

VIKINGS, MONKS AND THE MILLENNIUM

CANTERBURY IN ABOUT 1000 A.D.



TWO MILLENNIUM LECTURES

by

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Canterbury Archaeological Society

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**POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN CANTERBURY
AROUND 1000 A.D.**

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**BOOKS, CULTURE AND THE CHURCH IN
CANTERBURY AROUND THE MILLENNIUM**

by Richard Gameson

Lectures delivered to a meeting of the
Canterbury Archaeological Society
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Front Cover: The siege of Canterbury in 1011. Stained glass window (North Aisle 9) reproduced by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury Cathedral

POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN CANTERBURY AROUND 1000 A.D.

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The advent of the year 2000 has sparked off a number of attempts to reassess the state of the world, or Europe, or Christendom, at the end of the first millennium. Some have been more convincing than others and some more commercially successful. Older ideas, including the notion that there was widespread popular panic in the west as the year 1000 approached, have been revived and then usually debunked. More fashionable is the theory that the decades before and after the millennium saw a comprehensive restructuring of medieval society which prepared the way for several centuries of subsequent expansion; a process described by some French historians as a 'feudal revolution'. Major changes included more productive agricultural techniques, the beginnings of urban growth, advances in military technology, adjustments in succession customs and patterns of political allegiance, the formation of new states, and reforms of the Church. But these developments came in gradually, and at different times in different parts of Europe. Local and regional events show many divergences from what any general theory might predict. In England some continental influences obviously arrived in the wake of the Norman Conquest of 1066, others much earlier. The discussion which follows will focus closely on the period 'around the millennium' and look at wider developments very much from a Canterbury perspective. Canterbury a thousand years ago was one of the biggest towns in southern England and the leading centre of the English Church and its culture. Some of its inhabitants would certainly have been aware of wider changes, in Britain and in Europe. But, as will become apparent, they also had to survive immediate and local problems at home.

We may begin then with the year 1000, and a survey of the contemporary scene, of the kind employed in the dating clauses of some medieval and ancient documents, which list the most important rulers of the day. In England it was the twenty-second year of the reign of Ethelred, later called 'the Unready' or 'Unraed' – ill counselled, though it is interesting that there is no hard evidence of the circulation of this nickname before 1066. Ethelred had become king through the murder of his elder half-brother Edward in 978 when he was still a child, in a plot



Figure 1 England and Western Europe

widely believed to have been instigated by his mother Aelfhryth. By 1000 Æthelred had already presided over a decade of escalating Viking attacks on England with little success in organising military resistance. Æthelred's most dangerous enemy was Swein – later called Forkbeard – then in about his thirteenth year as king of Denmark, though he also exercised effective lordship over the richer southern parts of Norway and Sweden. In 999 he had just defeated and killed his leading rival, Olaf Tryggvason of Norway. Swein too had come to his throne through violence, in his case leading a revolt to depose his father Harald, probably in 987. This period – the late tenth century – was also the period of early Christian conversion in Scandinavia, and it is probable that different attitudes to the new religion had sharpened rivalries between regional leaders and members of the royal family. The extent of Christian conversion across the North Sea was an important issue, because it had an obvious influence on the nature of those Vikings who attacked Kent, and England, around the year 1000. Were they so different from the openly pagan Norsemen who had destroyed most of England's Christian kingdoms a hundred years before, in the ninth century?

Moving south, across the Channel from Kent to Normandy, one long-lived duke, Richard I, had just been succeeded in 996 by another, Richard II, William the Conqueror's grandfather, who ruled until 1026. But this apparent dynastic stability concealed another potentially disordered state and society. The Normans were of course themselves Vikings, 'Northmen', in origin, though granted land in the Seine valley to set up their own state, notionally subject to the king of France, since 911. They were rather further down the road to Christian conversion than the Vikings in Scandinavia though, as critical ecclesiastical writers in neighbouring states were liable to point out, they still had a long way to go. They were not yet the French-speaking Normans who founded so many monasteries as well as castles in England after 1066. The French monarchy had also seen a recent more or less smooth succession, of Robert the Pious to his father Hugh Capet in 996. But France at this time was a kingdom in little more than name, or theory. Though its kings possessed the prestige of anointing and coronation, like those of England and Germany, they governed not much more than the Ile de France, the area around Paris, and elsewhere emergent ruling families presided over almost independent provincial states, like the Duchy of Normandy. From the perspective of Kent, the other really important province was Flanders, whose counts were also slowly consolidating their regional power, though their dynasty dated its origins further back than the Norman dukes, to at least the mid-ninth century. But the most powerful and impressive ruler in Christian Europe at the millennium was the king of Germany Otto III, who also held the title of emperor conferred by the Papacy. Otto had been king since 983, but he succeeded to the throne as an infant, and was to die in 1002 still little older than twenty. In his few years of active rule he sought to build on the imperial title by

establishing effective control over Rome and Northern Italy, though many German nobles were more concerned with expansion nearer home, eastwards into the Slav lands.

In Kent and Canterbury though, many of these uncertainties and instabilities resolved themselves into a specific threat of Viking attacks, with the direct consequences of fear, and occasionally reality, of death and destruction. Indirectly too, there were the almost equally predictable burdens of crushing taxes, or gelds, to raise money for armies and ships to resist the invaders, then increasingly to buy them off, with limited success. This process began in earnest from 991, but it was to get much worse, if we look ahead a decade or so after the year 1000. In 1009 an 'immense raiding army' was paid £3,000 not to attack Canterbury, a huge sum to be raised just by the people of East Kent. In 1011 Canterbury was besieged, captured and ransacked. Among other ecclesiastics the archbishop of Canterbury Aelfheah, or Alphege, was captured and taken away, to be murdered a few months later in 1012 because a profitable ransom could not be arranged. This was the central catastrophic event of the whole period for the city and its region.

But referring to this episode at once raises some real problems. Part of the undoubted cultural achievement of the Canterbury clergy in this period is described below by Richard Gameson. His account redefines the nature of that achievement and its possible sources, but its existence has never been seriously in doubt. In 1984 Nicholas Brooks described what he saw as a golden age of book production and decoration at Christ Church in Canterbury. Furthermore he also pointed out that this was not just the outcome of a successful recovery after 1011, though it is evidence for such a recovery. Its origins lay earlier, and spanned precisely the period, from about 990 onwards, when the political situation was worsening. It is true that institutions or societies under threat of attack sometimes redouble their efforts to define themselves in cultural terms. Rivalry could also play a key role, between the great monasteries and cathedrals of early medieval Europe, just as between the cities and states of Renaissance Italy. Canterbury alone contained, in Christ Church and St Augustine's Abbey, two of the greatest clerical communities of late Saxon England, well capable of competing with and learning from each other. More debatably Brooks concluded that 'the surviving manuscripts betray no sign of any interruption to the life of the community by the events of the year 1011'. But it is hard to see how such continuity was possible in the years after 1000, if the destruction and impoverishment was anything like as bad as some contemporaries claimed, and as later Canterbury tradition believed. The Christ Church monk Osbern, writing in the 1080s, claimed in his *Life of St Aelfheah* that only four monks of the cathedral community and 800 of the town's population survived the attack of 1011.

When things do not quite add up in this way, the first recourse of a historian,

and especially a medieval historian, is to query the validity of the sources. If, for example, a contemporary narrative is concerned with political events, especially dramatic political events, the outcome may be a string of battles and crises which elides the intervening periods of remission, and ignores the bulk of the population who carry on with their normal activities of ploughing, reaping, trading, even copying manuscripts. As it happens, the most important contemporary source, the account of Ethelred's reign incorporated in most versions of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, is of this kind. Written apparently by a single author soon after the end of the reign in 1016, when Ethelred was succeeded by the Dane Cnut, the son of his old enemy Swein, this historian, working perhaps in London, looked back on the whole period as one of mounting disaster. Rhetorical repetitions hammer home the point: again and again the Danes 'worked evil' 'as they wished', defensive preparations 'come to nothing, or 'were of no profit' to the people. The sums paid in Danegeld mount in regular steps: £10,000 in 991, £16,000 in 994, £24,000 in 1002, £36,000 in 1007, £48,000 in 1012, too neatly to be credible in the opinion of some modern historians, though others accept that the figures are plausible. This is a story with a moral, that God was punishing the people for their sins, and that the king, even if not personally responsible, though some of his leading men are singled out for their treachery, could do nothing to save the situation. Post-1066 writers in Canterbury were largely following the same plot, even though in their case it had a happier ending. Recovery from the disaster of 1011, rebuilding of church and community, showed the restoration of divine favour, and formed an analogue to the more recent events of the Norman Conquest, out of which again the Canterbury churches had emerged better and richer than before, despite their trials. The Christ Church monk Gervase of Canterbury was to draw exactly the same conclusions in the late twelfth century, when the murder of Thomas Becket and the fire which destroyed much of the cathedral in 1174 was followed by its rebuilding as a great gothic church in the next ten years. Ironically, though the monastery of St Augustine stood outside the city walls, and is likely to have been more exposed to Viking attack, its later historians preserved a quite different tradition about the sack of 1011: that *their* house 'remained unharmed and free from persecution by the Danes', thanks to a miracle which frightened off the raiders. There is clearly good reason to be cautious in using these sources. The problem this leaves though, is predictable. In considering events in one place, even one as important as Canterbury, a thousand years ago, it is hard to allow for distortions in one or two major sources because there are few others to turn to. In many areas we have to admit ignorance or deal only in probabilities.

