

Cement, Summers, Pulleys, Plummets, Pipes, Timber, and Screws: George Herbert's Building Works

Ceri Sullivan, Cardiff University

For most of his adult life, Herbert needed to know the concrete details of contemporary construction techniques. It is usual to read The Temple as a celebration of the biblical image of the divine architect. No one has yet looked at the poems in terms of Herbert's rueful use of his own expertise in building works, acquired in the course of the lengthy and expensive church and rectory repairs he undertook. In doing so, it becomes clear that physical objects in his building poems are used analogically rather than metaphorically. Moreover, attending to the contemporary idiom of construction can help with dating some of the poems in the Williams manuscript.

For thirty years from the mid-1950s an increasingly rich set of readings emerged about Herbert's references to the fabric of the church, especially in the sequence which took final shape in the first edition of The Temple (1633): 'Church-monuments', 'Church-lock and key', 'The Church-floore', and 'The Windows'.¹ Commentators argued that poems move rapidly away from the various objects that have occasioned prayer. Even the titles of the poems are chosen to do so, for Anne Ferry.² In the case of 'Church-monuments' Joseph Summers traced sentences, stanzas, and then objects dissolving across the poem. Stanley Fish argues Herbert undid the claim of any 'creature' (including objects) to a separate existence from God. Thus, as Herbert makes comparisons between identical things, he dissolves meaningful distinctions between them. Barbara Harman saw mounds of dust deliberately burying themselves in themselves, in a circular process of origin to end. In Richard Strier's incisive formulation, though we want to read analogues (that is, reading the object and the spiritual abstract compared to it not as 'are', but as 'like', each other), Herbert writes metaphor, erasing the physical object of comparison. For Christopher Hodgkins, 'most of

¹ The English Poems of George Herbert, ed. H. Wilcox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). All references in the text to Herbert's poems are to this edition, unless indicated otherwise.

² A. Ferry, 'Titles in George Herbert's "little Book"', English Literary Renaissance 23.2 (1993), pp. 314-44.

Herbert's poetic references to ecclesiastical externals are clearly metaphorical from the beginning... [and] not... direct meditations on places and physical objects'.³

Latterly, though, commentary has returned to inspect those concrete things in the poems. Like Hodgkins, Paul Dyck argues that Herbert wants parishioners who read church buildings as well as they read poems. Church buildings, painted and engraved with scriptural labels on each feature, are another way of accessing and remembering the divine word. The reader collates the physical places and scriptural topoi with ethical issues in her own life.⁴ Anne Myers thinks that the aphoristic and didactic style of 'The Church-Porch' represents the uses to which the physical structure was put, as a quotidian place where contracts were made (for instance, the start of the marriage and baptismal ceremonies), where catechising and other teaching took place, where alms were distributed, and so on. 'The Church-Porch' refuses to speak in metaphor, she concludes, so that eternity is found by looking through (not over) the things of the world.⁵

In contrast to these readings, I want to point out how often Herbert's poems deal neither with the completed church structure nor the social function of the concrete objects, but with the materials and techniques used in their construction. 'The Altar', for instance, is about cement and stones, not alignment (as an altar, its width running North-South, or as communion table, East-West) nor about ecclesiastical coverings (plain linen table-cloth or embroidered frontal).

³ J. Summers, George Herbert (London: Chatto and Windus, 1954), pp. 134-5; S.E. Fish, Self-consuming Artifacts: the Experience of Seventeenth-century Literature (1972; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), pp. 164-70, 207-15; B. Harman, Costly Monuments: Representations of the Self in George Herbert's Poetry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 112-20; R. Strier, Love Known: Theology and Experience in George Herbert's Poetry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), pp. 146-51; C. Hodgkins, Authority, Church, and Society in George Herbert: Return to the Middle Way (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993), ch. 7, p. 165.

⁴ P. Dyck, 'Locating the Word: the Textual Church and George Herbert's Temple', in Centered on the Word: Literature, Scripture, and the Tudor-Stuart Middle Way, ed. D.W. Doerksen and C. Hodgkins (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), pp. 224-44.

⁵ A. Myers, 'Restoring "The Church-porch": George Herbert's Architectural Style', English Literary Renaissance 40.3 (2010), pp. 427-57.

‘Church-monuments’ concentrates on the jet and stone of the memorials, not the effigies and heraldry which are represented by the monument. ‘The Windows’ looks at the quality of the glass, not the stories represented in it, and so on. In arguing this, I will start with bringing evidence not used before, from architectural records, together with known facts about the financial and legal concerns of Herbert and his family. After establishing Herbert’s hands-on experience, I will look at how three groups of poems, whose central concerns are monuments, windows, and the improvement of leased estates, draw on renovations taken in hand by Herbert. In the third section of the article I show how the volume of more fleeting references to building work come together to vary the usual image of a saintly or courtly Herbert. I end by arguing that the building idiom might suggest a later date than 1625 for some of the poems in the Williams manuscript, and explain some of the titles and ordering of sequences.

There was a precise regulatory framework for maintenance of church property, which focused more on repairs than on reforms. Indeed, as Nigel Yates has shown, the change from Catholic to Protestant involved a change of use rather than structure. The two main ‘rooms’ of the church - the chancel and the nave - became distinguished by function rather than personnel (for instance, both clergy and laity now took communion in the chancel). However, the fabric of buildings was rarely remodelled, and regulations about this focused on good repair.⁶ Numbers 80 to 88 of the 1604 Canons dealt with ‘Things appertaining to Churches’. Two of these were concerned with the fabric of the building, number 85 requiring this to be ‘kept in sufficient Reparations’, with (in the following order) windows ‘well glazed’, floors ‘paved, plain, and even’, the church kept clean throughout, and the churchyard fenced. These are recognised weak spots in large and ancient public buildings (even today, parish officials acquire expertise in the funding streams, regulations and practical aspects of maintaining them). Canon 86 required personal episcopal visitations every three years, to compel churchwardens to levy the parish for the costs of any necessary repairs.⁷ The form of questions for the visitations of 1633 inquired of the churchwardens and minister whether the

⁶ N. Yates, Buildings, Faith, and Worship: the Liturgical Arrangement of Anglian Churches, 1600-1900 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), ch. 2.

⁷ J.V. Bullard, ed., Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical, 1604, Latin and English (London: Faith Press, 1934), pp. 88-90.

church and minister's house were 'in good reparations... decently and comly kept'.⁸ As F.E. Hutchinson points out, A Priest to the Temple (1652) covers the same agenda, putting first things first when the Priest is appointed to serve a church. 'First he takes order, that all things be in good repair; as walls plaistered, windows glazed, floore paved, seats whole, firm, and uniform, especially that the Pulpit, and Desk, and Communion Table, and Font, be as they ought, for those great duties that are performed in them... The Church be swept, and kept cleane without dust or cobwebs'.⁹ Commentators on this passage tend to focus on the middle statement (about ecclesiastical furniture), since it enriches their discussion of doctrinal and devotional attitudes to God's word. Yet the quotidian repairs and cleaning, from plasterwork to cobwebs, should not be brushed off.

