CHAPTER V.2

Rites of passage and pastoral care

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It is probably true to say that medieval churchmen in the period 900–1200 displayed rather more interest in the delivery of pastoral care than modern historians have done until very recently. Dismissed as routine, pastoral care has been overlooked in favour of the dramatic transformations unfolding in monasticism, saints' cults and the crusades in the course of these three centuries. Yet the mundane business of the cure of souls lay at the heart of all Christians' experience of the Church to which they belonged. Giles Constable has defined pastoral care as 'the performance of those ceremonies that were central to the salvation of the individual Christian and that were the primary responsibility of ordained priests working in [local] churches': the Mass, baptism, penance, the last rites and burial of the dead, that is the fundamental rites of Christian life, the *cura animarum*.¹ This chapter will focus mainly on the rites for entry into, and exit from, life and the earthly Christian community. The evidence for pastoral care ranges from the prescriptive laws, aspirational liturgical rites, model sermons and other texts to the physical remnants of buildings, ecclesiastical furnishings and interments. Whilst much of the textual evidence is the work of second-generation reformers in the late tenth century and the first decades of the eleventh century, led by Ælfric and Wulfstan I, archbishop of York and bishop of Worcester, there is sufficient testimony, especially when combined with the material evidence, to suggest pastoral care was important to both churchmen and laymen throughout this period.

In England the years 900 to 1200 witnessed such an explosion in the building of churches for local communities that it was singled out for comment at the time. Bishop Herman of Ramsbury reportedly told

Pope Leo IX in 1049 about how England was 'being filled everywhere with churches, which daily were being added anew in new places; about the distribution of innumerable ornaments and bells in oratories; about the most ample liberality of kings and rich men for the inheritance of Christ'.² Three-quarters of a century later the monastic historian William of Malmesbury observed the continuation of this movement: 'You may see everywhere churches in villages, in towns and cities monasteries rising in a new style of architecture'.³ It is impossible to quantify this building and rebuilding: the county commissioners of Domesday Book were erratic about whether they chose to record churches, and there was often a substantial lag between the architectural evidence and the earliest textual records. Nevertheless it has been suggested that by 1100 there were between 6,000 and 7,000 local churches in England.⁴

The clergy of such churches had prime responsibility for the delivery of pastoral care. In his early twelfth-century text, *De statu ecclesiae*, which, although written for an Irish audience, circulated within England, Bishop Gilbert of Limerick identified fourteen offices for priests, but only seven for bishops. The duties of the local priest were 'to preside, to serve, to pray, to offer [the Mass], to preach, to teach, to baptise, to bless, to excommunicate, to reconcile, to anoint [the sick], to communicate, to commend souls to God, to bury bodies'. As Gilbert made clear, in both his text and the diagram which accompanied it, the priest was in charge of the bottom layer of a pyramidal hierarchy, that is of the lesser clergy and the laity (those who fight, plough and pray, both men and women) within his parish; he thus had prime responsibility for pastoral care but above him came the bishop, who was in charge of the priests of the various parishes (and also, at least theoretically, the monasteries) within his diocese. Above the bishop came the archbishop, above him the primate and above him the Roman pontiff. The bishop had responsibility for confirming the baptized with chrism, blessing nuns, absolving 'the people' of venial sins at the start of Lent and of serious sins on Maundy Thursday, holding a synod twice a year, attended by all the priests of the diocese, dedicating

¹ G. Constable, 'Monasteries, rural churches and the *cura animarum* in the early Middle Ages', in *Cristianizzazione et organizzazione ecclesiastica delle campagne nell'alto medioevo: espansione e resistenza* (Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 28, Spoleto, 1988), pp. 349–89, at p. 353.

² *Historia translationis sancti Augustini*, PL 155, cols. 13–46, at col. 32; translated by R. Gem, 'The English parish church in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries: a great rebuilding?', in J. Blair, ed., *Minsters and Parish Churches: The Local Church in Transition, 950–1200* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 21–30, at p. 21.

