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978-0-521-07288-5 - The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot

Edited by Z. N. Brooke

Excerpt

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE MANUSCRIPTS

This book is an attempt to bring together, in a single critical edition, all the letters and charters of Gilbert Foliot, abbot of Gloucester (1139–48), bishop of Hereford (1148–63) and London (1163–87), which we have been able to discover. Most of the charters have been gathered from the usual sources, from collections of originals and from cartularies in the national collections, in local record offices and cathedral muniment rooms; a few have been preserved in the Archives Départementales of France.¹ But a number of the charters, and all but a handful of the letters, are to be found in Bodleian MS E Musaco 249 (27835), our MS B. This manuscript inevitably forms the chief basis of our edition, and we believe it to have been written, in part at least, in Gilbert Foliot's own scriptorium. It contains both letters and charters, and so is itself one of many factors which decided us to include charters as well as letters; it also illustrates another, namely the difficulty of distinguishing clearly between letters and charters. We do not pretend to have been entirely consistent. A basic distinction has to be made on grounds of form—charters have the formal elements discussed below,² and conclude with sealing clauses or the like and witness lists; letters have their own, more informal rules of diplomatic, never have sealing clauses or witness lists,³ and end with *Valete* or the equivalent. Frequently, however, letters were sent on formal business, and in a few cases we have deliberately included a charter among the letters or a letter among the charters to avoid breaking a group of documents dealing with a single case or theme.⁴ It is none the less convenient to keep them (for the most part) separate. The majority of the letters can be arranged (up to a point) chronologically, and have some personal element in them; often a group of letters illustrates a great issue—and groups of letters dealing with the Cerne dispute or with some particular aspect of the quarrel with Thomas Becket must in any case be placed together. We have divided the charters between the three main periods of Gilbert's official career—as abbot, as bishop of Hereford and as bishop of London. Most of them cannot be closely dated within those periods, and are most conveniently arranged by religious houses and the like from whose muniments they come; only so can like be placed with like and any semblance of reason be put into their order.⁵

¹ For a full list of sources, see Index of Manuscripts.

² Chapter II.

³ Except for no. 13, which incorporates the will of Gunni of Stanton.

⁴ E.g. no. 153 (a charter among the letters); no. 347 (a letter among the charters).

⁵ Religious houses, etc., from whose muniments they come are arranged in alphabetical order, as in the comparable collections by Professor Saltman of Theobald's *acta* and by Dr Mayr-Harting of those of the bishops of Chichester. Several arbitrary decisions have had to be made as to which of two houses to attach an agreement to; and the charters in MS B have been distributed about the collection, where they seemed most reasonably to belong, although all derive from Gilbert's archives.

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The manuscripts of the letters fall into two groups: those which emanated from Gilbert Foliot's own *familia* or circle, or derived from collections made in his household; and manuscripts containing the correspondence of the Becket controversy. The latter provide us with texts of only a handful of Gilbert's letters; but they include the most interesting of all his letters, the celebrated attack on Becket, *Multiplicem nobis*,¹ and they form a link with one of the most remarkable and interesting groups of letter collections of the period.

Bodleian E Musaeo 249 (27835)—B

B is a comparatively small book—now $8 \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in.² (written space *c.* $4 \times 6\frac{1}{2}/7\frac{1}{2}$)—of xviii + 207 leaves (fos. i–vi, viii–xviii, 207 paper, fos. vii, 1–206 vellum). It is written in a variety of hands of approximately the third quarter of the twelfth century, with initials and other details in red, green and blue; on fos. 122 v ff. there are marginalia in red. Details of quires and hands, and an analysis of the contents of the MS, are given in table B.

The contents fall into six main groups.