Regulations also covered where the money was to come from for repairs, if the parish was unable to fund them itself. 'A Proclamation for preventing the decayes of Churches and Chappels for the time to come' (11th October 1629) alleges that there is a general decay of chapels and churches in many parts of the realm, and is suspicious that parishioners deliberately overlook delapidations 'out of hope to obtaine some generall Collection, whereby to spare themselves, and to get the worke, which they are bound to doe by law [out of parish rates], to bee done by the common purse of others'. No more such collections under letters patent would be authorised, except in the case of acts of God, such as fire or tempest. The proclamation ends by requiring surveyors not to rely on documents presented by churchwardens (who might be trying to spare themselves and their neighbours the cost of repair), but to inspect the buildings in person.¹⁰

On 5th July 1625 Herbert was installed as non-residentiary canon of Lincoln Cathedral and prebendary of Leighton Ecclesia, Huntingtongshire. There was some churn in occupancy before and after his period of tenure, which might have affected (or reflected) the difficulty of funding and overseeing major repairs. His predecessor, Christopher Pasley, was only in place

⁸ Church of England, Articles to be Enquired of in the Metropolitall Visitation of the most Reverend Father, William,... Arch-bishop of Canterbury (1633), A3 r.

⁹ The Works of George Herbert, ed. F.E. Hutchinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941), pp. 246, 559.

¹⁰ J.F. Larkin, ed. Stuart Royal Proclamations 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 2.248-50.

for four months. The diocesan records do not record that Herbert resigned his office after his appointment to Bemerton; the prebend was vacant on 8th August 1634. The next recorded incumbent was Herbert Thorndike, who had deputized for Herbert as Cambridge University Orator, and was installed on 12th April 1636.¹¹ The prebend's responsibilities were to preach or cause to be preached an annual sermon at Whitsun at Lincoln Cathedral, recite psalm 31 and 32 privately every day for the good of the parish, and fulfil his obligations under the septism bond.¹² He was not bound to take charge of parochial duties, nor to keep the church in repair. At some point Herbert tried to get Nicholas Ferrar to take the position (Amy Charles suggests this was as late as 1630), but the latter suggested a partnership in which Herbert as prebendary raised funds for rebuilding, and the Ferrar men oversaw the works.¹³ Herbert's initial demurral suggests he was aware of the magnitude of the task, and only agreed as an act of charity.¹⁴

For nearly two decades no services had been said at the parish church of St. Mary the Virgin in Leighton Bromswold, according to Ferrar's preface to The Temple.¹⁵ The south aisle of the church had been demolished in 1606, and the roof of the nave had fallen in. Izaak Walton, expanding on Ferrar's preface, says the sort of public collection regulated in 1629 had been permitted for St. Mary's, but little money had been received of the £2000 appealed for.¹⁶ So the restoration group tried their connections, turning first to patrons of the parish, acquaintances, and family. Financing was always a headache. Herbert's letter to his brother Henry, in autumn 1630, says that he has already spent £200 on (unidentified) building works,

¹¹ 'Prebendaries: Leighton Ecclesia', Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae 1541-1857. Volume 9: Lincoln Diocese (1999), pp. 85-87 (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=35195>, accessed: 13/10/14).

¹² A.M. Charles, A Life of George Herbert (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 121-2.

¹³ Charles, Life, pp. 150-2; The Ferrar Papers, ed. B. Blackstone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), pp. 58-9.

¹⁴ Izaak Walton says he made a solemn vow to rebuild the church, 'The Life of Mr. George Herbert', in The Complete Angler and The Lives of... Herbert, ed. A.W. Pollard (London: Macmillan, 1901), pp. 386-8.

¹⁵ Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, p. 4.

¹⁶ Walton, 'Life', pp. 386-8; Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, p. 4.

even though he has not yet received money due (Hutchinson presumes this refers to the Bemerton tithes). On 23rd March 1632 Herbert wrote to Henry, pleased with the latter's success in enlisting aid for the building fund from Katherine Clifton, Duchess of Lennox (Baroness Clifton of Leighton Bromswold), and taking up Henry's offer to approach the Earls of Manchester and Bolingbroke.¹⁷ Herbert himself was apparently able at cajoling: Walton says he doubled to £100 a contribution from the Earl of Pembroke by a 'witty and persuasive' letter.¹⁸ Herbert remained concerned about the project finances all his life, bequeathing £15 to the building fund at his death on 3rd March 1633.¹⁹

Charles reads 'The Crosse' (pp. 562-6) as referring to the decision to rebuild St. Mary's (the only cruciform church of the three), citing 'not onely I,/ But all my wealth, and familie might combine/ To set thy honour up, as our designe'.²⁰ She reads the lines following these ('much delay, /Much wrastling, many a combate') as a note about Herbert's weak health. But it could also be an allusion to the money problem, perhaps reflected in the defensive tone of 'The Answer' (pp. 578-82) to 'all,/ Who think me eager, hot, and undertaking,/ But in my prosecutions slack and small'. On the St. Mary's project, the money was so slow to come in that much of the actual work was not done until long after Herbert had been presented as Rector to the living of Fugglestone-with-Bemerton, in April 1630. As Nicholas Ferrar had planned, the work at St. Mary's was supervised by his brother John, drawing on his experience of the restoration work at Little Gidding, and perhaps using the same group of workmen.²¹ Arthur Woodnoth, a Ferrar cousin, acted as treasurer, personally paying the workmen. Woodnoth had financial expertise as a freeman of the Goldsmith's Company, in a concern large enough to employ two or three apprentices at a time, and perhaps had contacts

¹⁷ Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, pp. 375-6, 377, 378-9. The Lennox household was interrupted every week, as all services for the whole parish had to be held in their hall, given the state of the church, Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, p. 58.

¹⁸ Walton, 'Life', pp. 387.

¹⁹ Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, p. 382.

²⁰ Charles, Life, pp.128-9.

²¹ A.L. Maycock considers that the design and material of the oak bench-ends and panelling in Little Gidding and St Mary's were probably made by the same craftsmen, Nicholas Ferrar of Little Gidding (1938; Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1980), pp. 129-32.

which might be tapped for donations. Herbert clearly valued his financial nous, for he appointed Woodnoth executor of his will.²²

Before he took on St. Mary's Herbert would already have heard much about the trials of renovations. In 1624 Mary Ferrar bought the manor of Little Gidding from Esmé, Lord Aubigny, afterwards Baron Stuart of Leighton Bromswold, then the third Duke of Lennox, in 1624). On arriving at the manor Mary Ferrar went straight to the church to pray, but could barely get through the door, as the church was being used as a barn. The woodwork was decayed, and the glass gone from the windows. The manor house was in a similar state. It took years for both buildings to be re-floored, re-glazed, and re-panelled. Finally, a balcony was hung at the west end of the church, to take an organ.²³

Citing two letters from Herbert to Nicholas, John Ferrar edits out what he considers to be the irrelevant bits, stating that Herbert 'goes on in the discourse of the building the Church, in such & such a forme as N.F. advised... and letting N.F. know, all he had, & would doe, to gett moneys to proceed in it', and 'so he goes on in his advice, for the ordering of things, to that business'.²⁴ However, some evidence of the renovation work which Herbert was involved with or knew about can be gathered from the existing fabric of the buildings: St Mary the Virgin in Leighton Bromswold, and the Wiltshire properties of St Peter's, at Fugglestone, the attached chapel of St. Andrew's at Bemerton, and Bemerton Rectory.