One way of putting the uncertainties of the narrative history into context is to try to construct a more general picture of what Canterbury and Kent were like in the eleventh century. The starting point for such local enquiry in most of England is Domesday Book, compiled following a survey in 1086 on the orders of William the

Conqueror. Domesday preserves a great mass of information about England in 1086, unparalleled in its scale anywhere else in Europe at this date, and a lot also about the situation 'in the time of King Edward', that is at the time of Edward the Confessor's death in January 1066, just before the Norman Conquest. The problem here, though, is to move back from Domesday into the pre-1066 'beyond', with only comparatively fragmentary evidence as a guide. In population terms, England in 1086 is usually reckoned to have contained about two million people, on the basis of the 300,000 or so, almost all adult male heads of households, actually recorded in Domesday Book. The equivalent figures for Kent are 13,000 recorded and around 80-90,000 estimated total. National population then increased over the next 250 years or so, doubling or even trebling – estimates varying – until the total was drastically reduced by the plague pandemic, the Black Death, in the mid-fourteenth century. Actual population figures before 1086 are largely a matter of guesswork, but all the indirect evidence, of settlement patterns, place names and so on, suggests that the steady rise observed after 1066 was a very long term trend, beginning centuries before the Normans arrived. We might estimate on this basis that the 'millennium' population around the year 1000 was up to 80% of that in 1086, perhaps more in an early settled area like the south-east of England.

In Kent, the 350 recorded settlements of Domesday seem to show a drastic contrast between the fertile north and east, relatively densely populated, scattered with valuable estates many of them in the hands of the Archbishop and the great monasteries of Christ Church and St Augustine's; and the wooded or upland Wealden lands in the south of the county. In fact the contrast is overdrawn because the Domesday compilers listed manorial centres where services and revenues were paid, not always the same as the places in which tenants actually lived. A map using all available pre-1100 evidence, giving a total now of 500 settlements in the county, somewhat redresses the balance, showing that colonisation of the Weald was already significantly under way. Again, despite continued growth in the eleventh century, we can infer that this was already the case by the year 1000.

The city of Canterbury, like the other substantial Kent towns of Dover, Sandwich and Rochester, owed its size in part to the development of this hinterland. Towns themselves are treated rather haphazardly in Domesday Book. Generally the survey was concerned more with rural assets, in a society in which perhaps 90% of the population were peasants and the great bulk of 'gross product' came from the land. But the Kent text does give quite a lot of information about Dover and Canterbury especially. The Dover entry on folio 1 actually begins the text of the Great Domesday Book, as Kent was bound in as the first county. On the second folio is the Canterbury entry, in the left hand column. Amongst other things, and together with other references to Canterbury in the text, it lists about 600 townsmen or town households which in 1962 Eila Campbell estimated might multiply up to a

total 1086 population of 2,500. That figure looks low, making little allowance for the poor and extended urban households. Furthermore it is not clear how sharp was the distinction between town and surrounding country in terms of residence and migration; Canterbury was already expanding outside its walls, with suburban markets at Longport, Wincheap and probably St. Dunstan's. Such expansion was not just random but served the interests of great landlords who profited from growing trade, as well as customers for urban services. Longport was the St. Augustine's Abbey market, Wincheap abutted the Norman castle which was the headquarters of the royal sheriff, and St. Dunstan's began as part of the large Christ Church manor of Westgate outside the city walls. Nicholas Brooks argued that after adding in the monastic communities and all their dependants 'a figure of about 6,000 inhabitants is not unreasonable' for the whole town of Canterbury in 1086. Again, if we move the time scale back a century from 1086, this has consequences for the likely size of the city about the year 1000. Urban populations fluctuate less predictably than rural ones, but it is still a reasonable assumption that Canterbury at about this time was at least three-quarters of its early Norman size. Osbern, in his account of the siege of 1011, says that the population of Canterbury was then 8,000, which may have influenced Brooks' Domesday calculations, since Osbern was writing after 1080. We must of course allow for rhetorical exaggeration: 8,000 people and 800 survivors looks suspiciously neat.

In topographical terms some differences from the Norman period are clear: the great churches and their precincts are smaller, there is no royal castle. Others are more speculative: the ruins of the old Roman theatre in the centre of the town had perhaps not yet disappeared. But in most respects the medieval street plan, quite different from the Roman one, was fully established. In preparing a map of Canterbury at this time, Tim Tatton-Brown argued that there is no certain evidence for any parish churches in the city at this date, as St. Mildred's and St. Alphege's were perhaps early eleventh-century foundations, but that is more debatable. Nicholas Brooks thought it clear that St. Mildred's, a now lost church of St. Mary, and perhaps others, were already established, some probably as refuge churches for clerical communities which had migrated to the shelter of Canterbury's walls during the ninth-century Viking invasions. Of course that situation is still very different from the eighteen parish churches set up within the walls by 1150.

What other things do we know about 'millennium' Canterbury? To judge from the references to a siege in 1011, lasting for twenty days according to Osbern, and the town falling only by treachery, the old Roman walls must have been sufficiently patched and rebuilt to be defensible. We know the names of a few leading citizens, some of whose descendants still appear as major holders of property and legal privileges in Domesday Book in 'the time of King Edward'. We know that there were several fraternities or 'gilds' of townsmen of different status as early as the

ninth century, and again such a gild is mentioned in Domesday, though only because some of its property had been occupied by a Norman knight in the following of Odo of Bayeux. Specialised markets had appeared: the first reference to the cattle market just outside the walls in Dover Street, which survived until the 1950s, was in 923. Canterbury in the tenth and eleventh centuries was second only to London, though a long way second, as a minting centre, which fits with some archaeological evidence of long distance and luxury trade alongside more basic exchanges. And finally, though some areas within the city walls may have been thinly occupied at this date, especially the marshy land along the River Stour, we know that other parts were heavily built up and demarcated, perhaps well on the way to the populous Canterbury of the twelfth century surveys explored so illuminatingly by William Urry. In a charter of 1002 King Ethelred granted a Canterbury property to a man, also called Ethelred 'on account of his humble service and his sufficient payment, namely seven pounds', actually a very substantial sum. The property was an area 15 rods by 8 within the walls and '6 acres for ploughing outside the wall.' In each case, in an otherwise Latin text, boundaries were elaborately defined in English in relation to neighbouring property owners and public streets. The use of a formal written document to record a transaction of this kind may have been especially common because Canterbury was an ecclesiastically dominated town, though few such texts survive. This one ends 'it was written in the city of Canterbury, which is the metropolis of the people of Kent.'

In conclusion, did the changes experienced by the people of Canterbury in the years around AD 1000 really amount to a drastic turning point, or was the picture more one of alarms and short term emergencies concealing basic continuity?

It is necessary to mention briefly, if only to put it aside, the old notion of a general panic in the year 1000 itself. This was popular with some nineteenth-century historians who imagined much of the population falling to their knees, or cowering in fear, as the fateful day dawned. It is a myth. First because although early medieval clerical writers believed that history was indeed divinely ordained as a series of distinct ages, culminating in the end of the world, and although some of them devoted much time to calendrical study, they did not believe in arithmetical easy answers. The ages of the world might loosely be seen as millennia but these, according to the late tenth-century monk Byrhtferth of Ramsey, 'do not consist of perfect numbers of years.' One of the few specific references to the possible end of the world in AD 1000, by the French writer Abbo of Fleury, was devoted specifically to refuting the idea. There is just as much evidence – that is not much – for the millennium of Christ's death in 1033 being seen as a special date. And in the 990s, people all over Europe continued to make legal and other agreements stretching beyond 1000, in apparent confidence that they would be honoured. Second, many different dating systems were used at this time, especially for the

beginning of each year, several even within the variant texts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, so most people can simply not have known when to worry, at least with any exactitude. This does not though, as some recent historians have argued, rule out a more diffuse anxiety or fear of change, a general awareness that the first decades of the eleventh century marked the thousandth anniversary of Christ's life on earth and that Christian society should by now have made greater progress in implementing its religious ideals. Such feelings provided a ready made explanation for the divine 'punishment' of the Viking attacks.

