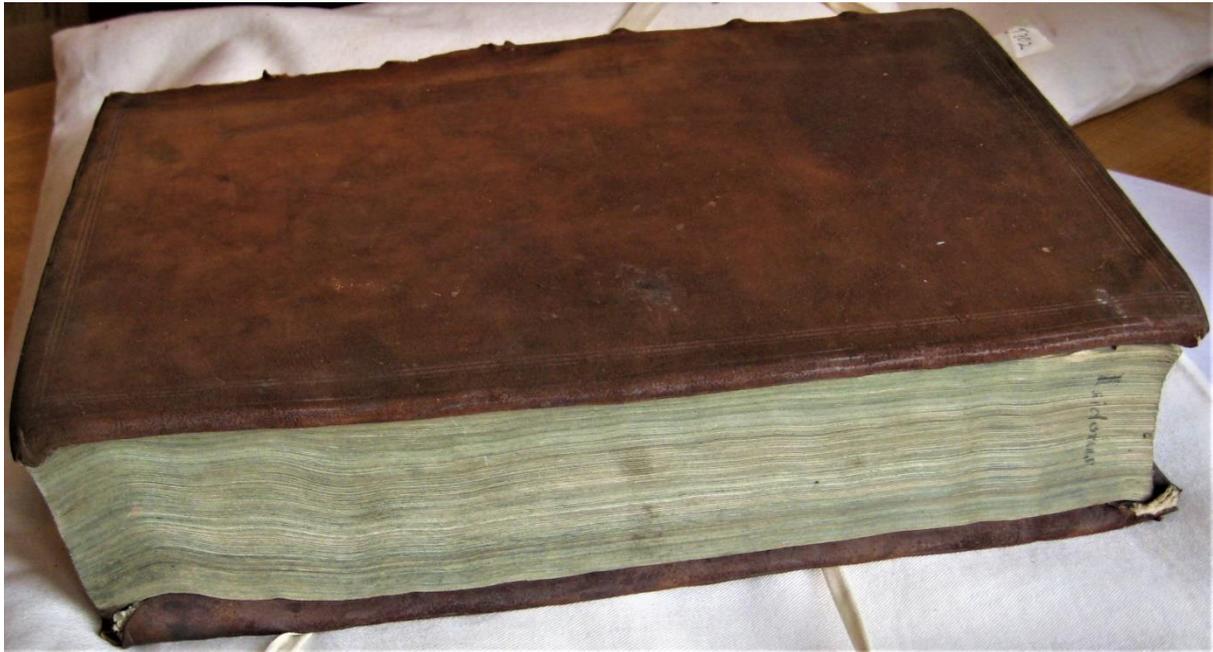


## Saint Isidore *Opera omnia quae extant* (Paris, 1601)



At first sight this is an unremarkable early seventeenth century book in the Ancient Library. The binding is plain, although it feels like suede as the inside of the skin is on the outside – a method known as reverse calf. The edges are pale blue and the name of the author is written on the fore-edge, as at that time books were shelved with the spines inwards.



It is by Saint Isidore (560-636) who became Bishop of Seville and did much to restore learning after two centuries in which the Goths had been paramount in Spain. His collected works were a compilation of all existing classical and Christian knowledge and were used as a standard reference in monasteries, seminaries and universities throughout the Middle Ages. The first printed edition appeared in 1580 and this is the third edition of 1601.

Just below the word 'EPISCOPI' you can see the words 'St James Library in Bury St Eds', which was written in all the library books in about 1715.