Ferrar and Woodnoth threw workmen at the St. Mary's site in the summer of 1632: eighteen masons and labourers and ten carpenters were on it by the end of July, Ferrar reported.²⁵ The north aisle was demolished and new north and south walls built to extend the line of the chancel, which reduced the space available for the seated congregation and turned it into a pronounced cruciform shape. The north and south doorways to the old aisles were retained to become the doorways for new north and south porches, with new side walls (in coursed Welden rubble) built back from the doorways to the new nave wall (thus making the porches

²² Walton, 'Life', pp. 386-8; Charles, Life, pp. 168-9.

²³ Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, pp. 24-5, 27-8.

²⁴ Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, pp. 77-8, 79.

²⁵ John Ferrar to Nicholas Ferrar, 30th July 1632, Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, p. 276.

the width of the old aisles).²⁶ The church was re-roofed, necessitating new tie beams and braces, as well as coverings (a rain water head on the south side is dated 1632, and one that on the north, 1634).²⁷ Red and yellow glazed tiles still on the floor of the north transept date from the 1630s. Finally the pulpit, reading desk, dwarf screen, and seating were installed. The tower, built at the cost of the fourth Duke of Lennox, was probably not put up until 1640; four of its bells are dated 1641.²⁸

Nearly concurrent with the work at St. Mary's was the reconstruction work being done at Fugglestone-with-Bemerton, where Herbert had to supervise the contractors himself. St Peter's has no sign of seventeenth-century work, bar some box pews which may be of that period.²⁹ St. Andrew's and the Rectory are another matter. Walton says that Herbert had to repair the chancel of the chapel of St. Andrew's, and rebuild three parts of the Rectory when he took office.³⁰ Charles doubts that the Rectory needed much doing to it, to repair minor damage consequent on leaving a building empty for ten years.³¹ However, given two-thirds of its surviving walls (of knapped flint and rubble, with ashlar dressings) date from the earlier seventeenth century, Walton's account has some support. St Andrew's shows little sign of seventeenth-century stone-work, just the south doorway and a small opening in the south of

²⁶ Myers thinks the church porch of St. Andrew's was too small for administrative tasks or teaching ('Restoring "The Church-porch"', pp. 431-2), but since a side window was let into the south porch of St. Mary's it might have been used for such tasks.

²⁷ Royal Commission on Historical Documents, An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Huntingdonshire (London: H.M.S.O, 1926), pp. 177-80, plate 99; N. Pevsner, Bedfordshire and the County of Huntingdon and Peterborough (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), pp. 282-4.

²⁸ A. Taylor, 'The Seventeenth-century Church Towers of... Leighton Bromswold (?c. 1640)', Architectural History 27 (1984), pp. 281-96, pp. 289-90.

²⁹ Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), Ancient and Historical Monuments in the City of Salisbury: vol 1 (London: H.M.S.O., 1980), pp. 163, 42-3; The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Wiltshire 18 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 6.48-9.

³⁰ Walton, 'Life', pp. 397, 399. By 'parts' Walton presumably means quarters, since he later says that Herbert repaired the greatest part of the house.

³¹ Charles, Life, pp. 153-4.

the chancel. This evidence points neither way, since there was a wholesale restoration of the church in 1860. Some of the structural woodwork, however, dates from about 1630: five pairs of trussed roof rafters, and some oak panelling (now incorporated into a modern chest), which suggests major repairs were made.

It seems probable, from the physical evidence of the buildings, that from the summer of 1630, until the autumn of 1632 Herbert had in hand (or the prospect of) three or even four restoration projects on large public buildings. The most complex of these was planned at a distance, to be completed by proxy, and took cash, emotional energy, and time away from his new benefice. The next part of the article will argue that three groups of poems, on monuments, windows, and leases, register Herbert's rueful sense of the anxious and tiring role of project manager. The number of sayings about building work that Herbert collected in Outlandish Proverbs (published in 1640) suggest hard-won experience in dealing with sub-contractors. Herbert is particularly stolid about bearing burgeoning costs and not bodging a job (though this, perhaps, is a luxury only the rich can afford): 'The house shewes the owner', 'Building and marrying of Children are great wasters', 'A good bargaine is a pick-purse', 'Ill ware is never cheape', 'Never had ill workeman good tooles', 'Good cheape is deare', 'It costs more to doe ill than to doe well', 'Hee that repaires not a part, builds all', 'An old friend, a new house', 'Things well fitted abide', 'A little lett lets an ill workeman', and 'Good workemen are seldom rich'.³²

First comes 'Church-monuments', the poem most associated with interpretations of the theology and aesthetics of self-consuming artefacts. Evidence about the impediments Herbert faced in working with the Leighton Bromswold monuments allows the poem to be read not as a pious meditation on memento mori, but as a malicious fantasy.

While Herbert seems to have had a relatively free hand in his work on the walls, roofs, windows, floors, and doors of the churches, he would have had to be cautious about touching the monuments. There are few now at the three churches, either from the 1630s or before. St. Peter's has a Purbeck marble chest tomb of a lady with her hands on her breast, but no

³² Herbert, Outlandish Proverbs, Selected by Mr. G.H. (1640), in Works, ed. Hutchinson, pp. 321, 323, 329, 333, 334, 337, 346. One proverb Herbert may have picked up from workmen is 'the groundsell speakes not save what it heard at the hinges', p. 331.

inscription. At St. Mary's there are three monuments in the north transept: a fragment of a large stone crest (possibly part of a seventeenth-century monument), and two family tombs in alabaster. One is an altar tomb with the recumbent effigies of Sir Robert Tyrwhit (d. 1572), wearing plate armour with his head on a mantled helm and a lion at his feet (both arms and legs are lost), and his second wife Elizabeth (d. 1578), wearing a French cap and long cloak.³³ The central bay of the south side of the chest bears the arms of the Tyrwhits. In bays on either side are a child and two swaddled infants; the coat of arms is repeated on the west end of the chest. The effigy of the Tyrwhits' daughter, Katherine (d. 1567), is nearby on a second altar tomb.

The Tyrwhit family would have loomed large in Herbert's plans for renovations. Leighton Bromswold manor was held by the church until 1548, then sold to Sir Robert Tyrwhit. It was settled on the Tyrwhit's daughter, Katherine, on her marriage to Sir Henry D'Arcy. In 1591 the manor was settled on their daughter, Katherine, on her marriage to Sir Gervase Clifton. In 1613 it was settled on their daughter, Katherine, on her marriage to Esmé, Lord Aubigny; Katherine died in 1637, after Herbert's renovations were complete. The monuments in St. Mary's are important in themselves, as records of the Tyrwhit tradition of passing the manor down from mother to daughter, on the latter's marriage.³⁴

Moreover, the monuments were tangentially associated with two more famous monuments to Protestantism. Elizabeth Tyrwhit was, from 1537, a gentlewoman of the privy chamber, attending the strongly Protestant Katherine Parr on her deathbed, and later appointed as governess to a resentful Princess Elizabeth. John Foxe's Actes and Monuments relates how, in 1546, opponents of the reform agenda attacked Parr's three closest associates. Two of these were Lady Anne Herbert (afterwards Countess of Pembroke) and Tyrwhit, whom the queen held, 'for her virtuous disposition, in very great favour and credite'.³⁵ By archi-

³³ Historical Monuments in Huntingdonshire, p. 179.

³⁴ The Victoria History of the Counties of England: Huntingdonshire 4 vols (London: Dawsons, 1936), 3.88.