³ R. A. B. Myrnes, R. M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, eds. and trans., *William of Malmesbury, Gesta regum anglorum*, iii, 246 (2 vols.; OMT; Oxford, 1998–9), i, pp. 460–1.

⁴ R. Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1989), pp. 147, 167.

⁵ J. Fleming, ed., *De statu ecclesiae*, in J. Fleming, *Gille of Limerick* (c. 1070–1145). *Architect of a Medieval Church* (Dublin, 2001), p. 154.

new churches and altars, consecrating the items used within a church and ordaining abbots, abbesses, priests and lesser clergy. The diocesan synod should provide an opportunity for the bishop to discipline priests and hear problematic cases which were too complex or too important to be dealt with at a local level, such as those of contumacious lay sinners who refused to accept sacerdotal authority.

The reality was a much messier and more complex and fluid world of institutional exemptions from episcopal jurisdiction, and unclear and changing boundaries between both dioceses and the territories served by local churches. The structures for the delivery of pastoral care changed in this period. There were seventeen dioceses in England in both 1000 and 1200, but their centres and the areas they covered had been subject to considerable rearrangement in the intervening years. The increase in the number of local churches led to changes in structures at local level. In the early Middle Ages it seems that a community of clergy, based in a minster church, provided pastoral care to the population living in a relatively large area, going out from the minster to provide services in local chapels to widely scattered communities; the clergy of the minster church retained a monopoly over the fundamental rites of baptism and burial in this larger area. The reasons for, and the timing of, the move to the parish structure envisaged by Gilbert in which a single priest was responsible for the delivery of all the pastoral rites within a much smaller area have been the subject of a good deal of debate. Much has been made of the secular and ecclesiastical benefits for local lords to be accrued from establishing a local church with a graveyard: the accompanying tithes and fees for particular rites were lucrative, the building itself an important statement of power in the landscape. Nor was local church building the sole prerogative of individual lords and their families; local communities of merchants and wealthy farmers, acting collectively, seem to have been behind the building of some local churches in this period, especially in the eastern counties of Lincolnshire and Suffolk. Changing church provision also coincided with changing settlement patterns; this period witnessed the emergence of more nucleated villages in central England. Yet local churches were not merely sources of revenue: what went on inside them was also of central importance to the lives of everyone living in these localities. It was through the rite of baptism that people entered into the community, and through those for the anointing of the sick and the burial of the dead that they marked their passing from the community of the living to that of the dead. The presence of Romanesque fonts in many local churches in England, even if subsequently rebuilt, points to

their role in baptism, the bounded graveyards surrounding them to that in death. The establishment of a cemetery alongside a local church may even in some instances have acted as an instigator for the emergence of local communal identity, rather than its establishment necessarily being a reflection of existing ties.⁶

However, the extensive repertory of texts written by and for the English pastoral clergy in the central Middle Ages omits any detailed requirement of the rites lay Christians were expected to undergo in the course of their life. This is not to say that evidence for these rites and the expectations made of lay Christians does not exist, but it has to be pulled together from episcopal guidance on the duties of local priests, liturgical prescriptions about how to administer particular rites and decrees about those whose behaviour led them to be excluded from Christian *societas*. That Christian rites should govern a person's entry into, and exit from, life was so self-evident that there was no need to spell it out. In the words of an early eleventh-century Worcester rite for the consecration of cemeteries, those buried there were those 'who had gained the grace of baptism and had persevered in the catholic faith until the end of their life'.⁷ This rite is from a pontifical linked with Archbishop Wulfstan I, who, in the statutes he composed for his diocesan clergy (c. 1005×8), probably for a synod, was keen to set out the duties of lay Christians:

And it is right that every man learn so that he knows the Paternoster and the Creed according as he wishes to be buried in a consecrated grave or to be entitled to the sacrament; for he who will not learn it is not truly Christian nor ought he by rights to stand sponsor at baptism or at confirmation until he learn it.⁸

The rites of baptism, communion and burial in consecrated ground were fundamental, but Wulfstan also encouraged active participation in the faith: the Christian who failed to learn the two fundamental prayers of the faith risked exclusion from Christian *societas* in this life and the next. Whilst Wulfstan's text here drew heavily on the ninth-century *capitula* originally composed by Bishop Theodulf of Orleans for his diocesan

⁶ E. Zadora-Rio, 'The making of churchyards and parish territories in the early medieval landscape of France and England in the 7th–12th centuries: a reconsideration', *Medieval Archaeology*, 47 (2003), 1–19.