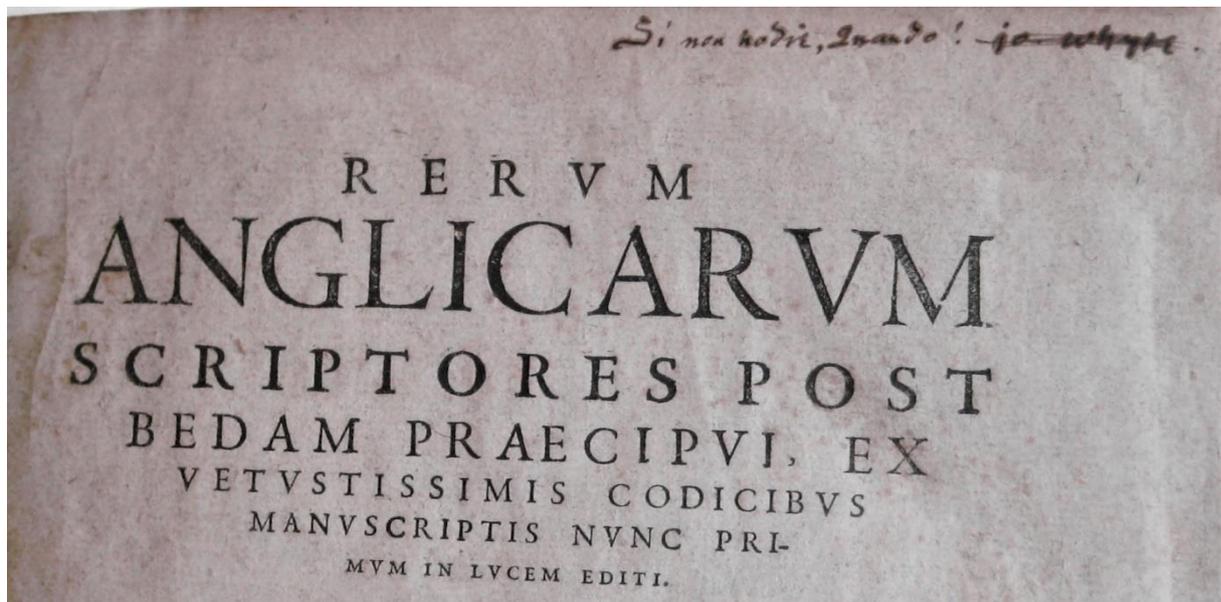


The most striking feature of the title page is the printer's mark which has the ship and compass emblem of the publisher Laurent Sonnius of the Rue S. Jacques, Paris. Early printers often had a decorative trademark to help identify their work. The use of such a mark made it easier to identify pirate editions as it was harder to forge than plain print. A loose translation of the motto is 'He who has some knowledge appreciates his limits.'



This is one of the eight of the books in the library previously owned by Dr John White (1570-1615) who became rector of Barsham in Suffolk in 1609, after serving in Eccles and Manchester. After his death, John White's books were sold and have survived in a number of libraries including Cambridge University Library and Chetham's Library in Manchester.

John White's motto, which appears above his portrait, is 'Si non hodie quando' (If not today, when?). It has been crossed out at the top of the title page in the *Isidore* but is clearly seen in another of his books - Sir Henry Savile's *Rerum Anglicarum scriptores post Bedam* (Frankfurt, 1601), which was donated to the library by Edward White, one of the Common Burgesses of the town.



This book cost £ 14<sup>s</sup> and was brought into this library by  
 exchange for 2 booke of no use for us. N. Vegetius his  
 Art of Warre and Vocabularius Syntaxis.