³⁵ 'Tyrwhit [née Oxenbridge], Elizabeth', Dictionary of National Biography (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46929>, accessed 2/11/14); H. and R. Tyrwhitt, Notices and Remains of the Family of Tyrwhitt... 1067 to 1872 (1858; London: privately printed, 1872), pp. 22-6; J. Foxe, Acts and Monuments Online (1583), book 8, pp. 1267-8

episcopal instruction a copy of Actes and Monuments was chained in the parish church (a policy Herbert endorsed), so any parishioner might read about the stand taken by their parish's most important Protestant woman.³⁶ Tyrwhit was herself a noted Protestant scholar, one of the first women to publish an English private prayer book, Morning and Evening Praiers, with Divers Psalmes Himnes and Meditations (1574), used by Thomas Bentley for the second section of his Monument of Matrones (1582). Bentley's dedicatory epistle to Queen Elizabeth dwells on the organising conceit he shares with Foxe: 'out of the admirable monuments of your owne Honourable works... one entire and goodlie monument of praier, precepts, and examples meet for meditation, instruction, and imitation'. The epistle to the reader explains these 'rare and excellent monuments, of good record, as perfect presidents of true pietie and godlinesse in woman kind to all posteritie... in this Monument or collection'.³⁷

The Tyrwhit monuments were in the north transept, where substantial demolition work was going on. It would have required repeated discussion between workmen, overseers, and funders about whether to re-site them, or how to protect them if left in place. Before starting work on St. Mary's, Herbert scanned the area for potential patrons (and hence, presumably, people who might object to the work), and hence would be circumspect in his plans for the physical monuments. It is likely that Herbert would learn about the Tyrwhit family history, especially since Foxe mentions the Herbert and Tyrwhit families together. A 50-year old copy of Bentley's Monument of Matrones would not normally come Herbert's way, but the Tyrwhit family might have had a copy to refer to in conversations with their new minister.

The state of monuments was a matter of church discipline, and a matter for episcopal visitation questions (as in 1633).³⁸ Nigel Llewellyn catalogues the vulnerability of

<http://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=text&gototype=modern&edition=1583&pageid=1267>, accessed 2/11/14).

³⁶ J. Roberts and E. Evenden, 'Bibliographical Aspects of the Acts and Monuments', Acts and Monuments Online, fn. 19

<http://www.johnfoxe.org/index.php?realm=more&gototype=modern&type=essay&book=essay2>, accessed 2/11/14); Herbert, A Priest to the Temple, in Works, ed. Hutchinson, p. 246.

³⁷ T. Bentley, The Monument of Matrones (1582), 'To Queene Elizabeth', B1 r, B1 v, pp. 103-38; see also the poem by 'L.S.', 'Hic aeterna pij cernis monumenta laboris', B7 r.

³⁸ Church of England, Articles to be Enquired, A3 v.

monuments, down more to general wear and tear than iconoclasm. Inscriptions could not be sealed and so tended to peel off; monuments might be moved so as to better organise church space or because the person commemorated was now remembered differently; the valuable materials of the monuments were wanted for other uses (plasterers coveted the gypsum in alabaster, for instance); extruding elements (like praying hands) were often carved separately and fixed on with wooden dowels, which rapidly perished. Occasionally, the commissioner of a monument might leave money for its maintenance, or a guild or fraternity to which the dead person had belonged might help. Mostly, though, it was down to the parish minister and clerk to tidy up what had been chipped, rotted, or rubbed off. Herbert, like any priest, had regularly to inspect the decay.³⁹

In 1631 John Weever surveyed the poor repair of many of the tombs of England. He quotes Horace and his admirers (specifying Edmund Spenser among them) on that well-worn topos of how texts live longer than monuments. Weever argues that tombs could be useful teachers, if kept in repair:

the frequent visiting, and advised reviewing of the Tombes and monuments of the dead... with the often reading, serious perusal, and diligent meditation of wise and religious Epitaphs or inscriptions, found upon the tombes or monuments, of persons of approved vertue, merit, and honour, is a great motive to bring us to repentance... They are externall helps to excite, and stirre up our inward thoughts.⁴⁰

But the 'vertue' that Weever talks about are as much to do with rank as morality. The place where a monument was sited, the materials it was made of, and the artistry involved in making it were as eloquent as any inscribed genealogy in making clear the rank of both the dead person and the commissioner.⁴¹ Thus Weever provides a sliding scale of site and style per rank: from being buried outside the church (with no monument), to inside the church

³⁹ N. Llewellyn, Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 259-71, 161-3.

⁴⁰J. Weever, Ancient Funerall Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britaine, Ireland, and the Islands Adjacent (1631), pp. 1-5, 6, 9.

⁴¹ Llewellyn, Monuments, chs. 3, 5; on disturbances of rank in tombs, see State Trials in the Reign of Charles the First, 1627-1640, in Cobbett's Complete Collection of State Trials 33 vols (London: T.C. Hansard, 1809-2), 3.cols 519-62; col. 552.

(with a flat ledger stone), to near or inside the chancel (with a life-sized effigy).⁴² The Tyrwhit tombs do not celebrate the virtues of mother, husband, or daughter; they celebrate the family coat of arms, in costly alabaster. Moreover, the size and site of the Tyrwhit tombs effectively turned the north transept into a private chapel. As Weever scolds, large tombs take up valuable floor space (at a premium because a Protestant congregation appreciated sitting rather than standing to listen to the lengthier sermons).⁴³ And space was already tight in St. Mary's, as a result of Herbert's alterations.

There was another amateur builder who arrived at Bemerton in 1630, who had already got a reputation as a patron of fine monuments. The family seat of the earls of Pembroke, Wilton House, lay just to the north of St. Peter's. Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset and Montgomery, had married Philip Herbert, the fourth Earl of Pembroke, on 1st June 1630. For the five years in which the marriage succeeded she spent her summers at Wilton.⁴⁴ Clifford and George Herbert were on good terms: he visited her for an hour in October 1631, and wrote to her with season's greetings that December.⁴⁵ The Appleby triptych, which she commissioned in 1646, includes a picture of Herbert's published works.

Clifford was a noted patron of monuments, and open-minded about experimenting with different styles as they became fashionable.⁴⁶ By the time she was living in Wilton her commissions included a Tuscan-pillared table tomb in jet and white marble (1612, to her cousin, Frances Bouchier), an alabaster ledger tomb with effigy (1617, to her mother), in the same style as that to Elizabeth I in Westminster Abbey and probably by the same sculptor, Maximilian Colt, and a monument to Spenser (erected in 1620, in Westminster Abbey). For the last, Clifford replaced a wall tablet, whose Latin inscription linked Spenser with Chaucer,

⁴² Weever, Monuments, ch. 3.

⁴³ Weever, Monuments, p. 10.

⁴⁴ Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, p. 583.

⁴⁵ Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, p. 267; Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, pp. 376-7.

⁴⁶ Clifford would later carry out extensive renovation work on churches on her Westmorland and Craven estates, including, in 1654, erecting a monument to her former tutor, the poet Samuel Daniel, R. Spence, Lady Anne Clifford: Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery (1590-1676) (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), pp. 38-9, 66-8, 151-5, 191, 200-3.

with a standing monument declaring Spenser to have had ‘a divine spirit [which] needs no other witness than the works which he left behind him’ (sometimes described as the beginning of Poet’s Corner).⁴⁷ The monument she commissioned for herself in Appleby church dwells triumphantly on her lineage, in retaining her inheritance.