(1) Fos. 1–62 v. 165 letters ranging in date from 1140 to 1169 (or later), the first 142 (to fo. 47 v) in a single book-hand (hand II); other hands then take over, most of the later additions being in a charter-hand which recurs in every section of the book, which we call hand I. It seems likely, however, that these additions came from the same source as some at least of the later letters in this group copied by hand II, since London letters in both hands overlap the collection represented by the Douce MS (D: see p. 14). But this does not mean that all the letters in this section form a homogeneous group. Hand II opens the book with no. 1, 'A te longe positi. . .'; hand I³ has added the heading 'Epistole uenerabilis Gilleberti Hereford(ensis) episcopi: epistolam hanc domno Radulfo decano Hereford(ensi) transmisit'. It is strange that hand I should call Gilbert bishop of Hereford in a collection containing London letters. Closer examination of section 1, however, shows that there is a notable break in the chronological sequence *c.* 1153–61: these years are represented by very few letters; none certainly later than 1153⁴ occurs before fo. 31; fos. 31–5 v have a small group of the 1150's; on fo. 36 there is half a column blank, and from then on there is only one document (a charter of Gilbert's predecessor as bishop of Hereford attached to Gilbert's own confirmation of it) which can be proved earlier than 1161. Thus the first part of section 1 seems to contain a collection made while Gilbert was bishop of Hereford, and this is confirmed by comparison with MSS R and H (below, p. 13), which also contain some part of the same collection; the rest of section 1 is based on materials also underlying MS D (below, pp. 14 ff.).

(2) Fos. 63–6 form an insertion: a detached quire of vellum of a coarse quality not found elsewhere, containing an anonymous sermon (Giles, no. 287) which may be by Gilbert, but cannot be proved to have any connexion with him, and three blank leaves. Section 2 itself runs from fo. 67 to fo. 111 v (fos. 112–14 v are blank), and, like section 1, consists of a substantial group of documents in a single book-hand, hand III, with additions in two or three

¹ See *GF*, pp. 167 ff. and below, pp. 20f.

² The margins of many of the leaves have been cut back by the binder(s), sometimes quite severely. It is in double column except for fos. 63–5, 115–20 v, 122 v–129, 199–200.

³ This identification is not quite certain.

⁴ And only five which could possibly be later than 1153.

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hands, mainly in hand I. It opens, like MS D, with an account of the controversy between Henry II and Becket known as the *Summa cause*¹ and Frederick Barbarossa's invitation to Henry II to the council of Pavia (1160) which confirmed Frederick's anti-pope. The group of documents in hand III is very closely related to MS D: see below, p. 15.

(3) Section 3 (fos. 115–36v) consists mainly of the decretal collection known as the *Collectio Belverensis*, which fills most of two quires (xvi and xvii, fos. 121–36v); prefixed to it is another quire of papal letters, relating to the Becket controversy and especially to Gilbert's role in it (quire xv, fos. 115–20v). Quire xv is in hand VIII, with at least one addition in hand I; with the *Belverensis* we return to hand III, the scribe of section 2; as usual, there are additions in other hands, mainly in hand I. The *Belverensis* has been analysed by Dr Duggan² and discussed in *GF*, pp. 230–4.³

(4) Section 4 consists of two quires (xviii and xix, fos. 137–52v), written in one or two hands (IV and IV a), with additions at the end of each quire by hand I. The material mostly belongs to the 1160's (1160–c. 1173/4); eleven of the items, out of 49, occur elsewhere—an exceptionally high proportion—and one more is repeated within the section. Some items also occur in D, but there is no such relationship with D as occurs in section 2.

(5) Section 5, consisting of three quires (xx–xxii, fos. 153–76v), is similar in character to section 1: it contains letters by Gilbert alone⁴ ranging in date from 1145 to c. 1177.⁵ It is noteworthy that the only overlap between these letters and section 1 occurs in two letters (nos. 34, 43) which are here disguised by a protocol making them belong to the Hereford instead of the Gloucester period; and also that, with the exception of these two and two other letters wrongly attributed to London instead of to Hereford, the scribe has carefully segregated the letters between Gilbert's two episcopates. There is no other indication of chronological order within this section; and since we know that section 1 was based on an earlier collection, it is clear that section 5 was put together as a supplement of Gilbert Foliot's own letters not in section 1. It is written in hand II d with the usual supplements in hand I.