Looking at the events of 991 to 1016, it is clear that the south east coastline of England was still highly vulnerable to seaborne attack, unless local defence systems worked exceptionally well. The big raids resumed in 991 with the Battle of Maldon, remembered because of the heroic poem recording the death of the local earldorman at the head of his men. In 994 a fleet led by King Swein sailed up the Thames to London, before ravaging along the coasts of Sussex and Hampshire as well as Essex and Kent. In 999 the Danes again came into the Thames estuary, and went up the Medway to take Rochester, after a battle, and pillage West Kent. Sandwich and East Kent were attacked in 1006, and again in 1009 under the leadership of Thorkell the Tall, who marched to Canterbury, and spared it only for a payment of £3,000. Crucially, this time they did not return but spent the winter in England, and the Chronicle records 'in the spring were in Kent mending their ships'. By 1011 the same writer claimed that the Danish army had overrun most of southern England, listing all the affected counties, seventeen in total. As before, he may be exaggerating, but there then followed the attack on Canterbury and the murder of Archbishop Aelfheah. This event was treated as central in later Christ Church tradition, especially because of Aelfheah's cult as Canterbury's greatest martyr saint before Thomas Becket. The late twelfth-century stained glass windows of the cathedral include a portrayal of the 1011 siege and another of the subsequent massacre of the monks, by warriors dressed in equipment of the time of Magna Carta rather than the late Saxon period.

All this seems to fit with a catastrophic view of the whole period, especially when events following 1012 are taken into account. In 1013 Swein of Denmark drove Ethelred into exile and set himself up as the ruler of England, only to die in 1014. The war of succession then resumed, before the successive deaths of Ethelred and his eldest son Edmund in 1016 gave victory to Swein's son Cnut. Through all this it is clear that the churches of Canterbury suffered substantial, if not necessarily permanent, losses. As early as 994 Archbishop Sigeric sold a valuable estate, Risborough in Buckinghamshire, to the bishop of Dorchester, to raise 90 pounds of silver and a quantity of gold needed to pay off a Danish army which had threatened to burn Canterbury Cathedral. A general fear of renewed pagan attack had perhaps never gone away: even in the more peaceful 950s the will of King Eadred provided

for a payment of £400 to Christ Church Canterbury in case it should be needed by the people for relief from hunger or from a 'heathen army'.

And yet, the picture was not as black, or as unambiguous, as it appears at first sight. Risborough was recovered by the next archbishop, Aelfric, with his own personal wealth, and bequeathed back to Christ Church on his death in 1006, hence the surviving record. Other estates may have been lost, but as Nicholas Brooks has shown, there were also substantial gains: 'In such times, more than most, men might seek an eternal reward through pious benefactions.' They might seek also earthly advantages, like King Cnut who after 1016 sought to consolidate his position as a Christian ruler by grants to the Church, above all the grant of the port of Sandwich to Christ Church Canterbury, probably in 1023. This was also the year in which Cnut allowed the bodily relics of Aelfheah to be translated from St Paul's in London, where they had lain since 1012, back to Canterbury, where his cult was now established. It was probably in this period too that Canterbury Cathedral became fully a Benedictine monastery, though the issue is fogged by subsequent invented traditions in the community. In 1993 excavations of the cathedral have led to the provisional conclusion that the building was massively extended after 1011, presumably after 1016, with the addition of an elaborate twin-towered west front. So far as the evidence goes this appears to have been a planned extension and not an attempt to repair damage to an existing structure.

Cnut's success owed much to the fact that as a Dane he was not just a barbarian outsider, but could become an acceptable king to many English leaders, just as Ethelred's weakness derived in part from some of his own nobles' disloyalty, or willingness to do their own deals with the invaders. There were many Scandinavians already settled in England, though the effects of this on local loyalties were not always predictable. Groups of Vikings, or their leaders, tended to act as independent operators rather than as parts of a single political movement. In 1001 or 1002 Ethelred had tried to strengthen his own position by a sort of Scandinavian marriage, to Emma of Normandy, sister of Duke Richard. They seem to have spent some time together in Canterbury just after their marriage. After 1016 Cnut symbolised his victory by marrying the widow Emma himself. Even the ravaging and plundering of the Danes has to be put in a contemporary context. All rulers tended to use 'ravaging' as a way of punishing dissident areas, or even to exact taxation. The first such event recorded for Kent after 980 in the Chronicle was actually perpetrated by Ethelred in 986: 'in this year the king laid waste the diocese of Rochester.' And the great gilds raised to pay off invading armies would hardly have been possible if earlier English kings had not set up a burdensome taxation system for their own purposes. Even the murder of Archbishop Aelfheah, the event which most stamps the Danes as barbarians, was probably the outcome of indiscipline among the troops. If it was an 'act of terrorism' calculated to extract

more protection money, then it was apparently not the outcome of any generally agreed strategy. One contemporary writer claimed that the Danish leader Thorkell the Tall, who later took service with King Ethelred, did all he could to save the archbishop.

It was not then a simple matter of English versus foreigners: the Danes were already part of the mixture which made up English politics and society a thousand years ago, just as England was closely influenced by changes on the continent. Local problems in Canterbury had wider causes and consequences, and so did their resolution, as the city and its churches recovered from the crises which climaxed in 1011. As we have seen, none of the sources can tell us with any certainty just how badly the people of Canterbury suffered in this period. But archaeology indicates that the great churches were not actually destroyed, though their clerical communities must have been disrupted. Learned men were scarce, and even the loss of a few key figures would have been hard to make up. Nevertheless, the subsequent recovery, and the ability of Cnut to rebuild links with Canterbury after 1016, make it at the least *unlikely* that most of the town's population, its priests and monks, were massacred in 1011. The long term continuity of economic and political development, together with the institutional growth of the Church, outlasted the crises of the millennium as it did those of the Norman Conquest two generations later. That is not to say, of course, that it was a comfortable experience for those who lived through it.

Further Reading

Many distinguished scholars have written about the early history of Canterbury since William Somner in the seventeenth century. It is apparent, however, that the progress of research has accelerated in the last twenty years. To mention only the most significant contributions, the pioneering work of William Urry on the topography of the city has been complemented by a great accumulation of archaeological evidence, latterly under the direction of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, and now extensively published – the cathedral nave excavation represents only a high point in this process. And Nicholas Brooks' major study of the Anglo-Saxon Church in Canterbury has provided a new foundation for research in the pre-Conquest period. The list which follows is far from comprehensive, but tries to concentrate on recent studies which contain good bibliographies and guides to earlier work.

Up-to-date accounts of European and French history in the years leading up to 1000 can be found in the relevant chapters of R. Collins *Early Medieval Europe 300-1000* (2ed, 1999) and J. Dunbabin *France in the Making 843-1180* (2ed 2000). There is an equivalent short survey of late Saxon England in P. Stafford *Unification*

and Conquest (1989). On the reign of Ethelred see S. Keynes *The Diplomas of King Ethelred 'the Unready'* (1980) and 'The declining reputation of King Ethelred the Unready' in D. Hill ed. *Ethelred the Unready* (1978) pp.227-253. On Cnut see M. K. Lawson *Cnut: the Danes in England in the Early Eleventh Century* (1993) and A. Rumble ed. *The Reign of Cnut* (1994). The lady in their case has now been studied by P. Stafford *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* (1997). On Swein and the Scandinavian background see B. and P. Sawyer *Medieval Scandinavia* (1993) and P. Sawyer 'Swein Forkbeard and the historians' in I. Wood and G. A. Loud eds *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages* (1991) pp.27-40. On early Normandy see D. Bates *Normandy Before 1066* (1982). D. Whitelock ed. *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (1961) is a full translation of the most important source for late Saxon England; the same text with many others, such as the 1002 Canterbury charter cited above, is in D. Whitelock ed. *English Historical Documents Vol.1 c.500-1042* (1955). The debate over the Chronicle figures for danegeld tax payments can be found in *English Historical Review Vol. 104* (1989) and *105* (1990) – articles by J. Gillingham and M. K. Lawson.

Books on late Saxon Canterbury are now headed by N. Brooks *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (1984); see also N. Brooks 'The Anglo-Saxon cathedral community 597-1070' in P. Collinson, N. Ramsay and M. Sparks eds *A History of Canterbury Cathedral* (1995) pp.1-37.