Any discussion between Clifford and Herbert about church monuments would not have been one-sided. Herbert’s mother, Magdalen, had in 1600 put up a massive and sophisticated canopied transi-tomb to herself and her husband, Richard (died 1596), in St. Nicholas’s, Montgomery. The tomb, possibly designed by Walter Hancock, has the husband and wife lying in state on the top slab, above the shrouded figure of Richard, with their eight children praying for them, Meanwhile, Vanity and Time prance on the spandrels of the front arch, which bears an entablature with a heraldic frieze, and the full achievement of the Herbert arms, including shield, helm, crest, and mantling. The Latin inscription recommends that the reader can see from the tomb what virtue, piety, and the love of good can do when memorialised. By contrast, about six-sevenths of the English inscription commemorates the lineage of Magdalen and her mother.⁴⁸

Ironically, despite her extensive preparations for a lasting reminder Magdalen was not in fact buried there when she died in 1627. Herbert was only seven when the family tomb went up (too young to be consulted about its style or inscription), but her second husband and sons, including George, would have considered the existing monument before deciding to bury her instead in her current parish of St. Luke’s, Chelsea.⁴⁹ Presumably any monument here was modest, for there are no traces of it in situ, or in accounts of the church.

These issues come together in ‘Church-monuments’ (pp. 234-8). In summer 1632 the work at St. Mary’s was going strong, including dealing with the owners of the Tyrwhit altar tombs,

⁴⁷ W. Camden, Reges... et alii in ecclesia collegiate B. Petri Westmonastery sepulti (1600; 1606), pp. 70-1; H.K., Monumenta Westmonasteriensia (1683), p. 46.

⁴⁸ Montgomeryshire Records: Parish of Montgomery 6 (1996), p. 16. J. Powers-Beck discerns patriarchal (not matriarchal) authority, Writing the Flesh: the Herbert Family Dialogue (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1998), pp. 8-23.

⁴⁹ W.H. Stewart, Chelsea Old Church, rev. A. Esdaile and R., Blunt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 52.

which registered the family's rank and descent, and which had to be protected if the funding stream was to last. Herbert was in regular contact with a noted commissioner of monuments, Clifford, and had recently reviewed his own family tomb, bloated with heraldry and taking up a lot of much space. The Herbert tomb cites the first standard topos, celebrated by Weever, that it records the imitable 'virtue' of the deceased. The Clifford Spenser tomb cites the second standard topos, lamented by Weever, that words last longer than stones.

Given this context, the common approach to 'Church-monuments' as being in the ars moriendi tradition might be varied. The registers of rank on the inscribed stones will indeed collapse, in the act of being asserted by hyperbolic gestures of respect. Stones will 'bow, and kneel, and fall down flat/ To kisse those heaps' of once-great human dust. The poem's unusual authorial persona (whatever is left behind, when first its soul goes off to devotion, and next its body sits down) points out what will provide the best register of descent: no distinction at all between the heaps. But 'Church-monuments' is also a malicious fantasy, on the part of an exasperated renovator - trying to work around an object in an awkward corner - that the blasted thing will one day just vanish into dust. Ruefully surveying the tomb, the authorial persona ignores any lessons proclaimed on the tomb (be they of virtue or rank) and concentrates on the obdurate materials it is made of. If church monuments teach lasting lessons by their dissolution, Herbert fully feels the irony of his having to keep his lot in good repair.

Turning to church glass, Herbert's poems register the material as much as the stories in the glass. Church regulations put pragmatics before polemic when dealing with windows. The 1633 episcopal visitations are above all concerned with them staying in one piece, and check their state with the parish's churchwardens, minister, and schoolmaster (should the church be used as a schoolroom).⁵⁰ There is no evidence about the contemporary glass in Herbert's churches, but Salisbury Cathedral provides some sense of what windows were available to him to look at. In the visitation of 1607 Bishop Cotton was told that the glass and lead at Salisbury Cathedral were under continuous repair, and cathedral authorities continued to invest in new windows. Three were installed in 1620, showing the story of St. Paul, to join painted glass still in the Cathedral (fragments of a Jesse window, a St. Peter, groups of

⁵⁰ Church of England, Articles to be Enquired, A3 v, B1 r; 'Salisbury 1634', Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts 1 (1874), appendix, pp. 127-9.

praying figures, a crucifixion, a bishop, angels with the instruments of the passion, the invention of the cross, and Bishop Jewell's arms survive).⁵¹ The early modern painted glass has a very different look to the deeply-coloured and thick pot-glass of the medieval windows. In the earlier windows, individual pieces in one colour are set in leaded patterns that follow the main features of a subject. By contrast, coloured glass from the mid-sixteenth century and throughout the seventeenth century consisted of large panes painted with a complete scene. To do this, compounds of ground powdered glass, mixed with a fusible medium, were painted onto clear glass, and then fired. It produced more realistic, pictorial, and complex treatments of characters and landscapes, in weaker tints on thinner glass.⁵²

Narratives in the glass (not the glass itself) could cause offence. Some commentators on 'The Windows' refer to Henry Sherfield, the Recorder of Salisbury, who 'reformed' the windows of St. Edmund's church. For decades a window at St. Edmund's had irritated the vestry: it showed God the Father as a little old man in a blue and red coat; it mixed up the order of the works done over the week of creation, and its God was shown using a pair of compasses to create a properly circular sun and moon, as though he relied on geometry. On hearing of the vestry's plans to replace the window with white (clear) glass, the Bishop of Salisbury, John Davenant, forbade them to do so. In October 1630 Sherfield locked himself into the church, took a pike, climbed precariously onto the edge of the back of a bench, and picked out small and discrete sections of the offending glass (he then fell off his perch, and had to spend a month in bed). Clearly he was not aiming to smash the whole window, otherwise he would not have been secretively balancing four foot up in the air picking aside the soft leading around panes - he could just have lobbed a large stone from outside the church.

⁵¹ T. Cocke and P. Kidson, Salisbury Cathedral: Perspectives on the Architectural History, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (London: H.M.S.O., 1993), pp. 17-18; R.O.C. Spring, The Stained Glass of Salisbury Cathedral (Salisbury: Friends of Salisbury Cathedral, 1979); C. Davidson, 'George Herbert and Stained Glass Windows', George Herbert Journal 12.1 (1988), pp. 29-39.

⁵² P. Cowen, A Guide to Stained Glass in Britain (London: Michael Joseph, 1985), pp. 18-9, 50-5, 202-3; C. Winston, Memoirs Illustrative of the Art of Glass-Painting (London: John Murray, 1865), pp. 108, 124-5.

The incident was blown up into a perceived affront to church discipline and doctrine. Depositions of witnesses were taken in January 1631. By 8th February 1632 the case had been kicked upstairs to be heard by the Star Chamber. Making specific reference to the 1604 Canons, the Attorney General pointed out that the vestry's main function was to keep the church in good repair, and that there was 'a great deal of difference between repairing and reforming'.⁵³ Five days later Sherfield was found guilty, fined £500, and instructed to make a submission to the Bishop (a punishment that reflected his insolence to the bishop, according to the secretary to the Privy Council); the king himself commanded that this be as full as possible. The Bishop, cautiously, asked for a form of submission to be drafted by the Privy Council, This was composed by the Attorney General himself on 8th April, and Sherfield spoke it a week later. All the clergy near to Salisbury diocese – which would include Herbert - were summoned to hear him do so.