(6) After quire xxii a quire is missing (see below, p. 4); section 6 (fos. 177–206v) consists of a miscellany, possibly always intended as a supplement to 1 and 5, but more varied in character, with some overlap with section 4. The first hand in this group, III b, completed his work on fo. 189 with a group of letters related to a group also in D. A few lines were left blank, then hand I took over, completed the quire⁶ and added another—the only one which is entirely his work. Most of these letters are Gilbert's, or at least passed under Gilbert's name, since many from this section are charters. As the section advances, the items become more fragmentary and anonymous, and there are a fair number which seem to belong to the world of rough drafts and formularies.⁷ On the verso of the final leaf of this quire another hand, not to be found elsewhere, embarked on Gilbert's masterpiece, *Multiplicem*, which he completed in one further quire. As in D, Gilbert's name is prudently suppressed; but in D it takes its place in an approximately chronological framework. Here it is

¹ *MB*, IV, 201 ff.

² Duggan, pp. 155 ff., cf. pp. 71 ff.

³ Precision of analysis is made more difficult in this case by the complex interweaving of different hands (see table B).

⁴ With the exception of two letters of Becket (*MB Epp.* 154, 219) and possibly one or two letters at the end of the section whose authorship is not quite certain.

⁵ Or later: 16 out of the 62 items cannot be dated closely to 1177 or before.

⁶ Fos. 193 and 194 are attached to the end of quire xxv. They are in hand I, but it cannot be proved that this was their original position.

⁷ See especially the items in Appendix VI, nos. 5–23.

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added as an afterthought. Since it was clearly copied from the materials used in section 2 (see pp. 14–15), and begins in a quire on which hand I had already inserted his final gleanings, it seems reasonable to assume that the afterthought was part of the original composition of the book, not a later addition made years afterwards (see pp. 20–1).

Apart from *Multiplicem*, hand I's contribution to section 6 is the conclusion of the book; and indeed he has filled in blank spaces in every section, so that his presence is (after the common links with Gilbert himself) the unifying factor in the collection. It is therefore fortunate that we can identify him as a scribe employed to write at least three of Gilbert's original charters: his hand wrote no. 422 and both surviving originals of no. 391; possibly also no. 466. It is possible that the scribe of any one or two of Gilbert's charters might have been employed for the occasion, or by the beneficiary; but when we find him treating a substantial collection of Gilbert's letters in the way hand I treats MS B, and especially when we find him filling a whole quire at the end with what can reasonably be described as the scourings of the bishop's office, we can be confident that he was a clerk in Gilbert's household. This does not establish that the whole of B was written in the *familia*. No other identifications can be made with any show of probability, and the book-hands, in whole or part, may represent professional scribes employed for this purpose. But there can be no reasonable doubt that with the probable exception of fos. 63–6 the whole book represents collections and materials available in the bishop's household; that the enterprise was supervised and partly executed by his clerks; that the author of hand I, who wrote with authority, reckoned himself the director of the enterprise. It sits on the surface of the document that the office whose files it reproduces was still in being, and we shall see reason presently for dating the completion of the manuscripts some years before Gilbert's death. One may doubt whether hand I would have acted as it did without the bishop's support. How much Gilbert was involved in the composition of the book we cannot tell; but it is reasonable to suppose that he took an interest at least in what seems to have been the preparation of a definitive collection of his letters and of other materials relating to his career.

The order and later history of B

At the end of most of the quires there is a trace of a number written in the thirteenth century—and perhaps in two or three cases trace of a yet earlier number; but none of these can now be read. These quire numbers show that the manuscript was bound up in the thirteenth century as it is now; but they also show that, unless a mistake was made in numbering the quires, there is one missing, probably between fos. 176 and 177 (quire xxiii); the nature of the material in quires xxii and xxiv makes it impossible to conjecture with any precision what has been lost.