There are many valuable studies in N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown eds *St Dunstan: His Life, Times and Cult* (1992), including T. Tatton-Brown 'The city and diocese of Canterbury in St Dunstan's time', pp.75-87. On historical writing in Canterbury before and after the Norman Conquest see D. N. Dumville 'Some aspects of annalistic writing at Canterbury' in *Peritia Vol.2* (1983) pp.24-57; J. Rubenstein 'The life and writings of Osbern of Canterbury' in R. Eales and R. Sharpe eds *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066-1109* (1995) pp.27-40. Osbern's account of the translation of the relics of St Aelfheah from London to Canterbury is printed in A. Rumble ed. *The Reign of Cnut* pp.283-315. The 1993 cathedral excavation is fully reported in K. Blockley *Canterbury Cathedral Nave: Archaeology, History and Architecture* (1997). R. Eales 'An Introduction to the Kent Domesday' in *The Kent Domesday* (1992) pp.1-49 is a recent analysis of this source. See also T. Tatton-Brown *Canterbury in Domesday Book* (1987) and E. Campbell 'Kent' in H. C. Darby and E. M. C. Campbell eds *The Domesday Geography of South-East England* (1962) pp.483-562. W. Urry *Canterbury under the Angevin Kings* (1967) remains fundamental for detailed work on the medieval city.

BOOKS, CULTURE, AND THE CHURCH IN CANTERBURY AROUND THE MILLENNIUM

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Our most reliable guide to scribal, artistic, intellectual and arguably even spiritual culture in Canterbury around the millennium is the evidence of the extant manuscripts. Some one hundred volumes of tenth- to mid-eleventh-century date survive which can be associated with Christ Church and Saint Augustine's Abbey: although there have undoubtedly been great losses, and while degrees of uncertainty surround some of the attributions, enough remains to show real patterns in the material. We shall first survey these manuscripts chronologically in broad-time bands, asking: how active were the scriptoria in the period in question; what sort of texts were copied; and how were the books presented – that is, what sort of script and decoration were used? We shall then consider the light they shed on the nature of the two communities and their relation to events at large in the generations immediately before and after the year 1000.

We begin, then, with an overview of the books from the period c. 920-960, the necessary background for appreciating developments nearer to the millennium itself. From Christ Church there is very little indeed: a couple of probably mid-tenth-century copies of the work of the 'local author', Frithegod, a Frankish scholar who served in the household of Archbishop Oda (941-58) and for whom he wrote a metrical life of St Wilfrid whose relics Canterbury had acquired in 948. To this may be added two moderately handsome gospel books dating from around 900, one Irish, the other continental, that were presented to the house by King Athelstan (924-939). It is conceivable that a couple of as yet unattributed mid-tenth-century English volumes, including a text of the Rule of St Chrodegang for secular canons, should also be associated with Christ Church; but even if this were to be the case, they would merely alter the picture from exiguous to very modest book production, confined to the archiepiscopacy of the energetic Oda.

From Saint Augustine's Abbey, by contrast, we have some ten manuscripts that were probably written locally, plus five or more continental volumes which, although we cannot generally say for certain when they reached Canterbury, are easily old enough to have arrived by the mid-tenth century. This is, comparatively

speaking, quite an impressive total for the generation in question; and Saint Augustine's thus emerges as one of a mere handful of English centres that were producing books during the first half of the tenth century. Such activity implies organisation, motivation, and a circle of 'literary' connections, as well as revealing scribal and artistic skill – all the more so given that standards were high. A fairly varied selection of texts were copied, implying access to a reasonable stock of exemplars – some of which undoubtedly came from the continent, above all perhaps from Northern France, like several of the imports referred to above. Thus alongside hagiography (Bede's *Vita Cuthberti*) and a popular Carolingian commentary on the liturgy (Amalarius of Metz's *De ecclesiasticis officiis*; pl. 1) we find Late Antique learning in the form of Boethius's *De arithmetica* and (probably) the Classics in the guise of the *Saturae* of Persius and Juvenal. These last two poetic works (which were presumably valued as models for Latin verse composition) enjoyed a modest growth in popularity in Europe as a whole during the tenth century. There is also, most interestingly, a copy of the *Regula S. Benedicti* – with the implication that, before the 'official' rise of the monastic reform movement in southern England at large (though coeval with its early stirrings on the Continent), the community of Saint Augustine's adhered to the Benedictine Rule.

In terms of physical appearance, these are attractive, well-made volumes. They are written in a fine, early Square Minuscule (an exclusively English script, developed from earlier indigenous writing), and some are ornamented with neat, pen-drawn initials constructed from parts of birds and beasts linked together with interlace (pl. 1). This decorative vocabulary (the so-called 'Type II' style) is peculiar to Canterbury, and quite distinct from that used elsewhere in England at the time. If the selection of texts, not to mention the probable 'imports' imply that Saint Augustine's had ready access to continental models, and although it flirted with the 'continental' method of arranging parchment within the quires, the scriptorium nevertheless pursued its own 'house style' of book production. This degree of scribal discipline in turn suggests a strong communal identity.

The fifty years from c. 960 to c. 1010, and particularly the generation to c. 990, saw a continuation and growth of book production at Saint Augustine's, attested by some twenty-five surviving manuscripts. The types of texts copied were much the same as in the previous generation, but there was naturally a greater range therein. A second copy of the *Regula S. Benedicti* accompanied by germane material, along with the *Institutiones* of the late antique monk, John Cassian – a template for monastic life, which also addresses its problems – reflect the requirements of communal life *per se*. The Latin language is represented by Statius's *Thebaid* and a second copy of Persius's *Saturae*, such secular verse being balanced by Arator's poetic version of the Acts of the Apostles; while Boethius reappears with his popular *De consolazione philosophiae*. There is a fair quantity of hagiography and

I. De XII. Lectionibus

EXLECTIONES

ab antiquis romanis. grece & latine le-
gebantur, q̄ mos apud constantinopolim.
usq; hodie seruabatur; ni fallor pp̄
duas causas. unam q̄a adstant greci q̄b;
in cognita erat latina lingua. adstantq; lati
in quib; incognita erat grece. Alteram pp̄ unam
imitat̄m utriusq; populi, xii. lectiones pp̄ xii. lectiones
dicunt. non pp̄ xii. uarietates scripturam, vi. lectiones
se tantummodo insinuat; Neq; enim si diximus. añ.
uñ. p̄p̄t̄e duas uarietates intelligere debemus.
sed unam; In temporib; quando agimus. xii. lectiones po-
latus ieiunare. Et si p̄uñtunt in octauis p̄ntecostes.
quando celebrat̄ p̄sant̄is septuaginta sp̄s p̄i & neo-
phytonū; vnde dominus beda dicit in omelia sua; q̄t
uñt̄ in h̄c ieiuniorum castigatio n̄sp̄at̄; de ipsorū
ap̄loz exemplo sumptū credere debemus. qui accepto sp̄u.
quo p̄fectius noua celestium bonorum suauitate p̄ueban-
tur. & alius m̄t̄m am̄monia dilectationum abstulne-
t̄m̄estum; Iam enim aduñt̄t̄ t̄m̄pus illud de quodñ
p̄d̄p̄t̄. quia discipuli ipso secum conuñscent̄ ieiuna-
re non poss̄t̄. ablato aut̄m eo ieiunant̄t̄; Nam cum
in̄t̄rogant̄ eum discipuli iohannis. dicentes; Quare
nos ephraim̄ ieiunamus p̄uñt̄t̄. discipuli aut̄ tui

Nicolaus Papa scri-
psit illa in h̄c
scripti. Tomo 2. con-
fite. fol. Cxxxj.

Quia lingue illius
lectiones in cōm
recitabantur.

IN NOMINE TRINO ET DIVINO INCIPIT LIBER
DE VITA S^CI CUTHLACI STRENUISSIMI AC
PERFECTISSIMI ANACHORITAE.