The state caricatured Sherfield as a wild-eyed, strong-armed iconoclast. His counsel for defence was Edward Herbert, the uncle of the poet. He had, perhaps, been approached by Sherfield on the basis of a personal connection, since both George Herbert and Sherfield were on parliamentary committees in the 1624 parliament (George having taken over the constituency of Montgomery from Edward), and St. Edmund's and St. Andrew's are only two miles apart.⁵⁴ Edward Herbert claimed, first, that Sherfield was living the word when he reformed the window, looking for accuracy of representation, particularly with regard to God the architect. His care in picking out a few quarries suggested he was sane. Edward Herbert then ignored the stories painted on the glass, and turned to the material of the window. He argued that the material damage to the church was slight: the whole window had only cost about 40s, and the dislodged quarries of glass were worth no more than 18d.

⁵³ Collection of State Papers Domestic (1629-31), p. 495; (1631-3), pp. 267, 530, 536, 538-9, 571-2; (1633-34), pp. 19, 21; State Trials 3.cols. 519-62; P. Slack, 'Religious Protest and Urban Authority: the Case of Henry Sherfield, Iconoclast, 1633', in Schism, Heresy, and Religious Protest, ed. D. Baker, Studies in Church History 9 (1972), pp. 295-302.

⁵⁴ C.R. Kyle, 'It will be a scandal to show what we have done with such a number': House of Commons Committee Attendance Lists, 1606-1628', Parliament, Politics, and Elections 1604-1648, Camden Fifth Series 17 (2001), pp. 205, 220.

Church wardens might prudently image that clear glass was the safe choice – but not so. Iconoclasts and iconophiles alike could scout out crosses everywhere (as John Donne does, seeing them in the shapes of seagulls and swimmers).⁵⁵ Herbert would have heard about Nicholas Ferrar’s response to someone who asked whether the family were going to reglaze the Little Gidding chancel window (of clear glass) with glass painted with a crucifix. Had such a window been there when the family arrived they would have left it, said Ferrar; not being so, they would not add it without due authority. Despite this, his visitors continued to spot crucifixes in the leading around each pane.⁵⁶

‘The Windows’ (pp. 246-8) likens the preacher who does not have the grace of God in him, when he preaches and then lives what he has preached, to stained glass without the sun behind it. Interpretations tend to start with the reference to St. Paul’s statement that ‘we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory’ (2. Cor. 3.18), or to the Laudian debate about the beauty of holiness.⁵⁷ Critical attention therefore tends to be on a devout image’s relationship to reality, not on the material of which the image is made.⁵⁸

Herbert has his own period’s glass in mind, since he says the figure of the preacher shows up as ‘watrish, bleak, & thin’ when it does not have the light behind it. Medieval glass, by contrast, shows up as dark and opaque, not watery, when there is no light. The likelihood is that this is a realist scene, painted on one panel, as with most early modern painted glass. Lines in ‘The Elixer’ (pp. 637-44) also squint at the glass, as well as through it: ‘A man that looks on glasse,/ On it may stay his eye;/ Or if he pleaseth through it passe,/ And then the heav’n espie’ (the lines were not revised between the W and B manuscripts, unlike the rest of

⁵⁵ John Donne, ‘Of the Cross’, The Poems of John Donne, ed. R. Robbins, 2 vols (Harlow: Longman Pearson, 2008), 2.7-14.

⁵⁶ The gossip is undated, Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, pp. 72-4.

⁵⁷ Judy Kronenfeld, ‘Probing the Relation Between Poetry and Ideology’, John Donne Journal 2.1 (1983), pp. 55-80; R.G. Shafer, ‘Herbert’s Poetic Adaptation of St. Paul’s Image of the Glass’, Seventeenth-century News 35 (1977), pp. 10-11.

⁵⁸ On the mid-century sub-genre of window poems, see A. Smyth, ‘“Art Reflexive”: the Poetry, Sermons, and Drama of William Strode (1601?-1645)’, Studies in Philology 103.4 (2006), pp. 436-64.

the poem). In 'Justice (II)' (pp. 490-3) the poet plays with colours in glass, looking at God's hand through 'sinne and error', which 'through their glasse discolour' it into red, which 'did burn and glow'. He then gazes at the hand through 'Christs pure vail' of imputed grace, in clear glass, so it turns 'white' again. So if the story in a glass window turns out to be dangerous (as Sherfield thought), then profit from looking at the glass or through the glass instead.

Sherfield's submission presumably incited Salisbury parishioners to troop to St. Edmund's to see the notorious window, before going back to their own parish church to do some beady-eyed checking. 'Love-joy' (p. 414) features two such theological aesthetes, gazing at a painted window showing 'a vine drop grapes with J and C/ Anneal'd on every bunch'. The word 'Anneal'd' makes it clear that painted shapes, not curved leading around the panes, form the letters. Either they appear in the bunch's tendrils (Hutchinson's suggestion) or in the curving profile of one grape against another.⁵⁹ The two gazers play the duck/rabbit game by ignoring whatever story is painted on the glass (in a bunch of grapes features) in favour of putting words to the letter-shapes made by the paint. Neither are 'loth/ To spend [their] judgement'. Herbert's poems repeatedly open with a hermeneutical dispute, then settled by the superior wisdom of one party. However, since here the two are not discussing a story (where factual accuracy could be checked), but only tracing shapes, both turn out to be right.

'Obedience' and 'Redemption' focus on estate improvements. Apart from the Sherfield sensation, also making the news at Bemerton in spring 1632 was the survey of the manors of the earl of Pembroke. It was an extensive and noteworthy process, the first since 1567. The two surveyors, Robert Drewe and William Kent, checked the estate's documents (especially the previous surveys, the court book, and lease book) against those of the tenant (namely, the indentures of leases of enfeoffment, or copies of the court roll). In particular, they looked at the details of the terms on which the tenancies were held, the in-going payment made when a tenancy changed hands, and the annual rent. This was a legal rather than a field survey. However the surveyors (consulting with the estate steward about the physical state of the property, and cross-referring to the book of rates held by the parish clerk or local overseer of the poor) also calculated the value of the tenancy, for use in drawing up the entry fines charged to any future new tenants. The Fugglestone survey was taken on 14th February 1632,

⁵⁹ Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, p. 518.

examining two tenancies by indenture and twenty-four by copy, and the Wilton survey three weeks later, on 5th March, covering sixteen tenancies by indenture. One of the tenants, William Abyn, held, for four lives, a garden plot abutting the land of St. Andrew's.⁶⁰ In autumn 1632 the holdings at the manor of Little Gidding were also in the process of being re-negotiated. The Ferrars, as new owners of the manor, had found out that glebe land had been sequestered from the diocese in the original enclosure a century earlier. Thus in September of that year, by a decree in chancery, Mary Ferrar returned to the diocese land worth £10 a year. A private paper by her declares 'Bee graciously pleased, Lord, now to accept from thy handmayd the restitution... as an earnest & pledge of ye total resignation of her self & hers to thy service vouchsafe to receive... this small portion of that large Estate, wch thou hast bestowed upon her', asking God to 'redeeme thy right' in the 'possessions' of 'Earth' and of her heart, in order to become his 'Inheritance'.⁶¹

