

# Were Early Medieval Lists Bureaucratic?

## The Whitby *Abbot's Book*, Folios 1r–4v

*Abstract:* Since the Enlightenment, early medieval lists have been removed from their original manuscript contexts and sometimes interpreted as artefacts of royal and ecclesiastical bureaucracy. Despite critical engagement with the idea of early medieval bureaucracy and recent emphasis on the material and literary characteristics of lists, the idea of bureaucratic origins remains. This paper focuses on the Whitby *Abbot's Book*, folios 1r–4v, a perhaps incomplete quire written after 1176, comprising a book list, a story of refoundation with accompanying property lists, an abbatial oath, and a story of abbatial elections including a list of monks. It uses approaches to bureaucracy, administrative history, and memory to reflect on this case study and on cultures of listing.

*Key Words:* medieval, lists, monastery, bureaucracy, memory

Until ca. 1250 western European lists are usually preserved as additions to liturgical texts, entries in histories, or copies in cartularies. The post-Enlightenment culture of historical criticism produced national projects to extract lists from their original contexts, categorize them, and edit them as estate surveys,<sup>1</sup> library catalogues,<sup>2</sup>



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Thomas Pickles, Dept of History & Archaeology, University of Chester, UK; [t.pickles@chester.ac.uk](mailto:t.pickles@chester.ac.uk)

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2 For an overview: Albert Derolez, *Les Catalogues de Bibliothèques*, Turnhout 1979; Austria: *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Österreichs*, 5 vols., Vienna 1915–1971; Belgium: *Corpus Catalogorum Belgii*, 7 vols., Brussels, 1996–2009; Britain: *Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues*, 16 vols., London 1990– [hereafter CBMLC]; Germany: *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz*, 7 vols., Munich 1918–.

church treasury inventories,<sup>3</sup> and relic lists.<sup>4</sup> This resulted in an enduring historical story, locating the origins of listing in the contexts of royal and ecclesiastical bureaucracy.<sup>5</sup> Behind this story lurk attempts to discover the roots of Weberian states based on institutionalization and routinization, with bureaucratic officials following general rules, operating in specific jurisdictional areas and hierarchies, requiring training and specialization, performing administrative practices rooted in documentary culture, and subject to documentary accountability.<sup>6</sup> Subsequent interventions have raised concerns about use of the term ‘state’ in medieval contexts, except perhaps for the Marxisant definition as the institutions developed to manage conflict between classes, or as an elaboration of a Weberian ideal type for comparative purposes, preferring the contemporary concept of lordship (*dominium*).<sup>7</sup> Aspects of medieval lordship involved accountability focused on the production of lists – most obviously, the recording of tenurial rights, fiscal obligations, and personal services, illustrated by the Domesday inquest in eleventh-century England.<sup>8</sup> Institutional processes sometimes recommended listing to monitor people and things – within religious communities, for the distribution of books and tools.<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless, Weberian structures and cultures of accountability only became widespread in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries from a number of parallel impulses.<sup>10</sup> When earlier lists are returned to their manuscript contexts, it can be difficult to envisage them as bureaucratic.

Inspired by post-structuralist approaches to textual sources as narratives and by the ‘material turn,’ studies of lists from other periods have emphasized their original contexts, exploring their literary and material characteristics.<sup>11</sup> They collapse artifi-

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3 Bernhard Bischoff, *Mittelalterliche Schatzverzeichnisse, Teil I: Von der Zeit Karls der Großen bis zur Mitte des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Munich 1967.

4 For an introduction and overview: Philippe Cordez, *Die Reliquien, ein Forschungsfeld. Traditionslinien und neue Erkundungen*, in: *Kunstchronik* 60 (2007), 271–282.

5 Emile Lesne, *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France*, 6 vols., Lille 1910–1943; Wolfgang Metz, *Das Karolingische Reichsgut. Eine verfassungs- und verwaltungsgeschichtliche Untersuchung*, Berlin 1960.

6 Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, edited and translated Talcott Parsons, New York 1947, 324–340.

7 Matthew Innes, *State and Society in the Early Middle Ages. The Middle Rhine Valley, 400–1000*, Cambridge 2000; Rees Davies, *The Medieval State. The Tyranny of a Concept*, in: *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16 (2003), 280–300.

8 Stephen Baxter, *How and Why was Domesday Made?*, in: *English Historical Review* 135/576 (2020), 1085–1131.

9 Timothy Fry (ed.), *The Rule of St. Benedict*, Collegeville, Minnesota 1981, c. 32 [hereafter RSB].

10 Thomas Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century. Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government*, Princeton 2010; Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307*, 3rd ed., Chichester 2013, 64–70; John Sabapathy, *Officers and Accountability in Medieval England, 1170–1300*, Oxford 2014.

11 For instance: Lena Cowen Orlin, *Fictions of the Early Modern Probate Inventory*, in: Henry S. Turner (ed.), *The Culture of Capital. Property, Cities and Knowledge in Early Modern England*, New York

cial distinctions between ‘pragmatic’ and ‘literary’ texts, revealing how listing transforms things – land, texts, material culture – into socially defined relational objects through acts of mediation. As Francesco Fredolini and Anne Helmreich put it: “The authors of many of these lists were self-consciously writing histories through objects and these acts of representation should make us critically alert as we employ these texts.”<sup>12</sup> Yet, even amongst those who recognize the complex characteristics of early medieval lists, or offer sensitive explorations of lists within their manuscript contexts, it has been difficult to escape the assumption that listing originated at the behest of the ‘state’; that lists were bureaucratic or administrative, inventories or catalogues, compiled periodically for self-evident pragmatic needs, like maintenance, storage, evaluation, and administration; and that lists were analogous to records like wills and testaments.<sup>13</sup>

Using an underexploited case study – the Whitby *Abbot’s Book*, folios 1r–4v – this paper reflects on cultures of listing. To establish the separate identity of these folios requires a brief introduction to the *Abbot’s Book* as a whole. The *Abbot’s Book* is a cartulary from Whitby Abbey, now preserved in the North Yorkshire County Record Office at Northallerton.<sup>14</sup> Following James Clark’s analysis, it comprises five sections.<sup>15</sup>

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2002, 51–83; the essays in the *Journal of the History of Collections* 23/2 (2011), a special edition on inventories; Giorgio Riello, “Things Seen and Unseen: The Material Culture of Early Modern Inventories and their Representation of Domestic Interiors, in: Paula Findlen (ed.), *Early Modern Things, Objects and their Histories, 1500–1800*, London/New York 2012; the studies in Cinzia Maria Sica (ed.), *Inventari e Cataloghi Collezionismo e stili di vita negli stati italiani di antico regime*, Pisa 2014; or the essays in the *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (Dec. 2014), a special edition on inventories and catalogues.

- 12 Francesco Fredolini/Anne Helmreich, *Inventories, Catalogues and Art Historiography*, in: *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (Dec. 2014), 1–14, quotation at 13.
- 13 Darryl Campbell, *The Capitulare de Villis, the Brevium Exempla, and the Carolingian court at Aachen*, in: *Early Medieval Europe* 18/3 (Aug. 2010), 243–264; Joseph Ackley, *Re-Approaching the Western Medieval Church Treasury Inventory, c. 800–1250*, in: *Journal of Art Historiography* 11 (Dec. 2014), 1–37, 1–8.
- 14 Northallerton, North Yorkshire Record Office ZCG VI 1. Facsimile: *The Greate Booke of Whitby*. CD Rom Facsimile, Hull 1999 [hereafter FCW]; Edition: John C. Atkinson (ed.), *Cartularium Abbatiae de Whiteby, Ordinis Sancti Benedicte fundate Anno MLXXVIII, 2 vols.*, Durham 1878–1881 [hereafter CW]; translation: Revd Barrie Williams, *The Whitby Abbot’s Book*, Whitby 2014.
- 15 James G. Clark, *The Whitby Abbey Cartulary. A Summary Description*, in: Roger Pickles (ed.), *The Whitby Abbot’s Book*. Latin transcription by Canon J. Atkinson (1878). English translation by the Rev. Barrie Williams (2001), Whitby 2001, 285–288.