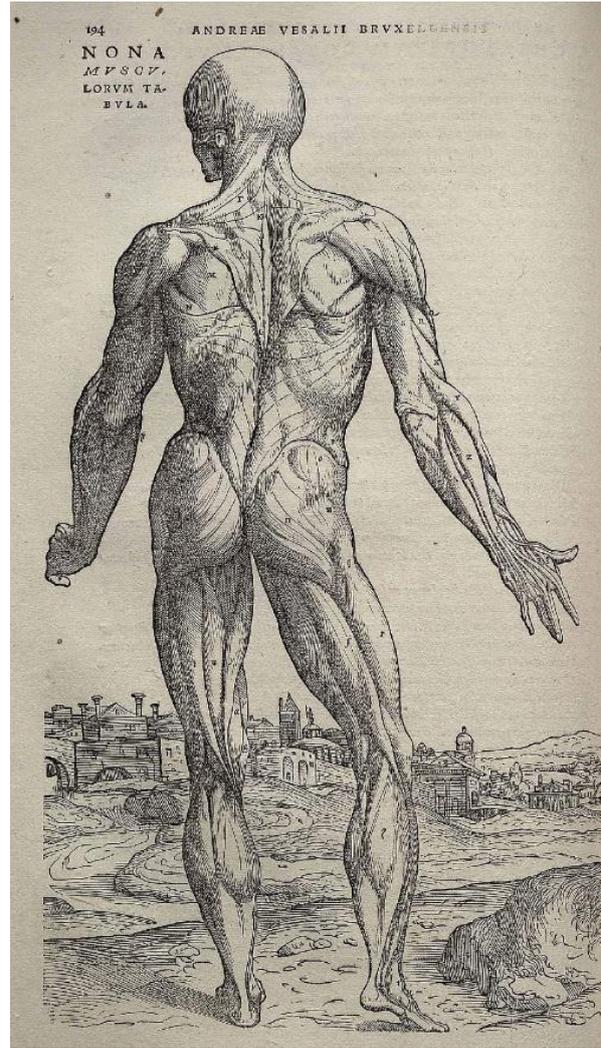
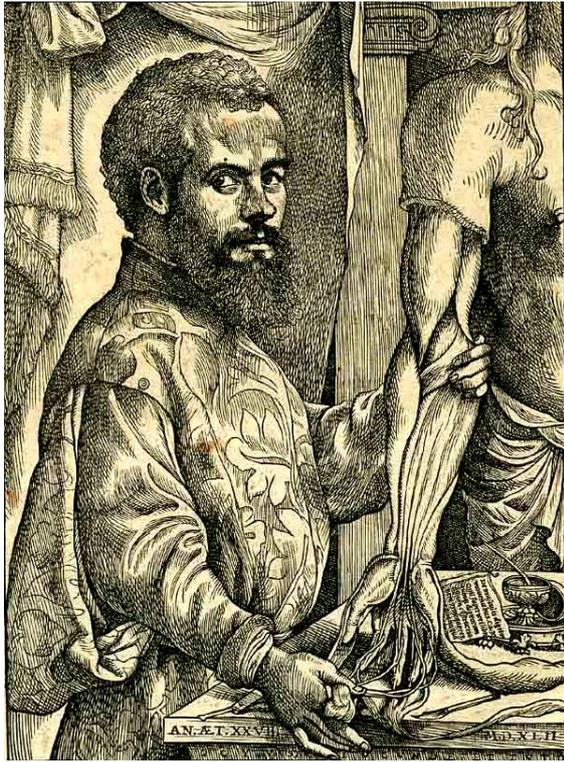
This exchange was made with the Consent of the Church  
 Wardens and other inhabitants of St James his parish  
 by the request and advice of the Ministers.

John Healey Richard Knewstubb  
 Roger Lowdall John Brincknell

The forenamed booke were given to this Library by Mr  
 Samuel Aylmer of Mowden Hall in Essex.

John Healey

An inscription states that the book cost 14 shillings and that its purchase along with others from the sale was arranged by the clergy, John Heiley and Richard Knewstubb, and the wardens, Roger Lowdall (a woollen draper) and John Brincknell (possibly a shoemaker) sometime before 1617. They financed the purchases by exchanging books 'of no use to us' some of which had been given about 20 years earlier by Samuel Aylmer, the son of John Aylmer, Bishop of London.



The exchanged books included one of the most influential books on human anatomy, *De Humani Corpori Fabrica* by Andreas Vesalius first published in 1543. It would be good still to have that spectacular volume but nonetheless an apparently dull book by Saint Isidore gives us an insight into life in Bury St Edmunds in the reign of James I.