The legal vocabulary of purchase and sale, as a metaphor for Christ's atonement, is regularly pointed out by commentators on 'Redemption' (pp. 129-31) and 'Obedience' (pp. 373-8). By noting the specific register of manorial land valuation, this reading is sharpened.⁶² The allegory of 'Redemption' is one in which the 'tenant' of the 'rich Lord' of a 'manour' asks for the lease to be varied, according to the worth of the land, but has first to find his landlord, who is taking 'possession' of another piece of 'land' bought earlier (that is, he is completing the purchase by physically going to it). The governing metaphor of 'Obedience' uses the same words as Mary Ferrar does: the poet desires to 'Convey a Lordship' (that is, of a manor), passing by 'speciall deed' all the land and what it bears, without 'reservation', in an 'action' that is registered in a 'court of rolls'. Moreover, he hopes, the purchase will be doubled by a reader willing to 'passe his land' too. The idiom reappears in 'Love Unknown' (pp. 452-8), where the tenant of 'A Lord' has a tenuously-held lease on 'grounds which may improve'. He holds it only for two lives, and admits he often defaults on the terms of 'the

⁶⁰ E. Kerridge, ed., Surveys of the Manors of Philip, First Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, 1631-2, Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society: Records Branch 9 (1953), pp. x-xii, 49-55, 82-5.

⁶¹ Ferrar Papers, ed. Blackstone, pp. 69.

⁶² Bernard Kneiger treats 'Obedience' as referring to the sale of honours in the Stuart court, 'The Purchase-Sale: Patterns of Business Imagery in the Poetry of George Herbert', Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 6.1 (1966), pp. 111-24.

lease'. The register of estate valuations urges the reader to realise that their lease can only be improved by acknowledging that the land is Christ's, as Mary Ferrar does.

Perhaps the greatest change to the image of a bookish Herbert comes about in realising the volume of fleeting allusions to building works in The Temple. The visitation questions of 1633 had a section on security, asking the parish clerk and sexton if the church was locked up at fit times, and the churchwardens and minister if the church had a chest for alms for the poor, which had triple locks and keys. There is some anxious carpentry in 'Confession' (pp. 442-5), to get to that triple-layer of security. The poet, 'master' in his 'trade', makes tills in boxes, boxes in chests, and chests in closets, to hide his heart away from affliction. However, the 'scrues' and awls of grief can 'wind' into any 'piece of timber'. In any case, 'no smith can make such locks but they have keys'. In 'Ungratefulnesse' (pp. 294-7), unlike the heart's locked 'boxes', 'two rare cabinets' are 'unlockt', as they are again in 'Praise 3' (pp. 541-5), where 'boxes for the poor' and 'chests' are open for topping up with Christ's tears. Those hanging tears remind the poet of 'streamers neare the top/ Of some fair church to show the sore and bloudie Battell', which Hutchinson reads as pennons hung outside a church tower, to stream in the wind. But battle colours are more frequently found inside a church (especially given the British weather), perhaps as part of an achievement over a monument. The church windows are eyes, below which hang the triangular colour. The bells of St Mary's post-date Herbert's restorations (though perhaps not his plans, given that the fourth Duke of Lennox financed the bell tower, and his mother had seen a 'book' about the renovations). However, when Herbert arrived at St. Peter's he found two new bells, cast in 1628 by John Danton, which were called 'Love God' and 'Praise God'.⁶³ 'Prayer I' (pp. 176-81) speaks of prayer as the sound of 'church-bels beyond the stars heard'. 'Cement' is integral to 'The Altar' (pp. 89-94) and 'The Church-floore' (p. 243-6). 'The Glimpse' (pp. 529-32) mentions how lime is slaked, starting the hot chemical reaction which produces cement (when sand and clay are added). There is 'season'd timber [that] never gives' (in 'Vertue', pp. 314-20, hitherto read as long-burning charcoal, not construction timber which is long-lasting and weight-bearing), a 'plummet' for measuring distance and for ensuring a true line in erecting walls (in 'Prayer 1'), and 'quarries' of stone (in 'The Sinner').⁶⁴ In 'The Pulley' (pp. 547-50) the soul,

⁶³ Victoria County History: Wiltshire, 6. 48.

⁶⁴ M.F. Maloney, 'A Note on Herbert's "Season'd timber"', Notes and Queries 4 (1957), pp. 434-5.

weighted down on earth by so many gifts, will be tossed up to heaven by the counterweight of restlessness. The verbs usually used about pulleys stress a slow, deliberate haul, but in using ‘tosse’ instead, Herbert suggests the ease with which an empty bucket can be drawn up, swinging to and fro. In ‘Justice (II)’ (pp. 490-3), also, the scales of justice change into ‘buckets, which attend/ And interchangeably descend,/ Lifting to heaven from this well of tears’. Perhaps the water is coming from the ‘pipe’ of ‘The Water-course’ (pp. 582-4). In ‘The World’ (pp. 300-2) the ‘inward walls and sommers’ (that is, horizontal load-bearing beams, such as those which support rafters) are being undermined by the invasive ‘Sycomore’ (one of the pioneer species of trees, regularly to be found in recently ruined buildings). Moreover, the addition of ‘Balconies’ (such as that hung onto the west wall of the Little Gidding chapel, to hold an organ) and ‘Terraces’ ‘weakened all by alteration’ (presumably a warning that Herbert had to heed, when it came to demolishing the aisle walls of St. Mary’s). Broken paving stones were always a problem: in 1607 and 1634 the paving of Salisbury Cathedral was defective.⁶⁵ The neatly laid and cemented paving of ‘The Church-floore’ (pp. 243-6) is credit to the ‘Architect’ (and the church-warden, Death, who keeps the marble, which ‘weeps’ with condensation, well swept from all the heaps of dust which any decaying structure produces). Some floors are tiled. The art of pottery is praised in ‘The Priesthood’ (pp. 550-5), where ‘earth and clay’ is translated by ‘fire and trade/ Of skilfull artists’. A ‘winding stair’ (a spiral staircase, which is hung onto the walls of a tower) comes to mind when Herbert is reaching for an analogy for fiction in ‘Jordan (I)’ (pp. 197-203). The passage ‘Sundaies the pillars are,/ On which heavn’s palace arched lies’ (‘Sunday’, pp. 270-5) is usually explained in terms of Francis Bacon’s advice to erect an arched trellis around a garden (thus picking up the poem’s following reference to the ‘fruitfull beds’ which are separated by bare paths). But to do so makes little sense of ‘heav’ns palace’. However, this phrase comes into focus if the lines are read as a reference to the ‘pillars’ or ‘sommers’ of a church aisle, on which the rafters rest. ‘Man’ (pp. 330-6) opens conversationally with ‘My God, I heard this day,/ That none doth build a stately habitation,/ But he that means to dwell therein’, perhaps a comment that stuck in Herbert’s memory as relevant to his circumstances, both at St. Mary’s (where he did not mean to stay) or at Bemerton (where he did).

⁶⁵ Cocke and Kidson, *Salisbury Cathedral*, pp. 17-18; ‘Salisbury 1634’, p. 129; Church of England, *Articles to be Enquired*, A3 v.