Section	Collation	Date
A	Bi-folium + I <sup>4</sup>	Late Twelfth Century
B	I <sup>10(-6)</sup>	Early Fifteenth Century
C <sub>1</sub>	I <sup>8</sup> +II <sup>8</sup> +III <sup>8</sup> +IV <sup>8</sup> +V <sup>8</sup> +VI <sup>8</sup> +VII <sup>8</sup> +VIII <sup>8</sup> +IX <sup>8</sup>	Mid-Thirteenth Century
C <sub>2</sub>	I <sup>12</sup> +II <sup>12</sup> +III <sup>12</sup> +IV <sup>10</sup> +V <sup>12(-1)</sup>	Fourteenth/Fifteenth Century
D	I <sup>10</sup> +II <sup>12</sup>	Fifteenth Century
E	Bi-folium	Mid-Thirteenth Century

After an opening bifolium, the *Abbot's Book* begins with Section A (I<sup>4</sup>), a four-leaf quire, folios 1r-4v, comprising a book list, a story of refoundation with property lists, an abbatial oath, and a story of abbatial elections; these folios were completed after the election of Abbot Richard II in 1176 and were written in the late twelfth century.<sup>16</sup> Originally a separate item, these folios were subsequently bound into a cartulary which was rebound on one or more occasions. Section C<sub>1</sub> is nine quires, folios 1r-70v, written in thirteenth-century hands: folio 8 was apparently the original opening of a thirteenth-century cartulary, headed "Incipit transcriptum omnium cartarum pertinentium ad abbatiam de Wyteby".<sup>17</sup> Section C<sub>2</sub> is then five quires, folios 71r-139v, written in fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century hands, continuing this cartulary.<sup>18</sup> Section B is a single quire written in a fifteenth-century hand and including an index to Sections C<sub>1-2</sub>.<sup>19</sup> The leaves of Sections A, B, and C<sub>1-2</sub> are foliated in a late fifteenth-century hand in a sequence that suggests a fifteenth-century binding with C<sub>1-2</sub> followed by A and then B, subsequently reordered during rebinding. Section D is two blank quires, folios 140r-162v, which were not foliated in that late fifteenth-century hand. Section E is then a bi-folium including a fragmentary extract from an unidentified mid-thirteenth-century text and a marginal inscription from the fifteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

The Whitby *Abbot's Book* Section A, folios 1r-4v, has never been considered as a whole. The story of refoundation with property lists and the book list have been separated out as a foundation memorial and a library catalogue; they have both been

16 FCW pls 002-009; CW I, 1-10, nos 1-3, and 341.

17 FCW pls 020-159; CW I, nos 4-278.

18 FCW pls 160-317; CW I, nos 279-383.

19 FCW pls 010-013.

20 FCW pls 319-321.

analysed for foundation,<sup>21</sup> endowment,<sup>22</sup> and intellectual activity.<sup>23</sup> The abbatial oath and story of abbatial election have been ignored. This is a missed opportunity. The collection invites us to ask when these elements were originally composed, what they were, what they were for, when they were compiled, and why; this requires us to reflect on cultures of listing. What follows will first analyse the internal details of each element to consider date, form, characteristics, and purpose(s). It will then use approaches to bureaucracy, administrative history, and monastic memory to reflect on these folios.

## The Book List

The book list occupies folio 1r.<sup>24</sup> Entries include author, or abbreviated title, or both, in three parallel columns, subdivided into groups. Initials are occasionally highlighted in red. Canon Atkinson transcribed the entries.<sup>25</sup> The Corpus of British Medieval Library Catalogues (CBMLC) numbered the entries and identified the likely authors and works from contemporary manuscripts.<sup>26</sup> Atkinson's transcription, representing the columns, disposition on the page (¶), and groupings (indentation), is reproduced, and CBMLC numbering is used.

The dates of identifiable books establish a timeframe for composition. The list includes works produced by or in the mid-twelfth century, by Bernard of Clairvaux (d. 1153),<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey of Auxerre (d. > ca. 1188),<sup>28</sup> Gratian (d. by ca. 1160),<sup>29</sup> Osbern Pinnock of Gloucester (fl. ca. 1148),<sup>30</sup> and William of Malmesbury (d. ca. 1143).<sup>31</sup> The book list was composed sometime between the mid-twelfth century and the compilation of the quire after 1176.

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21 CW I, xxxii–xxxvii; Alexander Hamilton Thompson, *Monastic Settlement at Hackness and its Relation to the Abbey of Whitby*, in: *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 27 (1924), 388–405; Janet E. Burton, *The Monastic Revival in Yorkshire. Whitby and St Mary's York*, in: David Rollason/Margaret Harvey/Michael Prestwich (eds.), *Anglo-Norman Durham*, Woodbridge 1994, 41–51; Janet E. Burton, *The Monastic Order in Yorkshire, 1069–1215*, Cambridge 2006, 23–44.

22 Bryan Waites, *Monasteries and Landscape in North East England*, Oakham 1997; Paul Dalton, *Conquest, Anarchy and Lordship. Yorkshire, 1066–1154*, Cambridge 1994, 65–66, 82–87, 120–124, 136–138.

23 Burton, *Monastic Order*, 2006, 278–297; Anne Lawrence-Mathers, *Manuscripts in Northumbria in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Woodbridge 2003, 109–133, 217–135.

24 FCW pl 002.

25 CW I, 341.

26 CBMLC IV, B109.

27 B109.45.

28 B109.45b.

29 B109.50.

30 B109.84.

31 B109.38.

Col. I

- ¶ Isidorus super Vetus Testamentum.
- Item Ysidorus Ethimologikum.
- Item super Summum Bonum.
- ¶ Ambrosius de morte fratris sui.
- Item Exameron.
- ¶ Beda super Lucam et super Marcum.
- Item de Temporibus. Item Historia gentis Anglorum. Item super Apocalipsim. Item super Parabolas Salomonis. Item super vii Epistolas Canonicas, et Actus Apostolorum.
- ¶ Rabanus super Mathematica.
- Item Mathaeus glosulatus. Item Johannes glosulatus.
- ¶ Passionales mensis Novembris.
- Item Passionalis mensis Januarii.
- ¶ Josephus. Ruffinus. Effrem. Gregorius Nazanzenus. Pronosticon Juliani Episcopi. Liber Paradisus. Item Regula Johannis Cassiani. Item Decem Collationes. Diadema Monachorum. Item decreta pontificum. Pannormiae Yvonis. Prosper de activa et contemplativa vita. Glosae super Epistolas Pauli in ii locis. Glosae Psalterii in ii locis. Glosae super Cantica Canticorum. De situ Dunelmensis Ecclesiae.

Col. II

- ¶ Liber Maimionis. Vita Cuthberti. Miracula Sanctae Mariae. Miracula Sancti Andreae Apostoli. Vita Sanctae Margaretae et Sancti Maclovii et Sancti Brendani et Sanctae Mariae Magdalena in uno volumine. Vita Sancti Benigni. Passio Sanctae Katerinae Virginis.
- Item Sancti Firmini et Sanctae Fidis Virginis. Item liber Theophili et aliorum Sanctorum in uno volumine. Item Imago mundi et Gilda in uno volumine. Item de Naturis hominum, et Ars Regni, et de lapidibus, in uno volumine. Item liber Helyscii Conpotistae. Item liber de Sermonibus, et Sententiae Abbatis Clarevallensis in uno volumine. Item liber de Ecclesiasticis Institutis, et Micrologus de Missarum Officiis.
- Item liber Guidonis monachi de Musica; et Iginus de duodecim signis in uno volumine. Item Consuetudinorum liber. Item liber Odonis et liber Tomae de Sancta Hilda. Item Exceptiones decretorum Gratiani.
- ¶ Sacramenta Magistri Hugonis.
- Item liber de archa Noae.

Col. III

- ¶ Liber Magistri Petri Longobardi.
- Super tres epistolas Pauli. Origines super Vetus Testamentum.
- ¶ Omeliae Caesarii Episcopi et Eusebii et Basilii in uno volumine.
- ¶ Exodus Glosulatus. Item liber Sancti Gregorii de conflictu Vitiorum et Virtutum, et Sermo.
- ¶ Liber Simonis.
- ¶ Isti sunt libri grammatici: Prudentius in ii locis. Sedulius in ii locis. Prosper Theodolus. Vita Sanctae Mariae Egiptiacae in versibus. Liber aratoris. Liber Bernardi super Theodolum. Priscianus. Item de accentibus. Beocius de Trinitate. Item de Consolatione. Liber Platonis. Item Juvenalis. Statius Achileides. Tullius de Amicitia, et alius de Senectute. De Parado' Bucolicae. Oratius. Avianus. Maximianus. Donatus. Cato. Remigius. Hugo super Donatum. Homerus. Persius. Derivationes. Natura bestiarum. Prooemium Arithmeticae et Musicae prooemium in uno volumine.