With the exception of fos. 63–6 the manuscript is clearly a unity; apart from the relation which all sections bear to Gilbert Foliot, all other quires either contain some documents written by hand I or have always been attached to quires in which he wrote. We can be clear that what we now have all passed under the eye of the scribe of hand I and (almost certainly) was written in Gilbert's lifetime.

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There is, however, a difficulty in supposing that the manuscript retains its original order or the character first conceived for it. The quire numbers show that its present order has a venerable antiquity, and it is possible, even likely, that it was never actually bound in any other order. The continuity of quires i–vii, ix–xiv, xvi–xvii, xx–xxii, xxiv–xxv, xxvi–xxvii is guaranteed by the fact that the breaks all occur in the middle of a letter or other document.¹ Catchwords link quires v–vi, vi–vii, vii–viii. Thus we are left with the following blocks of quires: i–viii, ix–xiv, xv, xvi–xvii, xviii, xix, xx–xxii (xxiii missing), xxiv–xxv, xxvi–xxvii. Nothing so far forbids us from concluding that the book is bound up in its original order. But at the end of quire viii there occurs the catchword *Th'*, which should mean (in view of the nature of the collection) that the next quire opened with a letter of Archbishop Thomas. The only quires so beginning (or opening with any word which could be abbreviated *Th'*) are viii itself and xviii, where the opening *Thomas* has been cancelled and replaced by *Teodbaldus* in another hand. It is, of course, possible that the catchword was an error, or that it referred to a quire now lost; but it is much more likely that quire viii was originally intended to be followed by quire xviii. It is noteworthy that the intervening quires form sections 2 and 3; that section 3 (papal letters and the *Collectio Belverensis*) is the most heterogeneous in the book; and that section 2, closely parallel to MS D, can be shown to have existed as a separate collection before B was compiled (see p. 15). The same is true of the first part of section 1. The evidence, none the less, strongly suggests that the whole book was originally conceived as a supplement to a copy of the earlier collection represented by the nucleus of section 1, and that sections 2 and 3 were not part of the original design.

It is possible that sections 2 and 3 were originally intended to go after quire xix or at the end. But this is hardly probable: the whole book gains in coherence if they are omitted, and there are strong grounds for supposing that the end of the book, like the beginning, is that originally intended. The manuscript opens with the same group of letters as the other manuscripts representing Gilbert's earliest surviving collection (see p. 13); this is clearly the original opening. The manuscript closes with two quires, the first written solely by hand I—the only quire in which he was not content to fill in blank leaves of a quire begun by another scribe²—which was completed by the scribe of *Multiplacem*, who added the second quire and left $2\frac{3}{4}$ pages blank at the end. This is the only part of the manuscript in which there is more than one leaf blank, save for the intrusive quire between sections 1 and 2 and the conclusion of section 2. It seems clear that it was the original conclusion of the book.

¹ In a few cases this could, of course, be due to later filling in; but since it is clear that on the whole the various hands did their work at much the same time this does not seriously affect our argument. The catchword linking quires vii and viii is 'Th(omas)': this could be a link to quire xviii, but see below.

² This is not, of course, wholly watertight: it is hypothetically possible that here or there is a quire whose final leaves he filled before the early leaves were written on (though such a hypothesis would be more probable if there were signs of the sort of difficulty this operation would make for the scribes of the earlier leaves), and at least one quire is missing.

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This would suggest that hand I found the book in loose quires: that he took sections 1, 4–6 and himself filled blank spaces in the quires, finally adding a new quire of his own at the end and leaving it to the scribe of *Multiplacem* to complete the work. There are, however, two reasons for doubting if this is an adequate account of his work. The first is that sections 2 and 3, though very probably intrusive to the original design, also show signs of his work. He treated them, in fact, exactly as he treated the other quires written by his fellow scribes—he filled the blank spaces. We can hardly doubt that sections 2 and 3 were part of the same enterprise as the rest of the book—added, that is, not much later than the rest; and this is confirmed by the fact that they were written on sheets of vellum of the same size as the rest¹ and could be fitted in without great incongruity. Whether the book was bound up in Gilbert's lifetime is impossible to say—possibly the disappearance of quire xxiii suggests that it was not; on the other hand, it is a little difficult to understand how so much survived in such good shape after the death of the bishop and the dispersal of his household if it was not bound, and a quire can easily have been lost in a later rebinding.