VIT

ITAQUE

morebus aethelredi in lufcun anglozum regis
quidam uir de egnecia fapre mepiciorum cog
nomine peniuall: cuius maritio in medio regna
neozum anglozum parabat: cuius paratū perū
pluxuppedita constabat:

Huius etiam uirū pgenes p nobilissima
illū quum regum nomina ab opugne icles
oiger to opoime cucupit:

Itaque cum iuuenilis æui impudante uigore
plopebat. adoptatū tibi coetanea uirginē

incepi nobi
nuptiarum
tecte: qui
impudellap
Euoluta
piculis qu
nibus mor
C onagi
piens

rum epu
enoi temp
micia ig
plo ppro
tentum. c
cupientia
omnicen
ppresenta
militat s
ppremir

Instituta illa que fiebat in diebus patrum

INSTITVTIO ILLA

QVÆ FIEBAT IN DIEBUS PATRVM

iniorum peccata uiaq; numquam desepuit.
 qui infatuati sunt penitentibus atque lugen-
 tibus suas passionibus ac uita medicamen-
 ta salutis atepine. quia diuersitatis cul-
 parum diuersitatem facit penitentibus
 medicamentorum. Nam si medici corpo-
 rum diuersa medicamenta uel potiones
 solent paccere contra diuersitatem in-
 firmorum. uel iudices peculatum causa-
 rum diuersa iudicia peccate atque diligen-
 ter tractant quomodo peccate iudicent in-
 ter miseros et diuites. Inter causam et
 causam: quanto magis sacerdotes di diuer-
 sa medicamenta animarum inuicibilium
 hominibus penpare et tractare oportet.
 neque scilicet medicum uulnera animarum
 piant peiora. propheta dicente. Compu-
 quesunt et ostenduntur uenerunt cicatrices

L'imp'ne p'pulus d'au' cū u'it' ad eū d'och
 idumeus et ad nūciauit paul.
 et dixit ei alit' d' d' m' d' m' o
 achimelech.



INCIPIT LIBER DE LAUDE

VIRGINITATIS.

AMDDV

ADPONTIFIALE

PROFICISCENS CONCILIABLUM
fraternis sodalium cateruis co
mitatus. almitatis ur̄e scripta
mee mediocritati allata satis
libenter suscipiens. erectis ad e
thera palmis immensas xpo p̄sor
pitate ur̄a gratulabundz ipen
dere grates curavi; Quosilo n̄
solū ecclesiastica p̄missorū uotoz
foedera q̄fida pollicitatione
spopondistis ubertā claruer. uez
cū melliflua diuinarū studia



II

INITIVM EVANGELII
 SECVNDVM MATHEV :

LIBER
 GENE
 RATIONIS IHV XPI ·
 FILII DAVID · FILII ABRA
 HAM · ABRAHA AVTEGO ·
 GENVIT ISAAC · ISAAC
 AVTEM · GENVIT IACOB ·
 IACOB AVTEM · GENVIT
 IVDAM ET FR̄S EIVS : —

BEATVS

VIR QVI

NON HABIT IN CONSILIO IMPIORUM.
SINUUS PECCATORUM
NON FLEAT. & IN CATHEDRA
PESTIS LENTAE NON SEDEAT;

Sed in lege dñi sunt uoluntas
eius. & in lege eius medita
bitur die ac nocte

Et erit tamquam lignum.
quod plantatum ē. secus
decursus aquarum

Quod fructum suum dabit
in tempore suo. & folium
eius non decidet. & omnia
quae cumque fecerit pro
sperabuntur

Non sic impij non sic sed tam
quam pulvis quem proicit
uentus a facie terrae

I deo non resurgunt impij
in iudicio. neque pecca
tores in consilio iustorum

Qui nouit dñs uia iustorum.
& iter impiorum per
ibit



PSALMVS DAVID
UARE PRECORSERUNT
gentes. & populi medi
tati sunt inania

Adstiterunt reges terre. &
principes conuenerunt
in unum. aduersus dñm &
aduersus xpm eius

Dirumpamus uincula eoru.

& proiciamus anobis iugi
ipsum

Qui habitabat in caelis irri
debit eos. & dñs sub sanna
bit eos

Tunc loquetur ad eos in ira
sua. & in furore suo concur
sabit eos

Ego autem constructus sum

rex abeo. super montem
sem eius. predicans pre
ceptum dñi

Dñs dixit ad me filius meus
est. ego hodie genui te

Postula a me. & dabo tibi
gentes hereditatem tuam.
& possessionem tuam ter
minos terrae



Plate 9



INCIPIT EUANGELIUM SECUNDUM MATHEUM.

IBER GENERA

TIONIS IHSU XPI FILII DAVID. FILII ABRAHAM.

Matth. i.
1044-111.
1044-111.
1044-111.

Abrham genuit isaac. Isaac autem genuit iacob. Iacob autem genuit iudam & fr̄ eius. Iudas autem genuit phares & zaram de thamar. Phares autem genuit esrom. Esrom autem genuit aram. Aram autem genuit aminadab. Aminadab autem genuit naason. Naason autem genuit salmon. Salmon autem genuit booz de rechemab. Booz autem genuit obeh ex ruth. Obeh autem genuit iesse. Iesse autem genuit dauid regem. Dauid autem rex genuit salomonem, ex ea que fuit urie. Salomon autem genuit roboam. Roboam autem genuit abia. Abia autem genuit asa. Asa autem genuit iosaphath. Iosaphath autem genuit ioriam. Ioriam autem genuit oziam. Ozias autem genuit ioatham. Ioatham autem genuit achaz. Achaz autem genuit ezechiam. Ezechias autem genuit manassen. Manasses autem genuit amon. Amon autem genuit iosiam. Iosias autem genuit iechoniam & fr̄ eius. in transmigratione babilonis. Et post transmigrationem babilonis. iechonias genuit salathiel. Salathiel autem genuit



Plate 12

sacred biography – albeit very insular in focus, including as it does the lives of Cuthbert, Guthlac (pl. 2), Benedict Biscop and Dunstan, as well as that of the Anglo-Saxons' 'patron saint' Gregory the Great, the last three of whom all had direct connections with Saint Augustine's Abbey. The *De virginitate* of Aldhelm of Malmesbury (†709x10) – an improving catalogue of famous virgins written in highly complex Latin – straddles all these classes. Gregory the Great is also represented directly by his most widely read work, the *Regula pastoralis*, a practical guide to pastoral care with reflections on the responsibilities and pitfalls of authority. Overall, even allowing for significant losses, this would seem to have been a fairly conservative collection; and the occasional exotic item notwithstanding, it was greatly inferior in range to the libraries that had been build up by comparable continental foundations in the admittedly different circumstances of ninth-century mainland Europe. In view of the relative homogeneity of the collection, one may assume that its restricted scope met – and reflects – the modest needs and interests of the community.

Yet if Saint Augustine's was unadventurous in its choice of texts, it took considerable care over the appearance of the volumes it made. As before, many of the manuscripts are very handsome for reading books – as opposed to liturgica – some of them exceedingly so. Although figural imagery is rare, the best have fine 'Type II' initials, accompanied by rows of monumental coloured capitals (pl. 2). Some of the initials are considerably more complicated than the earlier essays in the style, while the displays of coloured capitals are bigger and bolder. If the basic conception of the display pages was inspired by Carolingian manuscripts, the particular form of the lettering was distinctive to Canterbury. Particularly extensive 'runs' of decorated initials appear in the copies of the *Regula S. Benedicti* and Aldhelm's *De virginitate*, marking the subdivisions of the texts; while especially grand ornamental letters plus coloured display capitals adorn the *Vitae Pauli et Guthlaci* (pl. 2) and Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*. It is a moot point whether these works were deliberately singled out for 'special treatment', or whether they were simply the serendipitous occasions on which the finest artists were able to indulge their talent.

If the decorative vocabulary was fairly consistent, remaining faithful to the styles developed in the previous generations, script by contrast was polarised. While a couple of scribes at Saint Augustine's continued to employ a steadily evolving Square Minuscule (pl. 2 shows the work of one of the latest and finest practitioners), increasing numbers used Caroline Minuscule, the script that had become normative in mainland Europe during the ninth century, and in which nearly all the imported volumes alluded to above were written. Although most individual Saint Augustine's books were written wholly in the one or the other, it is clear that the two traditions co-existed for a while. Moreover, the local interpretations of Caroline Minuscule,

though based primarily on continental models, were evidently formed under the influence of the native tradition of writing. On the other hand, the local form of Caroline Minuscule seems to have achieved predominance fairly rapidly, and had almost certainly eclipsed the native script before – perhaps well before – the year 1000. It is impossible to point to a particular event that lay behind the introduction of Caroline Minuscule at Saint Augustine's, or even to date it with precision; however it is natural to wonder whether the arrival of Dunstan in Canterbury in 959 was a contributory factor. Although the two books that can be associated most closely with the saint himself were written in a particularly grand form of Square Minuscule (pl. 4), his connections with Flanders (where he had passed his exile in 956–8) may have fostered links with the continent, where such writing was the norm.