An understanding of this list must begin with twelfth-century monastic book production, storage, and repair.<sup>32</sup> Surviving customaries distinguish the role of the Sacrist, responsible for books used by officiants in the Mass, from the roles of the Cantor/Precentor and *Succentor*, responsible for books for personal and public reading.<sup>33</sup> The Cantor maintained book storage facilities, produced, inspected, and repaired books, oversaw daily personal and public reading, wrote names of the deceased in the martyrology, and administered charters.<sup>34</sup> The *Succentor* sometimes held keys to book storage facilities and distributed books.<sup>35</sup> At Eynsham the Cantor recorded the titles of each book, examined them once or twice a year, lined the book cupboard (*armarium*) with wood and created partitions to prevent damp.<sup>36</sup> As the Abbot's deputy, the Prior probably oversaw the unassigned funds used for books, but some charters reveal separate monies for the Cantor.<sup>37</sup> At Whitby one twelfth-century grant of land and several later grants of funds are for the Precentor to make and copy books.<sup>38</sup> A document of 1393 lists the monks, including Thomas of Ellington, Precentor, and Thomas of Butterwick, *Succentor*.<sup>39</sup>

32 For overviews: Richard Gameson, *The Medieval Library* (to ca. 1450), in: Elisabeth Leedham-Green/Teresa Webber (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland, Vol. I to 1640*, Cambridge 2006, 13–50; Teresa Webber, *Monastic and Cathedral Book Collections in the Late Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, in: Leedham-Green/Webber, *Cambridge History*, 109–125; Richard Sharpe, *The Medieval Librarian*, in: Leedham-Green/Webber, *Cambridge History*, 218–241; Teresa Webber, *The Libraries of Religious Houses*, in: Erik Kwakkel/Rodney M. Thomson (eds.), *The European Book in the Twelfth Century*, Cambridge 2018, 103–121.

33 Margot Fassler, *The Office of the Cantor in Early Western Monastic Rules and Customaries. A Preliminary Investigation*, in: *Early Music History*, 5 (1985), 29–51; Teresa Webber, *Cantor, Sacrist or Prior? The Provision of Books in Anglo-Norman England*, in: Katie Ann-Marie Bugys/Andrew Brock Kraebel/Margot Elsbeth Fassler (eds.), *Medieval Cantors and their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800–1500*, Woodbridge 2017, 172–189. The surviving eleventh-, twelfth-, and thirteenth-century customaries are: David Knowles/Christopher N. L. Brooke (eds.), *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, Oxford 2002, cc. 83–84, 86 [hereafter *Lanfranc's Constitutions*]; Joseph Stevenson (ed.), *De obedientiariis abbatiae Abbdonensis*, in: *Chronicon monasterii de Abingdon*, 2 Vols., London 1858, II, 335–417, at 371–374 [hereafter *Abingdon*]; John Edward Jackson (ed.), *Liber de Henrici de Soliaco abbatis Glaston. Et vocatur A*, London 1882, 8 [hereafter *Glastonbury*]; Thomas of Malborough, *History of the Abbey of Evesham*, ed. Jane E. Sayers/Leslie Watkiss, Oxford 2003, 394–394 [hereafter *Evesham*]; Antonia Gransden (ed.), *The Customary of the Benedictine Abbey of Eynsham in Oxfordshire*, Siegburg 1963, 16, 20, 164–168 [hereafter *Eynsham*]; Edward Maunde Thompson (ed.), *Customary of the Benedictine Monasteries of St. Augustine, Canterbury and St. Peter, Westminster*, London 1902–1904, I, 90–101, II, 28–42 [hereafter *Canterbury and Westminster*].

34 *Abingdon*, 371–374, gives the fullest account.

35 *Ibid.*; *Eynsham*, 166; *Canterbury*, I, 98; *Westminster*, II, 37–38.

36 *Eynsham*, 164–168.

37 Michael Gullick, *Professional Scribes in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century England*, in: *English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700*, 7 (1998), 1–24; Sharpe, *Medieval Librarian*, 220–221.

38 *CW I*, nos 14, 16, 17, 208.

39 *CW I*, no. 377.

By comparing the Rule of St Benedict with surviving customaries, book lists, and manuscripts, Teresa Webber has reconstructed a programme of personal and public reading that shaped book production, storage, and use.<sup>40</sup> Under the Sacrist were the books necessary for use in the Mass.<sup>41</sup> Occasionally contemporary book lists locate them in the treasury, the church, chapels, the infirmary, and the guesthouse.<sup>42</sup> Overseen by the Cantor were the books necessary for public reading in the Chapter Office, at Collation, and in the Refectory, and for daily personal reading.<sup>43</sup> Sometimes book lists reveal a reserved collection for public reading.<sup>44</sup> The Cantor could also care for the books required for education of boys, youths, and novices, though these could be a distinct collection.<sup>45</sup> Books were stored in chests, freestanding cupboards, or recesses lined with wood and furnished with partitions and shelves, and books were stacked flat.<sup>46</sup> Slight overlap occurred between the Sacrist's and the Cantor's roles because homiliaries and legendaries moved from Choir to Refectory.<sup>47</sup>

Keeping this in mind, we can consider the Whitby book list's contents and its organization. Missing from the Whitby book-list are the books for Mass: Bibles, plenary missals, sacramentaries, Gospel books and Gospel lectionaries, and other lectionaries and breviaries.<sup>48</sup> Missing too is the Rule of St Benedict, needed for readings in the Chapter Office.<sup>49</sup> Included are books necessary for public reading. It mentions items listed for use at Collation in other contexts:<sup>50</sup> – Cassian's *De institutis coenobiorum* and *Collationes*,<sup>51</sup> Isidore's *Sententiae*,<sup>52</sup> Julianus Pomerius' *De vita activa et*

40 Teresa Webber, *Monastic Space and the Use of Books in the Anglo-Norman Period*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies*, XXXVI (2014), 221–240.

41 Eynsham, 164–165; Canterbury, I, 106, 112, 197; Westminster, II, 49, 150.

42 Bury St Edmunds: Michael Lapidge, *Surviving Booklists from Anglo-Saxon England*, in Michael Lapidge/Helmut Gneuss (eds.), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, Cambridge 1985, 33–89, No. VII under Abbot Leofstan (1046–1065); Glastonbury: CBMLC IV, B37, under Abbot Henry of Blois (1126–1171); Ely: Ernest Oscar Blake (ed.), *Liber Eliensis*, London 1962, II.139, 223–224; Reading: CBMLC IV, B71.146, for a late twelfth-century list.

43 Webber, *Monastic and Cathedral*, (2006), 120–121; Webber, *Monastic Space*, (2014), 231–238; Teresa Webber, *Reading in the Refectory. Monastic Practice in England, ca. 1000–ca. 1300*, London University Annual John Coffin Memorial Palaeography Lecture, 18 February 2010, London 2013.

44 Donatella Nebbiai-Dalla Guarda, *La bibliothèque commune des institutions religieuses*, in: *Scriptorium* 50 (1996), 254–268; Webber, *Libraries*, 2018, 110–111.

45 Abingdon, 371, for an *almaria puerorum iuvenum*.

46 Gameson, *Medieval Library*, 2006, 14, 18–21; Webber, *Libraries*, 2018, 106–108.

47 Webber, *Monastic Space*, 2014, 229–231.

48 *Ibid.*, 223–231.

49 *Ibid.*, 232.

50 *Ibid.*, 235–236.

51 B109.23–24.

52 B109.3.



*contemplativa*,<sup>53</sup> Smaragdus' *Diadema monachorum*,<sup>54</sup> works by Ephraem Syrus,<sup>55</sup> and Palladius of Hellenopolis' *Historia Lausiaca*.<sup>56</sup> It encompasses a number of items used for readings in the Refectory:<sup>57</sup> homiliaries;<sup>58</sup> patristic exegesis relating to the Biblical book for the Office;<sup>59</sup> legendaries (or passionals); the histories of Josephus and Eusebius;<sup>60</sup> and histories and *vitae*.<sup>61</sup> Alongside these, it incorporates a range of works for education.<sup>62</sup> It also includes up-to-date Bible glosses and associated works from the schools of northern France, and some Patristic and Canonical collections like Ivo of Chartres' *Panormia*.<sup>63</sup> The Whitby book list therefore records the Cantor's books. The order follows a tradition which evolved from the eighth century onwards, beginning with works by the Church Fathers, proceeding through glosses and commentaries to *vitae* and other works suitable for readings, and ending with works on the Liberal Arts.<sup>64</sup> Yet this fails to explain the columnar layout, groupings, or categorical inconsistencies. The organization of other book lists suggests that this tradition influenced shelving decisions and that lists could replicate systems of classification used in practice.<sup>65</sup> Yet the varying dimensions of manuscripts meant that more or fewer items could be kept in an individual chest or on a particular shelf.<sup>66</sup> The best explanation for the Whitby list's columnar layout, groupings, categorical inconsistencies, and varying group sizes is to identify it as representing chests, free-standing book cupboards, or a furnished recess; the three columns make the idea of a recess with wooden partitions and shelves attractive.

Since the Whitby list lacks an explanatory heading, its purpose must be deduced from its characteristics. The rhythms of institutional life meant that a snapshot of the book cupboard would not capture the Community's full collection and would quickly be outdated as manuscripts moved around. Yet the list supplies no method

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53 B109.28.