⁷ D. H. Turner, ed., *The Claudius Pontificals (from Cotton Ms. Claudius A.iii in the British Museum)* (Henry Bradshaw Society 97; London, 1971), p. 61.

⁸ 'The so-called "Canons of Edgar"', c. 22 in *Councils and Synods*, i, p. 322 (also for references to Wulfstan's sermons), citing Theodulf of Orleans, *Capitula* i, c. 22, P. Brommer, ed., *MGH Capitula episcoporum* 1 (Hannover, 1984), p. 119; see also 1 *Cnut* 22, *Councils and Synods*, i, pp. 483–4.

clergy, he went on to repeat this injunction in subsequent royal codes and sermons.

The reiteration of this message across liturgy, law, sermons and synodal statutes suggests it had a resonance for the audience of reforming clergy for whom it was intended. More precise injunctions in prescriptive texts allow one to test the reality of such aspirations for pastoral care. Ælfric enjoined in a letter to Bishop Wulfsig of Sherborne (d. 1002) that a local priest should possess a Psalter, the Epistles, a Gospel book, a missal, a hymnal, a 'handbook', pastoral and manual, a penitential and a lectionary.⁹ Although this list echoes those in ninth-century Carolingian *capitula*, it was not merely rhetoric: attempts were sometimes made to implement these injunctions at a more local level. A mid-eleventh-century booklist records how the local church of Sherburn in Elmet in North Yorkshire possessed a sacramentary, a gradual, two Gospel books, two Epistolaries, a Psalter, an antiphonary and a hymnal. There is no mention of a manual for pastoral rites such as baptism, penance and the rites for the dying, but such texts were sometimes combined together with a sacramentary, as in the codex composed either at Sherborne or New Minster, Winchester c. 1061, now known as the Red Book of Darley after its sixteenth-century provenance, which includes towards the end liturgies for baptism and those for the visitation of the sick and burial of the dead. They also circulated separately, as in the codex composed at a similar date at Worcester which combined texts of the vernacular Old English Penitential and *Scrifþoc* with liturgical *ordines* for visiting the sick and burying the dead, alongside other penitential texts.¹⁰ Both manuscripts are probably the product of cathedral scriptoria and they suggest an attempt being made to realize the aspirations alluded to in more prescriptive texts. Both also include Latin pastoral rites which have been extensively rubricated in Old English, a feature which, when combined with the texts of the rites themselves, has recently led scholars to suggest that both manuscripts were composed as educational texts to train priests in the pastoral ministry.¹¹ They thus offer insight into how the higher clergy

⁹ C. 51, *Canons and Synods*, i, pp. 206–7.
¹⁰ Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Miscellaneous 482.

¹¹ H. Gittos, 'Is there any evidence for the liturgy of parish churches in late Anglo-Saxon England? The Red Book of Darley and the status of Old English', in F. Tinti, ed., *Pastoral Care in Late Anglo-Saxon England* (Anglo-Saxon Studies 6; Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 63–82; V. Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Anglo-Saxon Studies 4; Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 57–91.

Figure 13 Liturgical compendium in Latin and Old English c. 1062; English. Cambridge Corpus Christi College MS 422, p. 53; picture of Crucifixion published with the kind permission of the Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge

of two dioceses perceived the delivery of pastoral services outside the great churches of England, if not into what was happening at a local level.