Of course, none of these references are conclusive evidence of personal experience. After all, Herbert can mention Mount Etna ('Sinnes Round', pp. 429-31) without anyone assuming that he toured Sicily. His reading, particularly of scriptural images of the temple or house of prayer, could provide him with architectural analogies, drawing on God who gave the measures of Noah's ark, the tabernacle built by Moses, and Solomon's temple.⁶⁶ 'Sion' (pp. 381-3), for instance, starts with a description of Solomon's temple, before turning to the inner temple: 'now thy Architecture meets with sinne;/ For all thy frame and fabric is within'. The common image of the divine Architect appears in many religious texts of the time, like Robert Barrell's The Spirituall Architecture. Or, the Balance of Gods Sanctuary (1624), Matthew Brookes's The House of God, the Sure Foundation, the Stones, the Workmen and Order of the Building (1627), and Matthew Griffiths's Bethel: or, A Forme for Families in Which all Sorts.. are so Squared, and Framed by the Word of God... for Usefull Pieces in God's Building (1633).

But Herbert adds to this image by alluding to concrete building works in an unusually contemporary idiom. After all, Sherfield did not object to the image of God as an architect, but to showing him relying on a contemporary professional instrument, a pair of compasses. Some sense of what a non-specialist might need to know in dealing with contractors comes in a couple of books put out some thirty years later, specifically for the novice builder. The Great Fire of London meant that many householders had to grapple with the technical elements of a structure, the units of measurement, costs, and quality criteria for a range of construction materials, and wage rates for skilled and unskilled labour. Cross-referencing to these, Herbert's technical vocabulary proves remarkably accurate, from cement to summers.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ G. Herbert, The English Poems of George Herbert, ed. C.A. Patrides (London: J.M. Dent, 1974), p. 16; S. Hanley, 'Temples in The Temple: George Herbert's Study of the Church', SEL 1500-1900 8.1 (1968), pp. 121-35.

⁶⁷ W. Leybourn, A Platform for Purhasers, Guide for Builders, Mate for Measurers (1668) on mortar, pp. 106-7; paving, pp. 107-10, 116-7; timber, pp. 110-12; locks, p. 113; glass, pp. 113-5; summers, p. 132; S.P., The City and Country Builder and Purchaser (1667) on tiles and bricks, pp. 51, 55, 57-9; lime, pp. 51-2, 55; timber, p. 52; summers, pp. 52, 97, 59-60; winding stairs, p. 66; paving, p. 68; iron balconies (note the weight of these, and the care needed to calculate if the wall would bear them), pp. 69, 150.

A number of fresh approaches are catalysed by recognizing the ubiquity of this concrete idiom in The Temple. First, a new authorial persona appears: to devout minister, polished courtier, and rapt musician can be added perspicacious and knowledgeable, but perhaps rather anxious, site manager. Second, the materials he works with come from the bible and the daily life, Solomon's Temple and the very local parish church. Third, Herbert's own work on the four physical buildings is recast in the poems as a form of spiritual labour. Fourth, the poems themselves (or at least the metaphors and idiom animating them) could well have nudged prospective donors into contributing to church repairs.

A fifth benefit is helping to see how Herbert's poems were received. Christopher Harvey's The Synagogue was usually bound with The Temple between its first edition in 1640 and that of 1650 (and always bound together for the next two hundred years). About a quarter of the poems in the 1640 Synagogue show Harvey's robust enthusiasm for substantial images of a kickable church, from poems on the fabric ('A Stepping-Stone to the Threshold of Mr. Herbert's Church-Porch', 'The Churchyard', 'The Church-Stile', 'The Church-Gate', 'Church-Walls', 'The Church', and 'The Church-Porch') to those on the furnishings ('The Font', 'The Pulpit', and 'The Communion Table'). Harvey's poems are self-consciously allegorical, pointing the reader to a thing and then saying exactly what it stands for:

Seest thou that Stile? Observe, then, how it rises,
Step after step, and equally descends:
Such is the way to win celestial prizes;
Humility the course begins and ends.⁶⁸

The reader is told to look, view, turn to, walk round, and even perch on the concrete things described (no fear here of confusing representation and reality). The consequence of binding the two books together, Dyck points out, is that The Temple was inevitably partly interpreted through Harvey's concentration on construing the church in's disciplinary organisation.⁶⁹ But one could take Dyck's point even further, to say that (at least for Harvey) The Temple was partly about a literal temple.

⁶⁸ C. Harvey, The Synagogue, or the Shadow of The Temple, in The Complete Poems of Christopher Harvey, ed. A.B. Grosart (London: Fuller Worthies Library, 1874), p. 8.

⁶⁹ P. Dyck, 'Approaching the Table: Invitation and the Structure of Herbert's "The Church"', George Herbert Journal 35.1-2 (2011-12), pp. 45-54, pp. 48-9.

A sixth benefit of attending to the register of construction is in helping with the dates of some of the poems. Amy Charles argues that the poems of the Williams manuscript (W) were written and revised over a lengthy period, and that the extra poems of the Bodleian manuscript (B), which includes revised versions of those in W, were copied over a short period of time. She thinks that the demands of Herbert's new job make it unlikely that the extra poems were written after he arrived at Bemerton. Helen Wilcox adds that Herbert almost certainly saw W and corrected it, and that B is probably a presentation copy, stating that the poems in W were probably written between 1615 and 1625. Though she does not give her reason, 1625 was when Herbert was installed as prebend, so presumably she is also referring to pressure of work.⁷⁰ I have argued argue that the degree of technical expertise in renovation shown in Herbert's verse is substantial. In consequence, a later end date might be considered for some of the poems of the Williams manuscript (W) than that usually given, of 1625. This new date would at least encompass the period in which the condition of St. Mary's had become clear after the structural surveys were completed, which decided on the necessary repairs and funding. The new date might even include the time when the renovations were going on.

Moreover, knowledge about Herbert's work as a renovator may have increasingly influenced the way his poems were ordered and titled. Church reconstruction was the first thing to spring to mind about Herbert: attending Herbert's death bed in 1633, Woodnoth called the repairs, not the poetry, a work of merit, a 'good work', as also when Ferrar wrote the preface to The Temple.⁷¹ This might be why, sometimes, the titles of poems contract to do more building work than they deliver. 'Church-lock and key' appears to be titled that solely because of the single word 'locks' in its first line (where Herbert's cries to God are locked out by sin). Given that the first edition of The Temple re-arranges the church fabric poems into a sequence comprising 'Church-monuments', then 'Church-lock and key', then 'The Church-floore', and finally 'Church Windows', it is not imprudent to suggest that their final titles and grouping emerged partly from their arranger's memory of Herbert's building work from 1630 onwards. Working backwards in time, B takes this order, but 'Church Windows' is titled 'The Windows', and 'Church-monuments' and 'Church-lock and key' are separated by 'The Anagram'. There is no sign of the sequence in W, which does not include either 'Church

⁷⁰ Charles, Life, pp. 79-87, 138; Herbert, Poems, ed. Wilcox, pp. xxxvii-viii.

⁷¹ Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, pp. 42-3.

Windows' or 'The Church floore', and does not put 'Church-lock and Key' next to 'Church-monuments'. Moreover, W entitles 'Church-monuments' 'Prayer', and 'Redemption' 'The Passion', thus weakening the idiom of construction.⁷²

For me, the final pay-off is to see just how funny the poems are as they square up to the reality of keeping a building in good repair. I started the article by listing readings in which the material objects in the poems dutifully dissolve away, in the course of meditation. But I think that the poems show the contrary to be true: the bloody things remain, however much Herbert squints at them hopefully.

⁷² 'Introduction', in Herbert, Works, ed. Hutchinson, pp. l-lvi.