54 B109.25.

55 B109.19.

56 B109.22.

57 Webber, Reading, 2013, 16–47; Webber, Monastic Space, 2014, 236–8.

58 B109.20; B109.55a; B109.55c.

59 B109.1; B109.5; B109.6a; B109.6b; B109.9; B109.10; B109.11a; B109.11b; B109.12; B109.54; B109.68.

60 B109.17 and B109.18.

61 Histories: B109.8; B109.32; B109.42b. Vitae: B109.4; B109.34; B109.36; B109.38; B109.63; B109.64.

62 B109.66; B109.67; B109.70; B109.71; B109.72; B109.73a; B109.73b; B109.74; B109.75; B109.76; B109.79; B109.80; B109.81; B109.82; B109.83; B109.86a; B109.86b.

63 Webber, Monastic and Cathedral, 2006, 114–116; B109.27; B109.50; B109.53; B109.84.

64 Rosamond McKitterick, The Carolingians and the Written Word, Cambridge 1989, 165–210; Donatella Nebbiai-Dalla Guarda, Classifications et classements, in: A. Vernet (ed.), Histoires des bibliothèques françaises I. Les bibliothèques médiévales du vie siècle à 1530, Paris 1989, 373–393; Gameson, Medieval Library, 2006, 23–26; Webber, Libraries, 2018, 110.

65 Gameson, Medieval Library, 2006, 23–26; Webber, Libraries, 2018, 110; CBMLC III, Z14 Meaux, Z19 and Z20 Rievaulx; CBMLC VI, A16, Llanthony-by-Gloucester.

66 Gameson, Medieval Library, 2006, 26–27.

for tracking movement. The broad groupings, dense conglomerations of titles, and categorical inconsistencies mean that it is relatively easy to see the overall subjects covered, but difficult to discover the position of a particular book. These characteristics render the book list of limited use as a check on responsibility or a catalogue. Instead, as Teresa Webber has suggested, such lists may be better approached through the lens of moral-didactic histories, which assessed Abbots and Priors partly by their efforts in acquiring and copying manuscripts: she envisages such lists as “a record of the community’s possession of written authority, worthy of remembrance alongside its material property and rights, and [...] its relics”.<sup>67</sup>

## The refoundation story and property lists

The refoundation story with property lists occupies folios 1v–4r.<sup>68</sup> It comprises four paragraphs – one relating the story and three listing properties.

To investigate how the refoundation story reshaped the past, we can compare it with independent evidence for the early history of the Community. The refoundation story focuses on the Community’s re-founder Prior Reinfrid (ca. 1078–?1092), his successor Prior Serlo de Percy (?1092–<1109), and his successor Abbot William de Percy (1109–1125).<sup>69</sup> In providing context for Reinfrid’s religious vocation and refoundation of Whitby, the story claims he was a soldier (*miles*) in the army of King William I who travelled to Whitby and discovered that the earlier monastery had been destroyed by Vikings; it then suggests that, after taking up the religious life at Evesham, he returned with Prior Aldwin of Winchcombe and the monk Elfwy to the province of the Northumbrians, and came to William de Percy.<sup>70</sup> To our other evidence, it adds Reinfrid’s military background and experience of Whitby; but it omits Reinfrid’s role with Aldwin and Elfwy in visiting *Monkchester* (Newcastle) and re-founding Jarrow, before leaving for Whitby.<sup>71</sup> In locating the Community, the story conflates three places – *Streoneshalh*, *Prestby*, and Whitby.<sup>72</sup> *Streoneshalh* was

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67 Webber, *Monastic and Cathedral*, 2006, 110, 124, quotations at 124.

68 FCW pls 003–008.

69 David Knowles/Christopher N. L. Brooke/Vera C. M. London (eds.), *The Heads of Religious Houses. England and Wales, I*, 940–1216, Cambridge 1972, 77–78.

70 CW I, 1.

71 Compare the narratives in: Abbot Stephen of St. Mary’s, York, narrative of the foundation of St. Mary’s, written 1093x1112: CW, I, xxxiv–xxxix; Symeon of Durham’s narrative written 1104–7x1115 in his *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, ed. David Rollason, Oxford 2000, iii.21–22; an Anglo-Latin poem preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript, Arthur George Rigg, *A Latin Poem on St. Hilda and Whitby Abbey*, in: *Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996), 12–43.

72 CW I, 1.

the name of the Community under Abbess Hild from 657.<sup>73</sup> Whitby was a manor in Domesday Book, including separate lands owing dues and services at *Prestby* and *Sowerby*, used for the refoundation.<sup>74</sup> In relating the process of refoundation, the story states that William de Percy founded a monastery (*monasterium*) under the care of Reinfrid, on land at *Prestby*; then, after the number of monks grew and his brother Serlo de Percy became a monk, he gave further townships, lands, churches, and tithes.<sup>75</sup> Our other evidence suggests a more complex story: that Reinfrid was a hermit;<sup>76</sup> that Stephen, future abbot of St Mary's, York, was elected abbot;<sup>77</sup> that Stephen fell out with William de Percy and moved under royal patronage to Lastingham and then York, retaining the initial endowment at *Prestby* and *Sowerby*;<sup>78</sup> that William de Percy's brother, Serlo, subsequently became Prior, but also fell out with William and moved to Hackness, perhaps with royal assistance;<sup>79</sup> and that those at Hackness returned to Whitby, establishing a priory in the reign of King William II Rufus, and an abbey in the reign of Henry I.<sup>80</sup> In discussing the earliest rulers of the monastery, the story dwells on Reinfrid's Benedictine credentials: "Suscepto ergo Reinfridus monasterio, ad idem habitandum vel regendum coepit regulariter conversari cum sociis suis, in humilitate, patientia, paupertate, et caritate exemplum omnibus tribuens ad bene agendum, et ad Deo serviendum; ita ut, infra breve tempus, prudentissimos viros ad monachicum habitum suscipiendum socios sibi aggregaverit" ("Therefore Reinfrid, having received the monastery, began inhabiting and ruling the same, dwelling with his companions according to the rule, in humility, patience, poverty, and charity, setting an example to all in doing good and in serving God; so that, in a short time, he increased his companions with very prudent men who received the monastic habit"); it outlines the circumstances of his death, making only brief mention of his successors as the patron's brother and nephew.<sup>81</sup> In introducing the list of properties, it provides the unique information that William de Percy died journeying to Jerusalem and was buried there.<sup>82</sup>

73 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, ed. Bertram Colgrave/R.A.B. Mynors, Oxford 1969, iii.24–25, iv.23–24.

74 Margaret Faull/Marie Stinson (eds.), *Domesday Book. Yorkshire*, Chichester 1986, 4N1, CN1, SN L2, 4, and 13N13, SN D9.

75 CW I, 1.

76 Stephen of St. Mary's, cc. 3, 5.

77 Stephen of St. Mary's, c. 6.

78 Stephen of St. Mary's, cc. 7–9; Faull/Stinson, *Domesday*, 4N1, CN1, SN L2, 4.

79 Rigg, *Anglo-Latin Poem*, 32, ll. 590–605; Faull/Stinson, *Domesday*, 13N13, SN D9.

80 CW I, Nos 27, 279.

81 CW I, 2; compare RSB, Prologue 4 (*bene agendum*), Prologue 21 (*observantia bonorum actuum*), cc. 2.21 (*in operibus bonis et humilis*), 2.25 (*patientia*), 4 (*Quae sunt instrumenta bonorum operum*), 5.1 (*humilitas*), 7 (*De humilitate*), 7.42 (*patientia*), 33 (prescribing communal ownership, forbidding private property), 64.12–14 (*prudentia*), 72.5 (*patientia*), 72.8–10 (*humilitas, caritas*), 92.