The surviving liturgical evidence for pastoral rites when taken as a whole paints a more complex picture. Pontificals are collections of the services pertaining to a bishop made for, and used by, bishops and their cathedral communities. Some twenty-one pontificals and benedictionals (collections of the texts of episcopal blessings arranged by the liturgical year) survive from the tenth and eleventh centuries; only twelve include

the occasional pastoral offices. Whilst only six pontificals survive from the twelfth century, four include rites for baptism, the administration of penance and the reconciliation of penitents, and the visitation of the sick, burial of the dead and marriage. Fewer episcopal books survive from the later period, but the proportion interested in pastoral care is higher. Such books tell us about the aspirations for practice within the grandest churches in England. The elaborate rites for baptism in the early eleventh-century Missal of Robert of Jumièges and the twelfth-century Magdalen Pontifical presume the presence of at least two acolytes, deacons and other clergy.¹² It is hard to see how they would have been used in a parish church like Haselbury in Somerset, where, we are told in the life of the anchorite attached to the church in the mid-twelfth century, the priest, Brichtric, had only his son to support him at the altar. But the rite of baptism in the Red Book of Darley makes no mention of other clergy. It is pragmatic and therefore perhaps closer to the sort of rite which might be administered by the priest of a local church.

BAPTISM

Liturgical evidence is problematic because it is inherently conservative. English churchmen inherited a rite for baptism which was resonant with tradition. In the early Church adult baptism had been the norm and baptism was confined, except in cases of imminent death, to Easter and Pentecost. In the pastoral injunctions of the tenth and eleventh centuries, following Carolingian precedents, ad hoc baptism was widely promoted. The *Scritiboc*, a tenth-century vernacular penitential, enjoined a penance of three winters' fast on parents who failed to have their child baptized, whilst if a child died unbaptized owing to the negligence of the priest, the priest should be cast out of his orders. Other texts set a time limit of seven or nine days within which a child should be baptized.¹³ Yet despite the emphasis on immediate baptism in the law, the rite for baptism was normally located on Holy Saturday within liturgical books, as it was in the early eleventh-century Missal of Robert of Jumièges and the

twelfth-century Magdalen Pontifical. The Red Book of Darley, on the other hand, included it in a sort of pastoral supplement with the rites for the visitation of the sick, burial of the dead, burial masses and offices.

The rite for baptism which circulated in late Anglo-Saxon England was one which had been standardized by the Carolingians. The texts make provision for both collective and singular baptism, with alternative readings for boys and girls, singular and plural. They presume a one-stop service, in which the infants are exorcized, given salt, the font blessed and the child is baptized, vested in a white garment and given a light, and, only if the bishop is present, then confirmed. Often, however, it seems as if children went without confirmation. What is perhaps most striking about the usual services, as set out in the Missal of Robert of Jumièges and the Magdalen Pontifical, is that, whilst reference is made to the 'infans' no reference is made to their sponsors, the godparents. The godparents' presence has usually to be inferred from a rubric referring to the 'priest taking the child from someone holding him' but no reference is made to their role as vicarious responders on the child's behalf to the various questions. We know from the texts that we have already cited about exclusion that the institution of godparents was viewed as a form of social cement, and that eligibility for that role was integral to inclusion in Christian society. Perhaps because it had a pedagogic function, the baptismal rite in the Red Book of Darley spelled out the role of the godparents more clearly. To the questions which precede baptism – do you renounce Satan, and all his works, and his pomps – the rubrics make explicit that it is the godfather who replies *'Abrenuntio'* (I renounce).¹⁴ Here in a practical book made for the delivery of the pastoral liturgy in the 1060s the significance attached to godparents in the earlier eleventh-century injunctions is reinforced.

It has proved easier for scholars to demonstrate that bishops were concerned with policing and reforming what was going on inside local churches than to link the textual evidence to the material evidence of the buildings themselves, their contents and their surroundings. Nevertheless it is worth exploring the material evidence for what it can reveal about the success of episcopal aspiration. One of the most prominent features of the newly built churches was that most of them acquired in the latter half of the twelfth century a permanent font in stone or lead. Whilst many surviving examples lack any form of decoration, and on others it is confined to foliate designs or formal geometric ones, many were decorated

¹² Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale, MS Y.6 (274); H. A. Wilson, ed., *The Missal of Robert of Jumièges* (Henry Bradshaw Society 11; London 1896; repr. 1994), pp. 93–100; Oxford, Magdalen College, MS 226; H. A. Wilson, ed., *The Pontifical of Magdalen College with an Appendix of Extracts from other English Ms. of the Twelfth Century* (Henry Bradshaw Society 39; London, 1910), pp. 170–9.