Be that as it may, the tenth-century manuscripts from Saint Augustine's, considered as a whole, do not lend much overt support to the hypothesis that Dunstan converted the house from a community of secular canons to one of Benedictine monks. Rather, they indicate a community that was thriving from *c.* 930 onwards – and other evidence, such as King Athelstan's Grately Law Code of *c.* 926x30, suggests that the date might be pushed back even further – and which may well have been copying the Rule of St Benedict before Dunstan arrived. Though the scriptorium was clearly exposed to continental influence and came to welcome then prefer Caroline Minuscule, one is nevertheless struck more by the continuities than the changes in its oeuvre during the period from *c.* 930 to *c.* 1000.

By the close of the tenth century the main impetus for building up the book collection seems to have been coming to an end. Indeed, one of the latest volumes from this period (and the only one to be closely datable on internal evidence) – a copy of the first Life of St Dunstan which was produced between 995 and 1004 – was made not for internal use but for export to Fleury. Though undecorated apart from a row of display capitals at the start of the Life itself, the main text is well written by a single scribe whose attractive and well-controlled Caroline hand is firmly in the tradition of the previous generation. The slackening would seem, then, to apply to the quantity rather than to the quality of the output in the first instance: after several generations of work, the need for new books – or rather (given that the collection still had gaping holes) the desire for them – was diminishing. External circumstances may have contributed to the apparent decline in scribal effort, for owing to its position outside the city walls, Saint Augustine's was particularly vulnerable to disruption from the Viking raids that began in the 990s.

Turning now to Christ Church, we see a dramatic contrast with the earlier rather desultory phase, as the house formed a scriptorium and burst into productivity. Though firm dates are elusive, the activity in question almost certainly began during Dunstan's long archiepiscopacy, continuing and gaining momentum thereafter; and

we have some forty volumes that were produced between c. 960 – c. 1010,

The selection of texts that were copied is broadly similar to that from Saint Augustine's, the most notable differences being that there is less classical Latin and more liturgica. The fact that the latter class includes a couple of pontificals – volumes containing liturgical texts and directions for the exclusive use of a bishop – reflects the circumstances of a foundation associated with an (archi)episcopal see. Multiple copies were made of Boethius's *De consolazione philosophiae*, Aldhelm's *De virginitate* (pl. 5), and the works of Prudentius. The last, who died around 410, was one of the great christian poets of Late Antiquity; and in point of fact, late antique christian verse is well-represented in the corpus of Christ Church material. Gregory the Great's *Regula pastoralis* reappears, and there is also a copy of his *Dialogi* – accounts of the miracle-working holy men of Italy, including what is effectively the Life of St Benedict. By itself, this is not particularly significant, as the work was widely copied; however there are also other texts, such as Smaragdus's *Diadema monachorum* and Odo of Cluny's *Occupatio*, which relate in one way or another to the Regular life. The former was a popular, practical spiritual guide for monks, written in the early ninth century, which complemented the Rule of St Benedict – as the author says in his Prologue: 'And because it is the custom of monks to read the Rule of St Benedict in the morning chapter, we wish that this little book shall be read daily at their evening chapter'. The latter was a vast poetic meditation on the spiritual history of mankind from Creation to Redemption, plus a critique of the church, whose author was the second abbot (927–42) of the great reforming Benedictine community of Cluny. It need hardly be said that the presence of such works reveals monastic interests and, at the very least, suggests a community under strong benedictine influence. Furthermore, it is highly probable that the house made a copy of the *Regula S. Benedicti* plus other key monastic texts around the same time since, although the manuscript in question certainly belonged to Abingdon by the mid-eleventh century, its appearance has the hallmarks of production at Christ Church on the eve of the millennium.

Two of the 'service books', the majestic Bosworth Psalter (pl. 4) and the more modest Sherborne Pontifical (the latter almost certainly, the former quite possibly, to be associated with St Dunstan himself), are written in a fine late Square Minuscule of grand dimensions. The same script was used for a couple of other texts, the above-mentioned *Regula S. Benedicti*, and a penitential (pl. 3). All the other Christ Church books are written in Caroline Minuscule (pls. 5 and 8): as at Saint Augustine's, the two scripts co-existed for at least a generation. In addition to the practical problems of training scribes in the newly imported script, the very excellence of the well-established Square Minuscule – as opposed to the variable and more hesitant quality of some of the local early Caroline – may have guaranteed its initial survival. But however the phenomenon be interpreted, it indicates

continuity and suggests a degree of conservatism in the Canterbury communities of Dunstan's day: the arrival of the new did not mean the immediate departure of the old.

The history of Caroline writing at Christ Church does, in fact, begin before this period, with the mid-tenth-century manuscripts of *Frithegod*; however the styles adopted in the later tenth century owe little or nothing to those early examples, and suggest instead a symbiotic relationship with the Caroline script of Saint Augustine's Abbey. That said, Christ Church work as a whole seems rather more varied than that of its neighbour; indeed quite divergent hands occasionally co-exist in the same book. This could reflect greater diversity in the composition and contacts of the cathedral community allied to a greater willingness to experiment, but it might equally be due to different scribal standards resulting from the wish to produce as many volumes as possible in a finite period of time. Equal and greater divergencies appear in the broadly contemporary Caroline Minuscule output of Winchester and Worcester.

The visual articulation of the Christ Church texts was heavily indebted to the styles that had been developed at Saint Augustine's Abbey: the same decorative vocabulary of Type II initials plus distinctively formed coloured capitals was used (see pls. 3 and 5). Quite possibly initiated under Dunstan, the close relationship between the two foundations that is reflected here is likely to have been strengthened when Sigeric, a former abbot of Saint Augustine's (970-5), became archbishop (990-4). Though pioneered at Saint Augustine's, the boldest exercises in the style appear in service books from Christ Church, reflecting the higher status of the volumes in question. The largest and most colourful Type II initials appear at the major divisions of the *Bosworth Psalter* (pl. 4 shows the beginning of Psalm 51); while particularly extensive displays of coloured capitals were used for the Gospel incipits of the *Arenberg Gospels* (pl. 7 shows the start of St Matthew's text). Christ Church books include more figural imagery than do those from Saint Augustine's, and the latter manuscript also boasts excellent examples of a technique that was characteristic of its pictorial art around the millennium – coloured-line drawing. Realised directly in green, red, and blue lines, and set against partially washed grounds, the canon tables and evangelist portraits combine the lightness and vivacity of a drawing with the polychromy of a painting (pl. 6 reproduces the portrait of St Matthew).

The most extensive use of coloured-line drawing appears in the *Harley 603 Psalter*, a supremely ambitious volume which was probably started around the year 1000 itself. The presence of a diminutive archbishop adoring Christ in the initial to Psalm 1 (see pl. 8), suggests that it was an archiepiscopal commission and, in view of the likely date of the project, Ælfrie (995-1005) and Ælfric (1006-1012) are the leading contenders. In conception and iconography, *Harley 603* was based on the

so-called Utrecht Psalter, a manuscript which had been made at Hautvillers Abbey near Reims in the time of Archbishop Ebbo (816-35) but which had been brought to Canterbury at some point prior to c. 1000. A *tour de force* of archaising design, the Utrecht Psalter was written in Rustic Capitals, and every psalm was preceded by an extraordinarily detailed literal illustration of its verbal content. Though closely attentive to their model, the first team of Christ Church scribes and artists nevertheless made several fundamental changes in their version: the Romanum psalm text was substituted for the Gallicanum of the original; Caroline Minuscule was used instead of Rustic Capitals; and coloured lines rather than sepia were deployed for the illustrations. In this first stage of work, no fewer than four artists, all highly talented, were involved, one of whom was probably also the artist of the Arenberg Gospels (the iconography of which is, incidentally, heavily indebted to the imagery of the Utrecht Psalter) (see pl. 6). The number of participants itself provides an impressive testimony to the scribal and artistic resources that Christ Church could muster at this time. Echoing the psalter text, the illustrations of the Utrecht and Harley Psalters sometimes show the righteous beset by warlike adversaries who are, however, smitten by the forces of heaven. Whatever its eternal, spiritual dimensions, such imagery is likely to have had a strong contemporary relevance for beleaguered Anglo-Saxons in the face of renewed Viking inroads.

The production of the Harley 603 Psalter was an exceptionally time-consuming and taxing business. The project was soon simplified – the scribe no longer tried to imitate the layout of the Utrecht Psalter, while a different artist (a fifth hand) devised his own compositions, drawing on the imagery of the Utrecht Psalter but not trying to replicate it – and it was then abandoned altogether (at least temporarily). Though certainty on the point is unattainable, the events of 1011 provide a likely context for this hiatus in the work. The second scribe of the original phase is known to have been active before 1011 (for he was probably responsible for a charter of 1002x1003); while the datable work of Eadwig Basan, the scribe who subsequently continued the text (and none of whose pages received illustration in his lifetime), all comes from the second and third decades of the eleventh century.