82 CW I, 2.

The story of refoundation rewrote the Community's history, implying William de Percy and Reinfrid always intended to establish a Benedictine monastery at Whitby and rooting its endowment in their joint enterprise. To discover how this story related to the three paragraphs listing properties, we can consider the organization of the lists and compare them to the Community's charters. The second paragraph follows a different logic from the third and fourth: it lists properties by donor, whereas they list them spatially travelling clockwise from the east coast at Scarborough inland up the Vale of Pickering, and then east from Cumbria along the Cleveland plain to the coast. Using cartulary copies of the charters, we can establish what the Community considered to be the latest acquisition date of a property included in each paragraph. With one exception, all properties in the initial list were supposedly acquired by the 1140s.<sup>83</sup> The third and fourth paragraphs include properties purportedly acquired from the 1150s to the 1170s.<sup>84</sup>

The initial list highlighted the kinship between the patron and other donors. The list is introduced:

Itaque omnes terras, possessiones, forestas, ecclesias, decimas et libertates, quas saepe nominatus idem Willielmus de Perci, cum Alano de Perci, filio suo, monasterio de Witebi dederat in primis, necnon in ultimis temporibus suis antequam Ierosolimam peteret, vel quique fideles monasterio nostro de

83 The majority of the properties are listed as acquisitions in the following charters: CW I, no. 27, William de Percy (?<1095); CW I, no. 279, Alan de Percy (?<ca. 1130/1135, perhaps 1109); Henry W. C. Davis/Robert J. Whitwell/Charles Johnson (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, Oxford 1913–1969, III, no. 942, King Stephen (1136), confirmed by comparison with nos 99, 255, 256–257, 335, 373a, 716–717, 906–907, 979, 990; Philippe Jaffé, *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum ab Condita Ecclesia ad Annum Post Christum Natum MCXCVIII*, vol. III, Lipsiae 1888, no. 9645, Pope Eugenius III (1143x1148), compared with others with similar incipits listed Index, 603, and presumably acquired during Eugenius' tour north of the Alps in 1147–1148 – Anne J. Duggan, *The Benefits of Exile*, in: Iben Fonnesberg-Schmidt/Andrew Jotischky (eds.), *Pope Eugenius (1145–1153). The First Cistercian Pope*, Amsterdam 2018, 171–195. These documents are edited and accepted in: William Farrer/Charles Clay (eds.), *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Edinburgh 1914–1916, II, nos 855, 857, 868, 872 [hereafter EYC]. For two remaining properties, there are documents in the cartulary claiming their acquisition by the 1140s: CW I, nos 92, 173, and EYC no. 1099 for Middleton, and CW I, nos 207, 209, and II, no. 529, and EYC no. 1202 for Newton. The sole exception is the hermitage at Mulgrave: EYC no. 899, dated 1160–1170.

84 Second Paragraph: CW I, no. 44 and Janet Burton (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta V, York 1070–1154*, Oxford 1988, no. 50, Burneston Church (1161x1184); EYC no. 1059, Huntingdon Church (1159); CW I, nos 44, 193, 202, 361 and EYC nos 828–834, Skirpenbeck (1150–1160); CW I, nos 44, 90–91, Slingsby Church (ca. 1157?); CW I, nos 193, 201, 364 and EYC nos 830, 832, Stamford Bridge (1150x1170); CW I, nos 43–44, Sutton-upon-Derwent (1160x1184); CW I, no. 260 and EYC no. 249, York Blake Street (1150x1160); CW I, no. 262 and EYC no. 279, York Staingate (1140x1148). Third Paragraph: EYC no. 891, Liverton (1165x1175); CW I, no. 125 and EYC no. 705, Middlesbrough – William of Acklam (1170x1180); CW I, no. 138 and EYC no. 1852 (1160x1180), Middlesbrough – Roger Cousin; CW I, nos 71, 87 and EYC nos 902–903, Upleatham – Robert de Argenton (1165x1175).

Witebi dederunt vel concesserunt in elemosinam perpetuam, ad monimentum, hic breuiter annotabimus.<sup>85</sup>

(Thus, as a memorial, we will briefly note down here all lands, possessions, forests, churches, tithes, and liberties, which the aforementioned William de Percy, with Alan de Percy, his son, gave to the monastery of Whitby first of all, likewise in his final days before he sought Jerusalem, or which faithful men granted or conceded to our monastery of Whitby in perpetual alms.)

It begins with two longer grouped entries for the manors of Whitby and Hackness with their dependencies and churches. The cartulary charters reveal that most were claimed as foundation grants of William de Percy and Alan de Percy.<sup>86</sup> The exception is that the Community thought either King William I or William II had granted royal lands and exemptions around Hackness, but implied in the list that they were given by William de Percy and Alan de Percy, sidestepping complications for their story of refoundation.<sup>87</sup> A series of short entries then list lands granted by relatives of William and Alan, each beginning “Ex dono X”, and including a statement of blood relationship, such as “Ex dono Alani Buscel, filii praedictae Aalizae, neptis Willielmi de Perci et Serlonis Prioris”.<sup>88</sup> These proceed according to kinship and status, from the Community’s advocate, William son of Alan de Percy, through nephews and nephews’ offspring, to Alan de Percy’s *dapifer*, Fulk, who witnessed a charter as “Fulcus filius Reinfridi”. Versions of charters in the cartulary offer more details on these grants, omitted for simplicity – the refoundation story and list drew attention only to the joint enterprise, intentions, and virtue of the patron and prior, extending to other donors through kinship and service.

The lists in the third and fourth paragraphs emphasized selected aspects of the original terms on which the lands had been granted. Cartulary copies of charters for these properties supply more information. All entries in these lists supplied the name of the donor(s) along with the name and nature of the property. Occasionally further details were included. First, endowments supporting cells in return for service by monks, at All Saints, Fishergate, York, and St Hilda’s, Middlesbrough. Second, reciprocal arrangements to be honoured: an exchange with Bridlington Priory involving catches of fish; an arrangement with the Abbey of Evesham for the church of Huntingdon; prayers for John Ingram’s brother. Third, circumstances surround-

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85 CW I, 2.

86 CW I, nos. 27, 279.

87 This is clear from the apparently authentic documents of King Stephen and Pope Eugenius, see note 84 above. It is also implied by later forgeries preserved in the Community’s cartulary: William I to Archbishop Thomas: CW II, 495, no. 555; Davis/Whitwell/Johnson, *Regesta*, I, 61; EYC no. 862. William II to Archbishop Thomas: CW II, 527, no. 579; Davis/Whitwell/Johnson, *Regesta*, I, 105; EYC II, 207.

88 CW I, 4.

ing exchanges: Roger de Mowbray's exchange of a residence at Fosse Bridge in York in return for Hod; and lands in and around York quitclaimed to Roger de Mowbray by Reginald le Poer and given as a permanent endowment. Finally, illuminated initials in red, blue, and green were used for the 'E' of "Ex dono" to make it easier to pick out some donors and their gifts: William de Percy and the vill of Whitby and Hackness with its church; Emma de Port; William son of Alan de Percy, advocate; Alan Buscel, son of William de Percy's niece; Prior Wikeman of Bridlington; Robert de Percy, son of Pichot de Percy; Alan of Monkhouse, "strenuissimus miles"; William, count of Albermarle; Walter de Chancy; William Hay and Robert Chambord; Abbot Roger of Evesham; King William II Rufus; Audo; Reginald le Poer; Torfin of Ulverston; Adam son of Viel; Robert and Stephen de Meynell; Robert de Brus; Unfrid of Hutton; and Robert Fossard.<sup>89</sup>

Daniel Talbot argues that these four paragraphs were a *pancarte*, which might suggest an earlier text was being updated, so this possibility deserves some discussion.<sup>90</sup> *Pancartes* have received more attention on the continent; they comprise a foundation narrative with up-to-date list of properties for confirmation at the time of drafting, sometimes in multiple, updated copies.<sup>91</sup> Whitby may have produced *pancartes* because apparently authentic charters include comparable lists of properties reflecting the evolution of the endowment – foundation charters of William and Alan de Percy, a confirmation of King Stephen in 1136, and a privilege of Pope Eugenius III in 1145x1148.<sup>92</sup> The refoundation story extends only to the time of Abbot William (r. 1109–1125), the refoundation story and the initial list of property seem designed to speak to one another in their emphasis on the twin enterprise, intentions, and virtues of the first patron and prior, and the initial list of property only extends to the 1140s, with one exception. The first two paragraphs – the refoundation story and initial list of property – could therefore derive from an earlier *pancarte*. Whether this was an earlier text, now updated, or a single composition of the late twelfth century, in its late twelfth-century form it separated out the property acquired from the founding kin-group by the 1140s from the property acquired from others by the 1170s, which was listed spatially, and was supplied with details about certain patrons and particular responsibilities.

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89 FCW pls 005–008; CW I, 2–7.

90 Daniel Talbot, *Conflicting Memories, Confused Identities, and Constructed Pasts. St Hilda and the Refoundation of Whitby Abbey*, in: Denis Renevey/Christiana Whitehead/Hazel Blair (eds.), *Northern Lights. Late Medieval Devotion to Saints from the North of England*, Turnhout forthcoming.

91 David Bates (ed.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum. The Acta of William I (1066–1087)*, Oxford 1998, 22–30, for discussion and examples.

92 Above, note 84.

Again, the utility of this refoundation story with lists of properties must be deduced from its features. There are no guarantees of authenticity or proofs of ownership, but only the narrative force of the story and the shape of the first list to persuade readers or hearers. There is no way to verify its claims except to check it against the Community's charters or social memory in assemblies. There are no cataloguing conventions to relate properties in the lists to the location of charters or pages in cartularies. The story and its lists seem designed to persuade a reader or hearer of a broad moral truth about the Community's rights and its fulfilment of responsibilities over a period of time. The author might have envisaged a number of contexts for that act of persuasion – papal confirmations of privileges;<sup>93</sup> royal accessions and confirmations of property;<sup>94</sup> abbatial deaths, interregna, and escheats;<sup>95</sup> abbatial elections;<sup>96</sup> assembly disputes over property;<sup>97</sup> or liturgical acts of commemoration.<sup>98</sup>

## The abbatial oath and the story of abbatial elections

The abbatial oath and the story of abbatial elections occupy folio 4v.<sup>99</sup> The oath comprises four questions with responses. Each question and response received an illuminated initial. The word *responsio* was written in red.