¹³ *Scritiboc* viii, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121, fol. 89v; A. J. Franzen, *The Anglo-Saxon Penitential: A Cultural Database* (www.anglo-saxon.net/penance/index.html): 'The so-called "Canons of Edgar"', c. 15 (seven days) and 'Northumbrian Priests' Law', c. 10.1 (nine days), both in *Councils and Synods*, i, pp. 319, 455.

¹⁴ Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 422, pp. 388–9; Gittos, 'Is there any evidence for the liturgy?', pp. 73–4.

Figure 14 Burnham Deepdale font: this stone-carved font shows the months of the calendar year. Each month is represented by agricultural work appropriate for the time of the year except for May. Here the months May to August are represented.

Photograph by the Reverend Stephen Day of Papworth Everard, Cambs.; published with his kind permission

with an iconography which hints at how these fonts may have been the focus of sacerdotal teaching, and preaching, to the local community. The baptism of Christ by John the Baptist is common, as is the rationale for baptism, that is the need to wash away original sin as represented by the Temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and their subsequent expulsion. Also frequent are the Annunciation, the Nativity and the Passion. Sometimes St Peter is depicted clutching the keys to heaven, alongside St Michael weighing the souls of the dead. The didactic function of such objects is made even clearer at Lullington (Somerset), where the inscription reads 'sins perish through holy washing in this font'.¹⁵ Many fonts are decorated more intensely on two sides, suggesting that they were intended to stand in a corner by the door, as well as economy on the part of whoever commissioned them. They are standing testimony to the role of the local church as a centre for baptism within the community. That the parish was the centre for other activities as well is clear

¹⁵ C. S. Drake, *The Romanesque Fonts of Northern Europe and Scandinavia* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 14.

from the Burnham Deepdale font in Norfolk, which is illustrated with the 'Labours of the Months': that for May was not an agricultural task but rather a rogationtide procession. Iconography also sometimes allows the identification of small ateliers, as for six lead fonts in Gloucestershire, all of which are cast from the same mould panel, suggesting either the influence of lordship or the existence of a common atelier serving rival local communities along the River Severn; at the very least it means that by the second half of the twelfth century a permanent font was something which a local church had to have.

The popularity of infant baptism is testified to by the archaeological evidence: there is very little evidence for infant burial in pagan cemeteries, whilst children make up a significant proportion of the burials in cemeteries which can clearly be associated with churches: 20 per cent of the graves in the late Anglo-Saxon graveyard at the church of Raunds Furnell in Northamptonshire were of children, whilst children make up 45 per cent of the graves in a late Anglo-Saxon cemetery in Norwich. Their inclusion represents the success of the Church's message that unbaptized children would not achieve salvation: unbaptized children would not have been buried in such sacred space. More than anything else, their corpses testify to the reality of the Church's preoccupation with pastoral care in these centuries.

DYING

As with baptism, the compilers of ecclesiastical laws displayed little interest in ensuring the laity died and were buried in accordance with the rites of the Church, and were instead preoccupied with regulating the conduct of the clergy conducting these rites and the income from burial dues. The one exception to this seeming neglect is the provision made in penitentials and ecclesiastical and royal laws of the tenth and eleventh centuries for the exclusion of recalcitrant excommunicants from burial in Christian cemeteries as a marker of social exclusion and eternal damnation; exclusion burials, like that of a male, aged between twenty and thirty, whose right hand had been cut off, at the meeting point of the boundaries of three Cambridgeshire parishes, Burwell, Newmarket and Swaffham Prior, and execution cemeteries, like that identified at Guildown near Guildford, have been established throughout this period.¹⁶

¹⁶ A. Reynolds, *Anglo-Saxon Deviant Burial Customs* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 216–17, 245.

