Herbert, *Epp*. 6, 9, 28, 30, 32, 39, 49). In his sermons, Herbert seldom pointed out his non-biblical sources; the exceptions include Ambrose and Gregory the Great (Goulburn and Symonds vol. 2, 70, 310, 352). In addition to those two fathers, Augustine and Bede are identified as his major influences in the sermons' printed edition.[40]

Herbert's own books also included "a bible that he left to the church of Norwich." The quotation is from Henry de Kirkestede, the celebrated fourteenth-century librarian and bibliographer of Bury St Edmunds abbey (Suff), who copied into a commonplace book, now BL, Harley 1005, a short added text that he had found in Herbert's bible.[41] Herbert's bible is not known to survive, but the text copied by Henry de Kirkestede has recently proved to be of notable historiographical interest. Testifying to Herbert's schemes to take over Bury for his own bishopric, the account is suggestive of a character more complex than that of a penitent simoniac (Licence, "Herbert Losinga's trip" 155–63). The writing of such a text into his bible evidences

39. Herbert, *Ep*. 51: "Opponebam ei girationes et suae vagationis circuitus, sed ipse in suorum ignaviam praelatorum huius criminationis reserabat invidiam. Arguebar solidos quos pro suarum scripturarum laboribus expostulaverat; at idem hoc abnegans, in nostro victuum claustro solo cibo et vestitura se contentum fore confirmavit."

40. See Goulburn and Symonds vol. 2, 465–66, and for Bede also vol. 1, 27. While the index of the edition lists a variety of classical, patristic, and medieval authors, these refer almost entirely to the editors' annotations. These usually introduce potential allusions, often transmissions of allocutions or concepts, in a speculative manner that is now outdated.

41. Licence, "Herbert Losinga's Trip" 164 note 73: "Ista narracio inuenta fuit scripta in biblia quam Herebertus episcopus reliquit ecclesie Norwicensis…"

a conception within his circle of how books could be used. Bibles held special prestige as they carried the central corpus of Christian texts. A bible belonging to a bishop is likely to have been an object of fine or remarkable workmanship, that is, a book that would not have been carelessly disposed of. The party responsible for writing down this account, perhaps Herbert's amanuensis working at his behest, would have considered the bishop's bible the surest and most authoritative vehicle to transmit to posterity what was an important claim by Norwich.

Extant books identifiable as having belonged to Norwich certainly or possibly at Herbert's time are very few, four volumes altogether, of which two constitute a single set.[42] The bulk of the library's earliest collection was lost to fire and looting in 1272, the climax of a grievous disagreement between the priory and the townsfolk (Bartholomew Cotton, *Liber de archiepiscopis* 146–47).[43] None of the survivors can be securely connected to Herbert personally. However, it can be supposed with varying degrees of probability that these books were made or arrived in Norwich during his incumbency.

The strongest case is a two-volume set consisting of CUL, MSS Kk. 4. 13 and Ii. 2. 19, datable to the turn of the eleventh century. The volumes bear Norwich pressmarks "A. viii" and "A. vii" respectively. The main text is an augmented version of the homiliary of Paul the Deacon (Guiliano 277).[44] Copies of the homiliary survive from various churches in early Norman England: Durham, Rochester, Lincoln, Salisbury, Worcester, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, St Augustine's (Canterbury), and Glastonbury.[45] The impression one gets is that Paul the Deacon's sermons, in various notably large compilations, were available possibly in all cathedrals and the largest monasteries. A selection of Herbert's sermons was copied in a roughly contemporary hand on folios 217–240 of the latter volume, CUL, Ii. 2. 19, which is their only witness and evidences proximity to our bishop.[46] It is possible that his sermons were appended to the manuscript on his instructions. Their chances of survival would certainly have been better when lodged within a book carrying patristic homilies than on their own as a separate booklet. Association with Paul the Deacon might also have been intended to add prestige to Herbert's sermons. The second volume of Goulburn and Symonds' study of Herbert, published in 1878, is dedicated to his sermons and its heavily annotated notes make no mention of Paul the Deacon.[47] It might prove fruitful to compare Herbert's sermons with Paul's, an undertaking which falls outside the remit of this study. The conflagration of 1272

42. The foundational study of the extant Norwich manuscripts is Ker.

43. For commentary, see Dodwell, "Muniments" 333–4.

44. For the manuscript, see Binski and Zutshi 14–15; Ker 255–56; Gameson 42 and 31 (and Plate 11) .

45. Gameson 31, 42, 110, 111, 211, 216, 285, 340, 438, 442, 460, 893, and 921–3. Richards 96–110 is a study of the English transmission of the sermons, providing a slightly different list of provenances, which is now outdated.

46. A note in a fifteenth-century hand on f. ii^{v} reads "In fine huius voluminis est sermo Herberti episcopi fundatoris huius ecclesie."