B must have been written for Gilbert and we may presume that it remained within his household until his death. It contains several medieval inscriptions: two establish that it was once in the library of Westminster abbey, another that it was presented to Belvoir priory by Prior William of Belvoir.² The Westminster inscriptions are earlier in character than those from Belvoir, and probably belong to the mid thirteenth century. Those from Belvoir associate the manuscript with a group of surviving books presented by Prior William of Belvoir to his priory, all of which have very similar inscriptions of the fourteenth century.³ The prior probably (though not certainly) held office in the mid fourteenth century. B also contains a finely written eighteenth-century inscription, in the hand of Bodley's Librarian of the day, which records that Sir Thomas Cave, of Stanford Hall in Leicestershire,⁴ presented the book to the Bodleian; it is dated 1754.

¹ Though this may have been a standard size for a work of this kind made in or commissioned by Gilbert's office.

² *Westminster*: fo. 67 (top, half cut away) and fo. 206v: 'S.X. Pe. 7 Ed. West.' (cf. Ker, p. 196).

Belvoir: fo. 1 (top): '...de Beluero' (in red, cut away); (foot) 'Hunc (?) librum dedit fr. Willelmus de Beluero prior eiusdem ecclesie Deo et beate Marie de Beluero, quem qui alienauerit uel titulum (?) deleuerit anathema sit. Anima dicti Willelmi et anime omnium fidelium defunctorum requiescant in pace amen'; fo. 89v (foot, in a different hand): 'Hic est liber sancte Marie de Beluero, quem qui alienauerit anathema sit.'

For other additions, see p. 11 n. There are a few 'Nota' signs in the margin (see p. 11); a number of sixteenth–eighteenth-century interpretations or corrections of words; and two verses (= Walther, *Initia*, nos. 12100, 16256) and the opening of a prayer on fo. 206v. (thirteenth–fourteenth century).

³ Ker, p. 230, and below, p. 7n.

⁴ Unlike his father, who incurred large debts in horse-racing, Sir Thomas Cave (the fifth baronet, 1712–78) had been a fellow commoner of Balliol and was a man of scholarly tastes. He was chairman of the committee which sponsored the publication of Bridge's *Hist. of Northamptonshire* and collected materials which were used in Nichols' *Hist. of Leicestershire*—including the Belvoir material (from Gale MSS, now in Trinity Coll., Cambridge) in Peck's transcript in BM Add. MS 4936, one of a group presented to the BM by Cave (Sir L. Namier

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Prior William's gifts of books to his priory included a copy of Aimo of Fleury's *Historia Francorum*, formerly at Winchester, a copy of a set of Notule on the Pentateuch and a copy of William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Pontificum* whose earlier history is unknown, and a copy of an *Ysagoge in Theologiam* formerly at Cerne.¹ Of these, the last is the most interesting to us, since the book is dedicated to Gilbert Foliot and was written in his lifetime. It is possible that this was the dedication copy, and that, like B, it came from his *familia*. But if so, it came by a different route. Thus there emerges the picture of a Benedictine monk with access to the libraries of other Benedictine houses and with an interest in twelfth-century books—and in particular, it seems, in Gilbert Foliot. The reasons for his interest seem to be beyond conjecture.

The date of MS B

It will be convenient to lay out the range of date of the documents contained in each section, distinguishing the dates² of the letters in the main hand of the section (a), in other hands apart from hand I (b), and in hand I (c).