Vis propositum et Sancti Benedicti regulam ipse observare, tibi que subiectos ut id ipsum faciant diligenter instruere?

Responsio. Volo.

Res quoque ecclesiae hactenus dispersas iniuste congregare, et congregatas, vis, quantum praeuales, non dispergere, easque in usus ecclesiae, fratrum, pauperum, etiamque peregrinorum conservare?

Responsio. Volo.

Vis humilitatem et patientiam in temet ipso custodire, et alios similiter docere?

Responsio. Volo.

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93 CW I, nos 148–149, 151.

94 Davis/Whitwell/Johnson, *Regesta*, III, 346–347, no. 373a for the charter of King Stephen in 1136.

95 For accounts from Whitby escheating to the king, see: Pipe Roll 12 John 1210, p. 219; 14 John 1212, p. 5; Margaret Howell, *Abbatial Vacancies and the Divided Mensa in Medieval England*, in: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 33/2 (April 1982), 173–192.

96 CW I, no. 377, for a public resolution of 1393 made by the Chapter at the election of a new abbot about the Community's property, and 378 for an inventory made by at the arrival of the new abbot.

97 CW I, nos 29–42, and 312–340, all relating to disputes over the church of Crosby Ravensworth; nos 292–293, disputes over tithes; no. 380 for articles from a dispute with Alexander de Sneaton.

98 CW I, Nos 93, 175, 212, 221, 234, for grants occurring on feast days, at the altar or in the Chapter House, and involving relics.

99 FCW pl 009.

Vis Sanctae Matri Ecclesiae Eboraci, mihi et successoribus meis, canonicam  
obedientiam per omnia observare?  
Reponso. Volo.<sup>100</sup>

This seems to be an oath to the Archbishop of York taken by a new Prior or Abbot.

The story of abbatial elections begins with Abbot Benedict's resignation due to harassment in Lent 1148. It describes the election of his replacement, Abbot Richard I, followed by his major achievements, his death, and the election of his successor, Abbot Richard II, in 1176. Two illuminated initials highlight the 'A' of *Anno* at the beginning and at the start of the final sentence, drawing attention to chronology.<sup>101</sup> For the election of Abbot Richard I the story carefully established that correct procedures were followed, supported by historical details, and vindicated by evidence for the Abbot's successful leadership.<sup>102</sup> It suggested that Benedict "officium suum refutavit" ("resigned his office"), doing so "sponte" ("willingly") and "ex consensu totius Conventus" ("according to the agreement of the whole Convent"), supported by the fact that "Permansit [...] consensu totius capituli, in Ecclesia Omnium Sanctorum in Fischergate apud Eboracum" ("he remained [...] by the agreement of the whole Chapter, in the Church of All Saints in Fishergate at York"), a cell of the Community.<sup>103</sup> It situated his resignation in the presence of Archbishop Henry Murdac, in his minster at Beverley.<sup>104</sup> It pre-empted any suggestion that the Archbishop had forced the election with the claim that the Chapter had sought his advice on a successor, and "Qui respondit eis, se non esse permissurum ut vel Abbatem eligerent vel alium praeter dominum Benedictum haberent, nisi totius Conventus providentia se consilio illius committeret, et unum eligerent de tribus personis quas eis nominaret." ("He responded to them he was not about to permit them either to elect an Abbot or have anyone except Lord Benedict, unless the whole Convent committed itself to his wise counsel, and elected one of three persons nominated by him.")<sup>105</sup> It implied that the remaining two candidates were as worthy as Richard by noting their subsequent election to abbatial office, and stated that "Fratres vero Witebienses, amicorum suorum consilio corroborati, tandem Priorem Ricardum sibi in Abbatem canonicamente elegerunt, quia didicerant illum virum esse prudentissimum et ex nobili prosapia ortum." ("The brothers of Whitby, supported by the counsel of their friends, at length canonically elected Prior Richard as Abbot, because they

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100 CW I 8.

101 FCW pl 009.

102 RSB, c. 64 (The election of an abbot).

103 CW I, 8.

104 CW I, 8.

105 CW I, 8–9.



learned that man was very prudent and originated from noble stock.”)<sup>106</sup> By relating that Prior Richard was only then taken to King Stephen for confirmation and homage, it deflected any suspicions about royal interference.<sup>107</sup> By claiming that the brethren of Peterborough had been reluctant to allow him to leave, that he had been a virtuous Benedictine abbot – kind (*benignus*), humble (*humilis*), generous (*largus*), discreet (*discretus*), and merciful (*misericos*) – that he had instructed them in the Rule, and that “Itaque qualiter vixerit, vel domum Domini correxerit in redditibus, et in aedificiis, et ecclesiis, possessionibusque acquirendis” (“Therefore just as he lived, he improved the house of the Lord with restorations, with buildings, and by acquiring churches and possessions”), it emphasized the wisdom of their choice.<sup>108</sup> It specified that he had increased the number of the monks from 36 to 38, listing them by name.<sup>109</sup>

The attention the author paid to the circumstances of Richard I’s election and the efforts to establish his reputation suggest he was speaking to some controversial context. That context was probably the disputed election of William Fitzherbert as archbishop of York.<sup>110</sup> Following Archbishop Thurstan’s death in 1140, this election became a crucible for tensions about the role of the papacy, kings, the episcopate, and individual Cathedral chapters, and about the necessary moral authority of candidates. William Fitzherbert was elected, but an appeal to Pope Innocent II in Rome accused Fitzherbert of an unchaste life and simony, and claimed royal intrusion.<sup>111</sup> The Pope delegated authority to Bishop Henry of Winchester, papal legate and King Stephen’s brother, and Bishop Robert of Hereford, requiring an oath of free election

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106 CW I, 9.

107 CW I, 9.

108 CW I, 9–10; RSB, esp. cc. 2 and 64 on the qualities of an abbot, and more particularly cc. 3.7–11, 7.55, 64.20–22, 66.8 (following and teaching the Rule); 2.21, 3.4, 5.1, 7 (*humilitas*); 64.18–19 (*discretio*); 64.9–10 (*miseritordia*); 32 (maintaining the property of the monastery).

109 CW I, 10; Compare RSB, c. 2.38: “Whatever the number of brothers he [the abbot] has in his care, let him realize that on judgment day he will surely have to submit a reckoning to the Lord for all their souls [...]”.

110 David Knowles, The Case of St William of York, in: Cambridge Historical Journal 5 (1935–1937), 162–177, reprinted in his *The Historian and Character*, Cambridge 1963, 212–241; Derek Baker, *Viri religiosi* and the York Election Dispute, in: Geoffrey J. Cumming/David Baker (eds.), *Councils and Assemblies. Studies in Church History* 7, Cambridge 1971, 87–100; Derek Baker, *San Bernardo e l’elezione di York*, in: *Studi su S. Bernardo di Chiaravalle, Convegno Internazionale Firenze* 1974, Rome 1975, 115–180; Dalton, *Conquest* (1994), 221–227; Christopher Norton, *St William of York*, Woodbridge 2006, 76–148; Emilia Jamrozak, *The Cistercians, Eugenius III, and the Disputed York Election*, in: *Fonnesberg/Jotischky, Pope Eugenius*, 2018, 101–124.

111 Bruno Scott James (trans.), *The Letters of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, London 1953, nos. 187–194; John of Hexham, *continuatio Historia Regum*, s.a. 1142, in: Thomas Arnold (ed.), *Symeonis monachi opera omnia*, 2 vols., Durham 1882–1885, II; William of Newburgh, *Historia Regum*, i.17, in: Richard Howlett (ed.), *Chronicles of the Reign of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, *Rolls Series* 82, Vol. 1, London 1884–1189.

from the Dean of York and an oath of innocence from Fitzherbert.<sup>112</sup> Bishop Henry convened a court in Winchester, but apparently used a forged letter to adjust the Pope's requirements and marshalled oaths of support from the Bishop of Orkney, the Abbot of St Mary's, York, and Abbot Benedict of Whitby, before Fitzherbert was consecrated.<sup>113</sup> Pope Innocent died, Bishop Henry's term as legate expired, then Innocent's successors died in close succession, Celestine II in March 1144 and Lucius II in February 1145. Having sought his pallium from Pope Eugenius III but been condemned by Bernard of Clairvaux, Fitzherbert retreated to Sicily in 1147, and Henry Murdac, abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Fountains, was elected in July and consecrated in December 1147, before Fitzherbert was formally deposed in March 1148, and retired to Winchester.<sup>114</sup> After the deaths of Pope Eugenius and Archbishop Henry in 1153, Fitzherbert was elected as archbishop in 1154, but died suddenly, prompting rumours of foul play and generating a cult.<sup>115</sup> The desire to tell the story of Benedict's resignation from Whitby and Richard I's election could derive more generally from concerns about proper election. Nevertheless, it seems possible that it stemmed from the particular role of Benedict in the controversial council of Winchester, and from the coincidence between the deposition of his favoured candidate in March 1148 and his own resignation in Lent 1148, overseen by his favoured candidate's replacement. The popularity of Fitzherbert's cult at York makes it likely that the details of the controversy were remembered when Abbot Richard II was elected in 1176.