The liturgical evidence, like that for baptism, is biased towards elite clerical communities. The sequence of liturgical rites which accompanied the dying person from the deathbed to the grave was established only in the Carolingian monasteries of the second half of the ninth century. The following account is taken from that given in the twelfth-century *Magdalen Pontifical*, but the liturgical rites for the dying were far from uniform in these three centuries. The rite began at the dying person's bedside; she or he was visited by a priest, accompanied by the entire community. The dying person confessed to the priest, s/he was then absolved by all present, signified by kissing all those there; s/he was then anointed with holy oil, and given communion (the *viaticum*). These preliminary rites served as a preparation for death itself. Unless death followed immediately, the majority of the community would withdraw at this point, leaving only a few members to keep watch. When s/he was about to die the brethren would be summoned by the striking of a board to mark the commendation of the soul, led by the cantor: a sequence of prayers for mercy and release of the soul from punishment, an antiphon and psalm. The corpse was then washed, dressed and placed on a bier and, after being sprinkled with holy water by the priest, carried into the church whilst chants were sung. It was placed where the brothers could walk around it on all sides, singing psalms; this implicit reference to keeping a vigil is made more explicit in monastic customaries. A Mass was said for the dead person. Then the body was carried out, whilst bells were rung, to the grave, which was sprinkled with holy water and incensed, accompanied again by chants led by the cantor. Earth was thrown on top of the grave and prayers said for the dead person and all those in the graveyard.

The rite in the *Magdalen Pontifical*, like most of those which survive, was written for a monastic community, probably in this case that at Christ Church, Canterbury: it requires a priest, a cantor, at least two brothers to lead the responses and the presence of the entire community at the commendation of the soul. It is far too elaborate for use in a local church. Yet an attempt was made to give this particular text a universal application: the prayers for the dying and the dead were written in the masculine singular, but feminine and plural readings were added above the line; and the initial rubrics for the last rites were written in the second person, for example: 'You shall say this. The Lord be with you. Let us pray. [*Hic dicitur Dominus nobiscum. Oremus.*]¹⁷. This suggests that the rite may have been recorded with a didactic purpose, to train priests how to conduct the rite.

Here the rite echoes that for the anointing of the sick in the earlier *Missal* of Robert of Junnières in which the rubrics, which are in Old English, are similarly written in the second person.

Other evidence envisages a lay audience for such rites. The rite in the eleventh-century Worcester handbook advises the priest that if the dying person does not know the Creed or the Pater Noster, he should investigate whether he 'knows what is true belief', that is belief in the Trinity and the Last Judgement.¹⁸ The priest is also advised to differentiate how he hears last confession: whilst clerics will be accustomed to making confession, he should encourage laymen when doing so, presumably because it is an unfamiliar process for them. There are also hints in other sources that the laity had a specific role to play in these rites. The Old English penitential makes provision for those standing around a dying person's bedside; in the event the dying person is incapable of speech when the priest arrives, they may attest that he desired confession and communion; if so, the priest should carry out the rite.¹⁹ The rubrics to the Worcester rite outline one aspect of the deathbed which is missing from many other sources: the making of the will: if the sick person is 'a layman, then the mass-priest must tell him to put his household in order, that is, that he must bequeath his things and completely reveal his sins'.²⁰ The rubric also refers to the laying out of the corpse by 'those who stand by', rather than specifying, as in other rites, that it should be undertaken by clerics.²¹ It is clear that members of the laity sought a role in the obsequies of fellow laymen: the statutes of the mid-eleventh-century confraternity of Abbotbury in Dorset make provision that if any member falls ill within 60 miles he is to be brought home by 15 men, and if he dies in the neighbourhood as many as possible should bring the body back to the minster and pray earnestly for the soul.²² Later Anglo-Saxon penitentials written in the vernacular promoted lay prayer: the *Scyrfhoc* enjoins that whilst Mass for a dead man should be said on the third and seventh days after his death, it need not be said on the thirtieth day after his death, as was usual, 'if his kinsmen and relations fast for him and make him some offering for his soul at God's altar'.²³ The Old English Handbook

¹⁸ V. Thompson, 'The pastoral contract in late Anglo-Saxon England: priest and parishioner in Oxford', Bodleian Library, MS Laud Miscellaneous 482, in Timin, ed., *Pastoral Care*, pp. 106–20, at p. 116.