47. See note 40 above.

seems to have been so destructive that the manuscripts' survival would suggest they were then being held not in the claustral library, but somewhere else within the precinct.

Next, Cambridge, University Library, Ii. 4. 34 carries a heavily annotated *Institutiones grammaticae* by Priscian. The volume, datable to the early twelfth century, has a Norwich pressmark "L. iiii" at folio 189v, and, according to one of the most authoritative modern book historians, it "is, no doubt, a Norfolk, if not a Norwich, book" (Ker 255). The most recent description of the manuscript is more cautious, maintaining England as the origin and Norwich as a provenance (Binski and Zutshi 16–17). Priscian was one of the most frequently used authors in medieval Latin education. In that one of Herbert's epistolary leitmotifs was the need for proper instruction in Latin, a modicum of coincidence between his intentions and the manuscript's existence at Norwich can be argued for.[48]

48. Herbert, *Epp*. 9, 20, 29, 30, 32, 39, 41, 43 (following Anstruther's numbering which has "xlii" twice and skips "xliv"), 49, and 53.

Our last volume, Lincoln Cathedral, 220, is a very uncertain, perhaps dismissible case. This is a composite manuscript consisting of three booklets, of which the first two are from the early twelfth century and the third from its second half. The manuscript apparently had a later medieval provenance at one of the Norwich houses, as is hinted by surnames in fifteenth-century inscriptions found at folios 2r and 69v; these leaves belong to the first and the third booklet respectively (Thomson, *Manuscripts of Lincoln Cathedral* 180–81). It is probably on this evidence that the first two booklets have been identified as potentially coming from Norwich (Gameson 345 and 346). The contents are medical. Folios 1–44 convey four texts: a Latin commentary on the Hippocratian *Aphorismi* (see Kirbe 259), an extract somehow related to the *Aphorismi*, an extract representing Pseudo-Soranus's *Quaestiones medicinales* (see Fischer 31), and an unidentifiable medical excerpt. The second booklet, folios 45–61, carries a work titled *De diversis medicinis* sometimes misattributed to Pliny the Younger and a fragment of a sermon on St Patrick. No bearing on Herbert's career or expressed interests can be demonstrated.

To end with, a brief missive addressed to Prior Hugh, possibly of Thetford, offers telling testimony to the degree to which Herbert paid attention to the creation of his new cathedral's library and valued his achievement (Herbert, *Ep*. 4). The letter, which makes an order for ink and parchment, is a note of only a few words.[49] But it serves as a demonstration that Herbert was prepared to intervene at the micro-managerial level for the benefit of the library. His decision to furnish his letter-collection with several pieces attending to relat-

49. Herbert, *Ep*. 4: "Mittite nobis encaustum et unam sive duas pelles de pargomento; plura dixissem, sed sufficit amanti dicere amato quod necessarius est."

ed affairs, even when his concern was in a humdrum matter, as in this letter, shows that he wished to be remembered for his commitment to the undertaking. A pastoral letter sent to the brethren at Norwich puts in a nutshell why the matter was so important. Herbert asserted, with a degree of hyperbole, that the brethren's foremost obligation was to the study of scripture.[50] The bishop's efforts bore fruit. His brethren at the cathedral priory long remembered his contribution in stocking the library. A Norwich chronicler active in the late thirteenth century summed up that Herbert had "enriched the episcopal church that he had founded with possessions, books and various types of ornaments."[51]

50. Herbert, *Ep*. 57: "Agite gratias quod non nisi in deliciis scripturarum Deo servire cogimini."

51. Bartholomew Cotton, *Liber de archiepiscopis* 391: "[…] ipsa episcopali ecclesia quam ipse stablierat possessionibusque, libris et diversi generis ornamentis ditaverat."

Because the library almost completely perished in 1272, Herbert's achievement can no longer be grasped other than in the sporadic glimpses offered almost exclusively in his correspondence. The situation is rather different for the two other English cathedrals transferred at about the same time, Lincoln and Exeter. Surviving manuscripts and in Lincoln's case also a twelfth-century booklist provide for a solid comprehension of what titles were acquired. However, even though Herbert's epistolary snapshots do not constitute a full picture of his efforts to create a library, they remain important. Such miniatures, capturing so many instances in time, are rare from the Anglo-Norman realm in this period. Only Anselm's letters, especially those prior to his relocation from Normandy to England in 1093, provide richer testimony.[52] In that sense, Herbert is among our chief correspondents for a literary reorientation that profoundly reshaped intellectual landscapes in England in the wake of the Norman Conquest.

52. Anselm, *Epp*. i. 10, 19, 21, 31, 32, 35, 51, 57, 61, 62, 63, 64, 99, 127, 130, and 132 (ed. Niskanen). For Anselm's interlibrary loans, see Pohl 240–43.

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