Taking stock of the Christ Church material to c. 1010 as a whole, one is struck by the extent to which the community maintained a ‘house style’ of book design – elements of which had, of course, been borrowed from, and were shared with Saint Augustine’s. If Square Minuscule and Caroline Minuscule co-existed at first, and if no great attempt was made to achieve a truly standardised local Caroline Minuscule, nevertheless the visual articulation of the volumes with Type II initials and monumental coloured capitals, along with the high quality coloured-line drawings comprised a distinctive Canterbury style. Such work is difficult to parallel elsewhere: indeed the exceptional books or isolated exercises in similar style that can occasionally be associated with other centres are likely to be exports from

Canterbury or responses to Canterbury influence. Correspondingly, Christ Church volumes show little or no reaction to the rather different canons of contemporary Winchester book design, which included greater use of gold, a conservative Uncial display script, lavish foliate borders, and an altogether more painterly style of artwork.

When we move into our final period, the generation following *c.* 1011, several dramatic changes are immediately apparent. It must be admitted that, as the dating of many individual manuscripts is necessarily approximate, the following account simplifies a complicated situation; nevertheless, several key volumes are closely datable, and the general picture is hardly in doubt. The output of Saint Augustine's dropped sharply – to virtually nothing. Moreover, the couple of items that were possibly produced there in the following decades are rather poor scribal efforts, while the handful from the middle of the eleventh century show no continuity with the earlier house style of production – suggesting that there was indeed a hiatus followed by a slough. As we have seen, the scriptorium appears to have been winding down somewhat by *c.* 1000, a trend which the early Viking raids may well have accelerated. The events of 1011 would seem then to have delivered the *coup de grâce*. By the time of Abbot Ælfstan (1023x7–1045) the community was vigorously pursuing its landed interests once again and building up its resources at the expense of Minster-in-Thanel, but there is little evidence for a corresponding revival of scribal and intellectual effort.

One of the handful of manuscripts that may have been produced at Saint Augustine's towards the middle of the eleventh century is, it is true, of outstanding interest. The illustrated Old English Hexateuch (a profusely illustrated vernacular version of the first six books of the Old Testament) was a highly ambitious project that required complicated planning and extensive pictorial matter. Nevertheless, the artwork of the surviving copy is mediocre, it remained unfinished, and the volume appears as an isolated, abandoned monument. If in itself the Old English Hexateuch indicates a major change in direction in comparison with the largely unillustrated Latin manuscripts that were produced at Saint Augustine's in the tenth century, its isolation and the dearth of other material suggest a general loss of direction. Even if we allow that some of the fairly numerous unattributed, vernacular manuscripts of eleventh-century date could have been produced at Saint Augustine's, there is little to shake the conclusion that its heyday as a centre of book production was long past. Not until after the Norman Conquest was it to revive. Intellectually and spiritually, then, the eleventh-century community would seem to have been largely content with the legacy of the tenth century.

The output of Christ Church after 1011, on the other hand, remained relatively strong – thirty or so items. In terms of content and appearance, however, it diverges somewhat from the earlier material. Service books (psalters, gospel books,

pontificals, and hymnals) predominate, while reading texts are in relatively short supply. There are plentiful indications that Christ Church was a wholly Benedictine foundation. One thinks above all of the fine, full-page depiction in a psalter datable to 1012x23 that shows the monks of Christ Church presenting a copy of the *Regula S. Benedicti* to St Benedict himself, who teaches them from it (see pl. 9). The imagery and inscriptions, a carefully calculated embodiment of Benedictine values, underline and perpetuate the point that Christ Church is a model Benedictine community which enjoys a direct relationship with the great monastic saint. Yet it was evidently not a community that was concerned to expand and develop its library. Given that the *raison d'être* of a monastic book collection was *lectio divina* and not research, there was no compelling reason why it should. Nevertheless, the stagnation of the collection is surely to be seen as regrettable. The inherited library was already restricted in scope – there was very little that could be described as theological, as opposed to devotional – and its content was becoming increasingly outdated by contemporary continental standards. The lack of the works of the church fathers is very noticeable – something brought into sharp relief by the fact that communities in nearby Flanders (notably Saint Bertin at Saint-Omer and Saint Vaast at Arras) had, and were actively building up their holdings of such material – and nor, it should be remembered, did Christ Church seemingly have any reserve of Carolingian or even Bedan commentaries. The books of the cathedral thus suggest a backward-looking, non-academic community, that was preoccupied with the divine services. And if such a characterisation is wholly reasonable for a Benedictine house without an intellectual at its helm, it is nevertheless slightly troubling for what was also the mother house of the English church as a whole. Not only did the primatial see not have access to many of the texts that were widely regarded as invaluable for the full and just comprehension of scripture, but nobody seems to have been very concerned by this. It is wholly in character that the most striking theological points to issue from the southern archbishopric at this time that have come down to us were made not via treatises or sermons but rather visually and in the context of fine gospel books. The illumination of one such volume incorporates a multivalent meditation on cosmic history and man's place within it, while another includes a pointed pictorial rebuttal of heresy. The importance of such imagery should not be underestimated, but nor should the absence of theological writings.

Allied to the change in content is a transformation in appearance. We find the emergence of a new and particularly elegant form of Caroline Minuscule which – to simplify for a moment – combines the weight and rotundity of the finest Winchester work of the previous generation with the greater height and rectilinearity of some coeval Canterbury hands. Impulses towards the new style can, in fact, be found in both Winchester and Canterbury books of the previous generation, whose script was rather less homogenous than the foregoing.

simplified characterisations imply. Nevertheless, in its classic fully developed form, the script appears to be the creation of the Christ Church scribe, Eadwig Basan (see pl. 11). Eadwig gave his name in a colophon at the end of John's Gospel in one of his gospel books ('Do not disdain, Father, to pour forth a prayer for the scribe. The monk Eaduius, with the surname Basan, wrote this book. May long-lasting health be his...'); and his highly distinctive hand appears in a further three gospel books or lectionaries, three psalters, one fragment from a liturgical book, and several charters. Four of the specimens in question are dated or datable within fairly narrow limits, and collectively these place his *floruit* in the second and early in the third decade of the eleventh century. Whether or not he was working at Christ Church before 1011 – and in the absence of datable work before 1012x23 and 1018, it is impossible to say – he was certainly a dominant, quite possibly the predominant, force in the scriptorium thereafter. Moreover, his influence seems to have spread well beyond Canterbury; the style he pioneered subsequently became widespread in southern England, continuing in some circles (not least at Saint Augustine's Abbey) long after the Norman Conquest. The reasons for this are imperfectly understood; however the fact that Eadwig's style was firmly grounded in the writing of the previous generation, the circumstance that several of his manuscripts were distributed at an early date (one reached York, another Winchester, while two travelled to the Continent), along with the central role of Canterbury within the English church were doubtless part of the explanation.

Around the same time, Canterbury scribes adopted for deluxe books the lavish gold bar and foliate frames that had formerly been the hallmarks of Winchester illumination (see pls. 9, 10 and 12). While coloured display script akin to that of earlier Christ Church books retained a discreet place in this new generation of more opulent volumes (pl. 11), the delicate coloured-line drawings that had adorned the Arenberg Gospels and the Harley 603 Psalter (pls. 6 and 8) were superseded by tinted drawings and fully-painted images (pl. 9). Fully painted initials in the Anglo-Saxon version of the Franco-Saxon style also appear, accompanied by golden display script; and, most unusually, in one manuscript extensive use was made of silver alongside gold, for metallic counterpoint (pl. 12). Although other houses may have practised this ornamental vocabulary by c. 1000, it is logical to presume that Winchester itself was the principal source of inspiration. The most likely secondary source of influence was Saint Bertin at Saint-Omer in Flanders, where similar decoration had been adopted (and adapted) during the abbacy of Odbert (c. 986–1007) – it is there not in England, for instance, that one finds the most important precedents for the use of silver as well as gold in such decorative schemes. Specific contacts between Winchester and Christ Church can be documented from the end of the tenth century: Archbishop Æthelgar (988–9) came from the New Minster, Winchester, while Archbishop Æfneah (1006–1012) had previously been Bishop of Winchester. Similarly Archbishops Æthelgar and Sigeric (990–4) both corresponded

with Odbert of Saint Bertin. Be that as it may, such chronological pointers as we have imply that it was after the sack of Canterbury that the 'Winchester' decorative vocabulary was adopted at Christ Church.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* claimed that in the sack of 1011 the Vikings 'seized all ordained people, both men and women in [Canterbury] ... and afterwards were in the town as long as they wanted; and when they had thoroughly searched it, then they turned to the ships, and led the archbishop with them'. Whatever the exact truth behind this account – and the fact that the archbishop was taken prisoner and subsequently murdered is certain – the event must have been a major trauma. If the manuscript evidence indicates that Christ Church recovered rapidly, it equally implies that the event acted a catalyst for change at both foundations.