### The context(s) and purpose(s) of folios 1r–4v

The collection of texts in the *Abbot's Book*, folios 1r–4v, seem complementary. The abbatial oath established the principles by which abbots might be judged. The abbatial election story established the legitimate process by which Abbot Benedict had resigned in 1148 and Abbot Richard I was elected; it spoke to the terms of this oath, suggesting Richard was a good Benedictine abbot, observing the Rule and instructing others in it, particularly in keeping and teaching humility, and increasing the number of monks. The book list illustrated his effectiveness in overseeing the acqui-

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112 James, *Letters*, 1953, nos 195–198; John of Hexham, *continuatio Historia Regum*, s.a. 1144.

113 *Ibid.*, nos 199–204; John of Hexham, *continuatio Historia Regum*, s.a. 1144; Knowles, *Case* (1935–1937), 82–88.

114 *Ibid.*, nos 205–208; John of Hexham, *continuatio Historia Regum*, s.a. 1147–1148; William of Newburgh, *Historia Regum*, i.17; *Narratio de Fundatione Fontanis Monasterii*, in: John R. Walbran (ed.), *Memorials of the Abbey of St. Mary of Fountains*, vol. 1, Durham 1962, 1–129, at 97–103.

115 John of Hexham, *continuatio Historia Regum*, s.a. 1154; William of Newburgh, *Historia Regum*, i.17. For the cult: Norton, *St. William*, 2006, 149–201.

sition and copying of manuscripts. The refoundation story with property lists fitted his abbacy into the Community's Benedictine tradition and demonstrated his effectiveness in managing its property portfolio, separating out lists of property acquired by the 1140s from those acquired by the 1170s and focusing on responsibilities. The book list and refoundation story with property lists related to the second promise of the oath – retaining the Community's property to put it to good use. This reads like an *apologia* for the election and abbacy of Richard I compiled sometime soon after the election of his successor Abbot Richard II in 1176. The author would perhaps have known of other historical pamphlets composed in the twelfth century, whose genre and purposes are difficult to pigeon hole, some of which probably circulated, forming the basis for longer histories.<sup>116</sup>

## Cultures of listing

A bureaucratic interpretation of the Whitby *Abbot's Book*, folios 1r–4v, is superficially attractive. The book list and the refoundation story with property lists were composed in an institution by officials governed by rules, with specialist training, and subject to hierarchical accountability; our ability to identify the conventions behind them results from this context. Royal lordship and its cultures of accountability presented circumstances that could cause the composition of refoundation stories with summary lists of property: royal accessions prompted tenants-in-chief to secure royal confirmations of property; abbatial interregna resulted in the escheating of lands to the king. A mutually reinforcing story of refoundation and lists of property could be useful on both occasions. Ecclesiastical administration and its cultures of accountability could have generated book lists. Occasional episcopal visitations, the election and arrival of a new abbot, and the continuous abbatial oversight of book acquisition and copying through the Prior and Precentor could require book lists. These royal and ecclesiastical cultures of administration and accountability could also be imagined to lie behind the compilation of this pamphlet combining a book list, a refoundation story with lists of properties, an abbatial oath, and an abbatial election story. Elements of what James C. Scott described as “seeing like a state” may be observed in the lists: the tendency to render a messy reality legible for bureaucratic or institutional purposes, such as simplifying a complex manuscript collection through broad categorizations and selective details of authorship and title,

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116 Richard Sharpe, Symeon as Pamphleteer, in: David Rollason (ed.), *Symeon of Durham, Historian of Durham and the North*, Stamford 1998, 214–229.

or reducing the social and legal complexities of charters to focus on donor, place, and responsibilities.<sup>117</sup>

Yet a bureaucratic interpretation is only superficially attractive because of the limitations of these lists for bureaucratic accountability. The book list includes no mechanism for tracking books. Its abbreviated entries require esoteric knowledge to deduce the contents of volumes. Its form, layout, and inconsistent categories undermine its utility as a catalogue. The refoundation story with lists of properties lacks externally verifiable features to establish the authenticity of the text or its claims to ownership, or a system to facilitate checking against charters. If we are to understand the culture which produced these folios, such limitations require us to abandon older traditions of constitutional or institutional history and take inspiration from what John Sabapathy calls the “new administrative history”, distinguishing between political thought and political thinking, and recovering political thinking through practice.<sup>118</sup> Considered individually or within these folios, any crude distinctions between the elements – narrative and list, history and documentary record – immediately break down: the refoundation story and lists of properties are mutually reinforcing textual strategies, simplifying and selecting information in the same act of persuasion; the book list, refoundation story with lists of properties, and abbatial election story are complementary texts speaking to the abbatial election oath. They reveal a culture focused on moral accountability, consistent with the principles of moral persuasion at work in historical writing.

Ultimately, the contents of the Whitby *Abbot's Book*, folios 1r–4v, may belong to a culture of institutional memory rather than bureaucratic accountability. In a reassessment of approaches to monastic texts, Tom O'Donnell observes that the concept of memory helps us to retain insights derived from analyses of monastic mentalities, genres, and discourses, whilst embracing the variety of monastic ideals and institutions.<sup>119</sup> Memory enables us to explore “how the monastic life, in different times and places, encouraged different forms’ juxtaposition and mutual influence”, and discover the dialogue between individual and institutional concerns as well as the counter-intentional aspects of texts.<sup>120</sup> It allows us to observe the transformation of personal memories through recasting the personal past as *exemplum*;<sup>121</sup> or dialogues

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117 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a state: how certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*, London 1998.

118 Sabapathy, *Officers*, 10–19.

119 Thomas O'Donnell, *Monastic History-Writing and Memory in Britain and Ireland. A Methodological Approach*, in: Philip Knox/Kellie Robertson/Wendy Scase/Laura Ashe (eds.), *New Medieval Literatures* 19, Woodbridge 2019, 43–88.

120 O'Donnell, *Monastic*, 48–54, quotation at 51.

121 O'Donnell, *Monastic*, 67–74.

between memories of the world and the Community;<sup>122</sup> or examples of memories of the neighbourhood, requiring input from, and addressed to, neighbours.<sup>123</sup> These folios reveal personal, collective, and social memories in dialogue with one another, the world, and the neighbourhood.

The refoundation story about Reinfrid's vocation presumably originated with personal memories about his transition from soldier to monk, but omitted details related in a text in the Community's book list to emphasise local context. The refoundation story also mentioned the local circumstances of Reinfrid's death:

Transactis igitur plurimis annorum curriculis, cum quoque causa monasterii sui iter ageret, venit ad Ormesbricge, ubi artifices faciebant pontem trans Derwentum; et desiliens equo ut illos adiuuaret, incaute lignum super ipsum cecidit, et confracto cerebro, mox extremum exalavit spiritum. Cuius corpusculum perductum est ad Hachanos, sepultumque in cimiterio Sancti Petri Apostoli in medio parietis orientalis contra altare.<sup>124</sup>

(Consequently, with the course of many years having been completed, when he was making a journey also by reason of his monastery, he came to *Ormsbridge*, where craftspeople were making a bridge over the Derwent; and dismounting the horse so that he might help them, unguarded wood fell on him, and with his skull having been broken, soon he breathed his last breath.)

Such details seem unnecessary to the story's broader strategies. Because the story omits the complications of the early history of the Community surrounding a move to Hackness and fails to explain that the River Derwent runs through Hackness, these details are obscure without local knowledge. This story similarly provided no context for the death of William de Percy in Jerusalem, perhaps because it was well known locally, leaving us to speculate on chronological grounds that it was during the First Crusade. At one point the appeal to local collective or social memory is explicit. The story relates that when Reinfrid arrived at Whitby, "Erant enim tunc temporis in eadem villa [*Prestby*], ut antiqui patriotae nobis retulerunt, monasteria vel oratoria paene quadraginta; tantum parietes et altaria vacua et discooperta remanserant propter destructionem exercitus piratarum." ("There were at that time in the same vill, as old inhabitants have recalled to us, almost forty monasteries or oratories; as many walls and altars remained empty and exposed because of the destroying pirate army.")<sup>125</sup> This reliance on local knowledge extended to the lists of properties: only someone with knowledge of the landscape of northern England could follow the fact that the third and fourth paragraphs proceeded spatially.