1. (a) 142 letters, 1140–c. 1168–9 and probably 1174 or later.
 (b) 11 letters, 1163–6.
 (c) 12 letters, 1166–9.
2. (a) *Summa cause* and 34½ letters with the *Causa* between Gilbert and Thomas in their midst, 1163–71 (with a backward glance to 1159).³
 (b) 8½ letters, 1169–75.
 (c) 10 letters, 1170–c. 1177.

and J. Brooke, *The House of Commons, 1754–90*, II (London, 1964), p. 200; *Verney Letters of the 18th Century* . . . , ed. M. M. Lady Verney (London, 1930), esp. II, 215 ff., 234 ff., 263; S. Ayscough, *A catalogue of the MSS preserved in the BM hitherto undescribed* . . . , I (London, 1782), pp. ix, 62).

¹ Ker, p. 230 (cf. p. 9) lists Cambridge, Trinity Coll. B. 14. 33 (317) (the *Ysagoge*, on which see *GF*, p. 54 n.), Eton Coll. 48 (the Notule), Bodl. 755 (Aimo of Fleury's *Historia Francorum*); to these can be added BM Cotton Claud. A. v, fos. 46 ff. (William of Malmesbury: noted by Ker as a Belvoir book on p. 9, but not on p. 230 among Prior William's), whose inscription is partly illegible but was clearly very similar to those in the others, which are very similar to each other. (We have to thank Dr D. Luscombe and Mr F. P. McGivern for help with these MSS.) Three Priors William of Belvoir are known: William of Huntingdon, c. 1270–7 (*VCH Lincs.* II, 206–7; Trinity Coll., Cambridge, MS O. 9. 25, fo. XII; cf. fo. XVIIIV); William of Belvoir I, 1319–20, and William of Belvoir II, 1333–c. 1366 (*VCH Lincs.* II, 206–7; J. Nichols, *Hist. Leicestershire*, II, I, App. p. 21—from Peck from Gale: see previous note). The *ex libris* inscriptions seem to make it clear that William 'of Belvoir' was distinct from William 'of Huntingdon' (donor of Trinity O. 9. 25), and William of Belvoir seems most probably to be the notable prior who ruled from 1333 to c. 1366.

² I.e. the approximate earliest and latest dates of letters in each group which can be fairly closely dated. There are a considerable number which cannot be closely dated, though in most groups those which can form a substantial proportion: dates are noted in table B to make this clear; the table also shows the order of hands.

³ The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa's invitation to the council of Pavia (Giles, no. 510; for English MSS of this cf. W. Holtzmann in *Neues Archiv*, XLVIII (1930), 386–7), quoted at the same point in both B and D. For the *Causa*, see *GF*, p. 163 and n.

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3. (a) Canons of council of Tours (1163) and 17 papal decretals, 1163–73/4.
(b) 18 decretals and bulls, 1163–73, and canons of council of Westminster, 1175.
(c) 2 bulls, 1164/5, 1172, and 4 decretals, 1175.
4. (a) 25 letters, 1160–9, possibly 1157/8–1174 or later.
(b) 19 letters, c. 1163–73/4.
(c) 5 letters, 1170–1 or later.
5. (a) 57 letters, 1145–67/8, probably 1177.
(c) 5 letters, c. 1163–6.
6. (a) 26 letters, c. 1155–75.
(b) 1 letter, 1166.
(c) 63 letters and fragments, 1172–4/5, but mostly undatable.

It is immediately clear that no section can have been copied before the 1170's; and in most cases the dates of the documents give no grounds for supposing that (b) and (c) were added long after (a). Indeed the sections appear remarkably homogeneous in date. The latest documents in four out of the six sections are +1174, 1174/5 or 1175; section 5 produces one probably of 1177 in (a), section 2 one of c. 1177 in (c), its latest stratum. The earliest stratum in section 3 is related to the collection known as *Wigorniensis Altera*, which was composed in or after 1173; the latest documents are of 1175. In the whole manuscript there are approximately 200 documents (out of just over 450) which can be dated with reasonable precision to a particular year. They range from 1140 to 1177, with gaps (at least in precisely dated letters) in 1141–2, 1144, 1149, 1151, 1154–5, 1157–9 and 1176. Although there is a clear purpose behind some of the sections, the selection of material as a whole does not suggest any principle which might lead to later documents being purposely or consistently omitted. A date c. 1175 would be possible for most of the collection; a date c. 1177 acceptable for the whole of it. It is difficult to believe that it was compiled much later than 1177; a date later than c. 1180 seems virtually inconceivable.¹