What, then, are the general issues that the material we have surveyed raises? Three main points may be made here. The first concerns the monastic reform movement that was spearheaded by Dunstan († 988), Æthelwold († 984), and Oswald († 992), and which swept across southern England once King Edgar was on the throne (959-75). The phenomenon features prominently in the written sources for late Anglo-Saxon England, and thus tends to dominate our view of the history and culture of the period. The view put forward by the reformers themselves was that by replacing clerics with monks at existing foundations and (re)founding others, they rescued the late Anglo-Saxon church from degeneracy. The arrival of Bishop Æthelwold was indeed followed by the expulsion of clerics and their replacement by monks at Winchester; and by the 1020s the monks of Christ Church were claiming that clerics had likewise been expelled there in 1006. However, the less partisan evidence of the manuscripts we have surveyed suggests a different and more subtle picture. It shows, for example, that Saint Augustine's was a thriving community, using the Rule of St Benedict, before the 'official' reform got under way and apparently independent of it. Saint Augustine's evidently enjoyed a close relationship with Christ Church from Dunstan's day; and it was there, rather than from the cathedral, that the oldest surviving copy of the first Life of Dunstan was produced. The manuscripts associated with Christ Church attest to the formation of a scriptorium and to a dramatic revival of interest in the communal library in the later tenth century. Although they fall short of indicating that Christ Church had been 'reformed' as such, they do reveal an incursion of texts and interests that one would associate with Benedictine monasticism. The most overt espousal of Benedictine monasticism in a Christ Church manuscript is found in a volume datable to 1012x23; but if there had been a dramatic change in the composition of the community shortly prior to this, it is far more likely to have been due to the events of 1011 than to a mythical purge in 1006. More generally, the restricted nature of both books collections, particularly as they failed to develop in the eleventh century, reveals the very narrow intellectual basis of the spirituality of such

English communities, monastic or otherwise.

The second point concerns the effect on the two foundations and their culture of political events around the millennium, in particular the Viking sack. Once again the manuscripts provide a counterpoint to other sources. Whatever destruction was wrought in 1011, the Scandinavian invaders obviously did not devastate the libraries of Saint Augustine's and Christ Church – many of whose earlier books still survive. Nor evidently had the repeated Viking attacks on southern England as a whole since 991 and the corresponding necessity of raising large quantities of danegeld – a policy which the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* credits Archbishop Sigeric with advocating – stymied the book production of Christ Church at least. (The case of Saint Augustine's may have been a little different, as we have noted.) Conversely, we know that the archbishopric did face financial difficulties because of these demands; and it may be that the rise in the manufacture of deluxe books at Christ Church after 1011 with more lavish use of gold rested in part on the greater political stability and the freedom from hostile raids that came with Cnut's accession to power in 1016. Moreover, conspicuous patronage of the English church formed an important part of the Danish king's bid to legitimise his rule in England in the eyes of God and man, and this too may have helped to create a favourable environment for deluxe book production at Christ Church. Yet within these broader patterns that might have encouraged change, the manuscript evidence suggests that the early eleventh century in particular was a watershed in the cultural life of both Canterbury communities, and it is logical to presume that the events of 1011 were central to this. The output of Saint Augustine's, which had hitherto been impressive if diminishing (particularly perhaps after the renewal of Viking hostilities), thereafter became first non-existent and then desultory. If Christ Church, being inside the city walls, was saved from at least some of the disruption suffered by its near neighbour in the decade on either side of 1000, and was undoubtedly producing volumes in the second decade of the eleventh century, there is nevertheless an appreciable discontinuity in its work around the time of the sack of Canterbury itself.

It is notable how soon after the sack the scriptorium of Christ Church was not just active, but actually producing very high quality manuscripts. If ordinary library texts were all that was involved one might argue that it would not have been too difficult to import some new scribes; however the production of deluxe volumes by superlative craftsmen using high quality materials is another matter altogether, presupposing stability, organisation, wealthy patronage, and access to suitable parchment and pigments. Restarting the scriptorium might have been a priority, even a matter of pride and prestige; be that as it may, the volumes in question indicate much more than bare survival. Above all they reveal determined and talented personnel; and this leads on to our third and final point.

While one may sometimes, as here, tentatively correlate known historical and scribal facts, or use them to refine each other, one should always proceed with caution. Although a monastic reform may energise a house scriptorium, and though a Viking raid might depress it, scribal activity equally had its own internal dynamic defined by the personnel involved, the needs of the community, the nature of its patrons, and the size of its 'hinterland' at a given time. Not all religious houses – reformed or otherwise – maintained scriptoria; nor were scriptoria continuously productive. On the contrary, they waxed and waned. As we have seen, that of Saint Augustine's did not really revive in the generation after 1011 despite the revivification of the house as a whole. Winchester, which reigned supreme in England in terms of deluxe book production in the later tenth century, seems to have declined somewhat in the earlier eleventh century: significantly the finest book it possessed dating from the second or third decade of the eleventh century was one that had been written by Eadwig Basan, presumably at Christ Church, and exported (pl. 12). On the eve of the millennium the scriptorium of Christ Church was motivated by the wish to build up a basic working library; while its unfinished masterpiece, the supremely complicated Harley 603 Psalter, was seemingly an archiepiscopal commission. Whether the later archbishops, Lyfing (1013-20) and Æthelnoth (1020-38), were significant sponsors of deluxe books is an open question – though the fact that the latter had formerly been dean of the community encourages one to suppose a closer relationship between archbishop and monks (and hence presumptively the scriptorium) than was sometimes the case. Be that as it may, despite the practical difficulties and whatever the state of the community as a whole, Christ Church re-launched its scriptorium rapidly and spectacularly in the aftermath of the Viking sack. And it is unquestionably true that a master scribe played a central role in the production of this new generation of fine books. By a happy chance his name has been preserved, reminding us that amidst larger events and broader historical trends, it was ultimately individuals with personal experiences and tastes who designed, made, and used the volumes in question. If the Viking sack of 1011 appears to have been more important than the monastic reform movement in transforming book production and decoration at Canterbury around the millennium, the presence – or (in the case of Saint Augustine's) absence – of highly talented and innovative, individual scribes like Eadwig Basan was surely the vital factor.

Illustrations

Plate 1 Cambridge, Trinity College, B. 11. 2, fol. 44r. Amalarius of Metz, *De ecclesiasticis officiis*.

Plate 2 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 389, fol. 22v. Jerome, *Vita S. Pauli*; Felix, *Vita S. Guthlaci*.

Plate 3 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 718, fol. 1r. Penitential.

Plate 4 London, British Library, Add. MS 37517, fol. 33r. Psalter, Canticles, Prayers, Hymnal, Monastic Canticles, Masses; added calendar and litany (The Bosworth Psalter).

Plate 5 London, British Library, Royal 5 E. xi, fol. 9r. Aldhelm, *De uirginitate* (prose).

Plate 6 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 869, fol. 17v. Gospel Book (The Arenberg Gospels).

Plate 7 New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M 869, fol. 18r.

Plate 8 London, British Library, Harley 603, fol. 2r. Psalter.

Plate 9 London, British Library, Arundel 155, fol. 133r. Psalter.

Plate 10 Hanover, Kestner Museum, WM XX1a 36, fol. 17v. Gospel Book (The Eadwig Gospels).

Plate 11 Hanover, Kestner Museum, WM XX1a 36, fol. 18r.

Plate 12 London, British Library, Add. MS 34890, fol. 11r. Gospel Book (The Grimbald Gospels).

Further Reading

Many of the manuscripts mentioned here are described and illustrated in one or more of the following: T. A. M. Bishop, *English Caroline Minuscule* (1971); E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts 900-1066* (1976); J. Backhouse, D. H. Turner and L. Webster, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art* (1984); S. Keynes, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts and other items of related interest in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge* (*Old English Newsletter Subsidia* 18; 1992); T. H. Ohlgren, *Anglo-Saxon Textual Illustration* (1992); and M. O. Budny, *Insular, Anglo-Saxon and Early Anglo-Norman Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge*, 2 vols. (1997).

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