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122 O'Donnell, *Monastic*, 74–78.

123 O'Donnell, *Monastic*, 78–85.

124 CW I, 2,

125 CW I, 1.

The book list reveals the operation of collective memory within the Community and the interplay between local and universal history. Consistent with the assumption that a single holy life was refracted through the lives of many saints, the book list includes a collection of the *vitae* of local and universal saints. The local saints are Hild, who founded the original Community at *Streoneshalh*, and Cuthbert, prior of Melrose and abbot and bishop of Lindisfarne, whose *vitae* included two miracles concerning Hild's successor, Ælflæd.<sup>126</sup> The book list described the *vita* of Hild as *Liber Tomae de Sancta Hilda*, 'The Book of Thomas about Saint Hild', and the "T" of "Tomae" is illuminated.<sup>127</sup> No early *vita* of Hild survives. There are reasons to think that the Whitby Community translated relics of St Hild from Glastonbury to Whitby sometime between ca. 1134 and ca. 1175, establishing a feast day on this translation date.<sup>128</sup> This translation is a possible impetus for composition of a *vita*. The *Liber Tomae* itself no longer survives, but there are reasons to think it was composed at Whitby, where Bede's story of Hild was rearranged and combined with additional miracles current amongst the local population, and that it was the basis for two later *vitae* of Hild, an Anglo-Latin poem and notes made by an antiquarian at Whitby.<sup>129</sup> The Thomas in question cannot securely be identified, but might be the Prior Thomas mentioned in the abbatial election story, in post under Abbot Richard I, and the only Thomas listed amongst the monks present at Richard I's death. The book list also included regional histories pertinent to the Community, such as Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, which told of its original foundation, and Symeon of Durham's *Libellus de exordio*, which told the story of Aldwin, Elfwy, and Reinfrid, and its refoun-

126 Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, iii.24–25, iv.23–24; Anon., *Vita Cuthberti*, iii.6, iv.10, and Bede, *Vita Cuthberti Prosa*, cc. 23–24,34, both in: Bertram Colgrave (ed.), *Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert*, Cambridge 1940.

127 FCW pl 002.

128 William of Malmesbury, who finished writing ca. 1134, related that Hild's relics had been taken from Whitby to Glastonbury in the tenth century: William of Malmesbury, *De Antiquitate*, in: John Scott (ed.), *The Early History of Glastonbury*, Woodbridge 2009, c. 21; R. A. B. Mynors/Rodney Thomson/Michael Winterbottom (eds.), *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Oxford 1998, 2002, I, c. 50, 54; Michael Winterbottom/Rodney Thomson (eds.), *William of Malmesbury, Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, Oxford 2007, ii.91.8 and iii.116.2. Hugh Candidus, who accompanied Abbot Richard I to Whitby on his election and finished writing ca. 1175, located them by then 'on Esk', meaning Whitby: William T. Mellows (ed.), *Hugh Candidus, Chronicon*, London 1949, 63. Twelfth-century documents reveal two feast days, one on the feast of translation on 25 August, presumably relating to this translation: A. D. H. Leadman, *St Hilda*, in: *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 17 (1903), 33–49; George Buchannan, *The Feast Days of St Hilda*, in: *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 17 (1903), 249–253.

129 The earliest version of the *vita* is preserved in British Library MS Landsdowne 436/2, folio 105b, an early fourteenth-century collection of English saints' lives known as the Romsey Legendary. A slightly later version is preserved in John of Tynemouth's later fourteenth-century *Sanctilogium*, edited in Carl Horstman, *Nova Legenda Anglie*, 2 vols., Oxford 1901, vol. 2, 29–33. For the poem and this argument, see Rigg, Latin.

dation.<sup>130</sup> The organization of the book list rested on a tradition of monastic book listing and book use that slotted these local *vitae* and regional histories into universal cosmologies, histories, and theologies, employing them liturgically, scattering them throughout the categories and groups, and intermingling them with other works. The illumination of the book list picked out a mixture of local and universal works – Bede’s *Historia ecclesiastica* and his commentaries on the apocalypse and the seven Catholic epistles; *vitae* of Mary, Andrew, Firmin and Fidis, Hild, and Cuthbert; works on the *Imago mundi* and Gildas and the nature of man; works on the offices and music; Caesarius’ homilies; and works pertinent to the Liberal Arts by Avianus, Cato, Priscian, Plato, and Virgil.<sup>131</sup>

Indeed, the culture of collective memory perhaps shaped the compilation or composition of these folios as a whole. Whether they resulted from a compilation or a single composition, the refoundation story with lists of properties preceded and was available to the copier of the abbatial oath and author of the abbatial election story. The copying or composing of the refoundation story might have inspired features of the abbatial election story, explaining parallels. The structure and contents of the refoundation story are mirrored in the abbatial election narrative: the circumstances of a prior’s or abbot’s appointment, the worthiness of that appointment, his Benedictine virtues, the increase in the number of monks, and the details of death and burial. Both texts appealed to collective memory within the Community, as we have seen for the refoundation story, and as we can observe in the way the abbatial election story narrates the death of Abbot Richard I.

Viginti denique vi. annis et mensibus vii., diebus quindecim, in regimine pastoralis transactis, post diuturnos et magnos languores, ad diem pervenit ultimum. Post gallorum quidem cantus, accepto viatico sacro sanctae communionis, circa ortum diei, circu-astante ei Domino Thoma Priore, cum caeteris fratribus quos ut pius pater foverat, educaverat, et regulari institutione informaverat, dormivit cum patribus suis, kalendis Januarii anno ab incarnatione Domini mclxxv., sepultusque est, quarto die, ab eisdem fratribus, in Capitulo quod ipse aedificaverat, iuxta Dominum Abbatem Willielmum.<sup>132</sup>

(Finally, having spent twenty-six years, seven months, and fifteen days in pastoral direction, after lengthy and great illnesses, he reached his last day. After cock-crow, having received Holy Communion, around day break, with Lord Thomas the Prior and the rest of the brothers, who that pious father nurtured, educated, and instructed in the manner of the Rule, standing around him, he slept with his fathers,

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130 B109.8; B109.32. Bede, *Historia ecclesiastica*, iii.24–25, iv.23–24; Symeon of Durham, *De exordio*, iii.21–22.

131 FCW pl 002.

132 CW I, 9–10.

on the Kalends of January in the year from the incarnation of the Lord 1175, and he was buried, on the fourth day, by the same brothers, in the Chapter which he himself had built, next to the Lord Abbot William.)

This passage is followed by the list of the 38 monks he left behind. This account of the death and burial is situated within the Community's sense of liturgical time and space. Its detail on the location and juxtaposition of the burials links the refoundation story, which ends with the abbacy of William I, to the abbatial election story, and links the lives and deaths of the first and previous abbots of the Community, collapsing them together in liturgical time and physical space, and adding weight to the claim that Richard I had brought into order the house of the Lord with restorations and buildings. The link between the building and the burials, as well as the list of monks, were strategies appealing to, and shaping, collective and social memory, since only members of the Community and those in its neighbourhood had the necessary knowledge for them to act as supporting evidence.

## Conclusions

Echoing Patrick Geary's arguments about the origins of cartularies, this analysis of the Whitby *Abbot's Book*, folios 1r–4v, suggests that we should look not to a Weberian culture of bureaucratic accountability, but to a monastic culture of moral accountability, shaped by, appealing to, and contributing to a monastic culture of memory.<sup>133</sup> Tempting as it might be, through synecdoche, to see this one instance as representative of a whole, it cannot claim to explain the origins of early medieval listing. Any attempt to extrapolate a universal culture of early medieval listing from one case study is in conflict with the approaches to the 'new administrative history' and monastic memory adopted here: from different perspectives they ask us to begin with texts revealing practice in place, to reveal multiple cultures of political thinking, or to explore myriad examples of specific constellations of personal, collective, and social memories, mixing the local with the universal. Instead, this case study simply appeals for more studies of listing in its manuscript contexts. When lists are restored to their manuscript contexts, this case study suggests it will often be difficult to think of them as artefacts of bureaucracy, as products of pragmatic needs, or as documents or records. Considered in context, it will often be hard to see where story ends and list begins, because stories and lists transform things into socially defined relational objects, writing histories through acts of representation. Like

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133 Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and oblivion at the end of the first millennium*, Princeton 1994, esp. 81–114.



Daniel Lord Smail's work on the inventories of later medieval Marseille, the analysis of early medieval lists may allow us to explore other cultures of organization and accountability, highlighting how things can be done effectively on the basis of local knowledge, and freeing us from any assumption that we have to "see like a state" to be efficient.<sup>134</sup>

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134 Daniel Lord Smail, *Imaginary Cartographies. Possession and identity in late medieval Marseille*, Ithaca/London 2000.