The materials employed in B

Ancient and medieval letter collections were normally put together in one of two ways: either from the author's own copies or drafts, or by collecting such letters as survived from the recipients. In some cases both methods may have been employed, but far and away the commonest basis for a collection was the author's own files. It is clear, in fact, that B derived from earlier collections made by or for the author, and from schedules, copies and drafts in his office. The first half of section 1 derived from an early collection of the 1150's, also represented in MSS R and H. Section 2 represents a collection made in the early 1170's, also represented by MS D. They will be analysed more closely when the other manuscripts have been described. It seems clear that the collection of the 1150's had been added to in the 1160's, though some of the additions may have been made as B was being compiled. But it is noticeable that there are no letters copied both in sections 1 and 2, and very few

¹ Though an item here and there might be a later addition: but the place of hand I makes this very improbable (except for fos. 63–6 and, much more doubtfully, *Multiplicem*: see above).

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repeated in 1, 2 and 5. Comparison with D will show that a number of the letters in section 1 were probably in the common source of D and section 2, and this strongly suggests that they were omitted from section 2 deliberately because already in section 1: if they were omitted by accident, the absence of overlap between the sections would be a very curious coincidence.¹ Thus it seems very likely that section 5 is a supplement to 1 and 2, and that 2 was itself intended to give the letters, etc., relating to the Becket controversy not already copied in 1. At some stage, perhaps after the book was complete, someone has noted a few cross-references and other memoranda designed to place some of the letters in section 2 in their historical setting.²

Section 3 represents Gilbert's files of papal letters and decretals; most of it consists of the *Collectio Belverensis*, and is itself based on a primitive decretal collection very similar to the earliest Worcester collection, *Wigorniensis Altera*, but has been added to in the process of copying.

Section 4 is too miscellaneous for one to say more than that it seems to be based on copies or schedules of letters of the 1160's rather than on an earlier collection.

Section 6 completes the work of hand I, which appears in every section, amplifying and completing. Commonly hand I provides material more or less appropriate to the section he is completing, and some of his additions in section 1 at least seem to come from an earlier collection—the common source of section 2 and D. But a considerable part of his material consisted of drafts or extracts from charters, and his contribution to section 6 is something like a rough formulary. The conclusion of section 6, *Multiplitem*, was evidently added as an afterthought from the common source of section 2 and D.³

¹ The argument at this point is complicated by the diversity of hands in the later part of section 1 of B (see table B); it could be argued that some of these items were later supplements made *after* section 3 had been compiled.

² His notes are on fos. 70 (marginal correction to a section of *Summa cause*, see *MB*, iv, 209 n. 8), 78 ('Seueritatem uestram, Seueritatem domne', referring to nos. 198, 200, B, fos. 147, 187), 78 v ('Placuit excellentie', no. 165, B, fo. 74; 'circa initium Quadrag.', giving the date of Gilbert's appeal in 1169; 'in Ramis Palmarum', the date of Gilbert's excommunication in 1169), 102 r–v, no. 212 ('Placuit excellentie uestre' as above; 'Ad uestram pater audientiam', no. 173, B, fo. 61 v; 'In Norm(annia)', see note to no. 212; 'circa initium xl.' and 'in Ramis Palmarum' as above), 106, no. 218 ('post passionem domni Cant.'), 106 v ('Con(tra) Oportuerat', i.e. an answer to *MB Epp.* 700, B, fo. 94), 107, no. 215 ('Quamuis cure pastorum', i.e. *MB Epp.* 720–1, not in B), 107, no. 219 (see note to letter), 119 v, *MB Epp.* 627 ('Videtur esse illa [...] quam orat sibi [...] ierit quod deceret (?) [...] illi [...] siquidem [...] sequitur illa [Dil]ecte mihi pater', i.e. no. 212), 163 v, no. 156 (see note to letter; includes reference to *MB Epp.* 157, not in B), 172, no. 177 ('Non plene liquet quo tempore uel de qua appellatione hoc dicat'!), 175 v, no. 178 (see note to letter). These notes were evidently written by someone with a fair but not very precise knowledge of the events and correspondence, with access to letters not in B, as we have it, or D, and sufficiently near the events to describe Becket's death as 'passio domni Cant.' rather than 'passio sancti Thome'. The notes range over sections 2, 3 and 5. There seems clearly to be no connexion between them and D.

³ See pp. 20–1 and textual notes to the letter: the text evidently derives from a version very similar to D, in which the author's name was left blank as in D. A common source seems

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INTRODUCTION

The ultimate source in most cases seems to have been drafts of the letters actually sent; and in several cases (as is common in such collections) we seem to have two drafts for the same letter.¹ Most of the time it is impossible to tell precisely how close what we now have was to the letter actually sent. The exceptions are those letters of which copies survive in other manuscripts of the Becket correspondence. For the most part these suggest that the copies we have are reasonably faithful, and that the scribes of MS B did their work with tolerable accuracy. There is one letter of which the text in MS C is very different from that in B (no. 197); this seems to be due to revision before B was copied. In one other case a version common to B and other manuscripts is surprisingly different from one preserved in Master David's dossier (no. 203): the former clearly represents the letter sent to the king, the latter a copy sent to David for his information as ambassador for Gilbert in the Curia. The differences are entirely stylistic, and no doubt due to inadvertence—perhaps the copy was sent to David before final revision of the letter.

No. 197 is one of the few in B which show signs of revision. Comparison of B, R and H shows that nos. 26, 27 and 34 were slightly revised before B was copied; but there is no sign of revision in the other letters common to the three manuscripts.² In most cases we have no check, but there is little reason to suppose that any elaborate process of polishing has taken place with more than a handful of the letters. They can be taken to be faithful copies, on the whole, of what Gilbert intended to send at the time each letter was drafted. The way B is compiled suggests that it was intended as a substantial collection of material to form the basis for a fuller edition of Gilbert's letters. The cancellations³ and the rough way in which some items are entered suggest that it was meant to be a working copy from which a fair copy would be taken. If this is correct, one might expect to find evidence of revision to the text of the manuscript itself, such as Arnulf of Lisieux gave to Paris Bibl. Nat. Lat. 14763,⁴ but there is remarkably little evidence of revision or of

certain. Hand I's additions in sections 1–4 are appropriate enough, though his last entries in section 2 are very miscellaneous, and his additions to 4 are fragments. To 5 he has added two personal letters and a testimonial, not in context. Section 6 opens with two testimonials, then a group of letters of the years 1173–4. Folios 193–4 and quire xxvi contain mainly charters and formulary fragments.

¹ For specific evidence of the use of drafts, see notes to nos. 152, 197, 203, 252; for duplicates, see *GF*, p. 27, and esp. no. 25 and n. 1.

² For no. 34, B offers two versions, B1 revised, B2 unrevised. The conclusion of no. 155 raises a curious problem. The Becket MSS agree with B that Gilbert concluded this letter with a reference to Peter's Pence; but the greater part of the last paragraph occurs in B only: D omits the whole of it (and so gives no evidence one way or the other on the state of this part of the letter in Gilbert's archives), and even the faithful Howden abbreviates this section. The most probable explanation is that B here represents Gilbert's draft, the Becket MSS what was actually sent, rather than that B shows the fruit of revision—the passage seems to be essentially something of temporary, ephemeral interest (cf. below, p. 15).

³ Fos. 105 v–106, no. 214 (not repeated elsewhere), 148 v, no. 375 (the witness list), 179 v, nos. 249, 152 (opening: this may have appeared too much of a draft to be preserved). Two items on fo. 200 (nos. 363, 472, the latter a repetition) are marked 'uacat'.

⁴ See F. Barlow, *The Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux*, pp. lxxix ff.