¹⁹ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Miscellaneous 482, fol. 2r; Franzen, *The Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database* (www.anglo-saxon.net/penance/index.html).

²⁰ Thompson, *Dying*, p. 111. ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 82. ²² *Councils and Synods*, i, pp. 517–20.

²³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 121, fol. 96r; Franzen, *The Anglo-Saxon Penitentials: A Cultural Database* (www.anglo-saxon.net/penance/index.html).

¹⁷ Wilson, ed., *The Pontifical of Magdalen College*, p. 190.

comments that the deathbed penance of a powerful man rich in friends was lightened with their help. Here the focus is on lay involvement in burial and prayers after death, rather than on the rites for the dying. The growth in the later eleventh and twelfth centuries in references to members of the lay nobility entering regular communities on their deathbed, becoming a *frater* or *soror ad succurrendum* in order to receive the benefit of the elaborate liturgical rites for the dying, as well as the benefit of monastic prayers for the dead, suggests that such rites had not yet spread to the lay community. Yet narrative texts hint at the normalization of the practice of the last rites outside the cloister. Written in the late 1130s, Geoffrey Gaimar's account of the death of William Rufus, who was shot whilst out hunting in the New Forest in 1100, records how the king anxiously requested that he receive communion before he died, whereupon the huntsman who was with him gave him some herbs to eat in place of the *viaticum*.²⁴ William of Canterbury, writing in the 1170s, recorded how a knight on Henry II's expedition to Ireland was unable to make his last confession, perhaps because he did not know the native language, and died without the *viaticum*.²⁵ There is, however, also evidence for practices which were interpreted as pagan by ecclesiastical authority: in particular the seemingly widespread practice of funeral wakes. Thus Ælfric warned the priests against taking part 'in the heathen songs and loud laughter of the laity', and eating and drinking beer in the presence of the corpse, and recounted a miracle which took place on such an occasion.²⁶

Whilst the Church all over Europe found it difficult to eradicate such secular vigils, the design of late eleventh- and twelfth-century Lincolnshire parish churches may, according to a recent case study, testify to the extension beyond the cloister of the practice of keeping a liturgical vigil over the corpse. This hypothesis suggests that because the base of the bell-tower in these churches was open to the nave it may have acted as the site for a vigil, whilst the siting of windows in the tower's upper chamber afforded the ringers the necessary view of the graveyard to time their tolling of the bells with the carrying of the bier from the church to the grave.²⁷ There is currently insufficient evidence to make this more than a

²⁴ I. Short, ed. and trans., *Geoffrey Gaimar, Estoire des Engleis* (Oxford, 2009), lines 6339–40, pp. 342–3.

²⁵ William of Canterbury, *Miracula S. Thomae Cantuariensis*, IV32; J. C. Robertson, ed., *Materials for the History of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury* (7 vols.; RS; London, 1875–83), I, p. 364.

²⁶ Ælfric, Pastoral Letter for Wulfstige of Sherborne, *Councils and Synods*, I, p. 218.

²⁷ D. Stocker and P. Everson, *Summoning St Michael, Early Romanesque Towers in Lincolnshire* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 79–91.

Figure 15 Tombstone of Gundrada of Warene (d. 1083). This tombstone dates from the mid-twelfth century, when it was made for the reburial of Gundrada and her husband William I of Warene (d. 1088) in the newly dedicated monastery church of St Pancras at Lewes. The text of the epitaph dates from the time of her death.

The tombstone, made of black Tournai marble, is now at the church of St John the Baptist at Southover (Lewes, East Sussex).

Photograph by Edward Reeves (Lewes), published by permission of E. M. C. van Houw

Judgement.²⁹ The inclusion of lead plaques within the grave, identifying the person within, like those found in the tombs of Earl Odda (d. 1056) and Giso, bishop of Wells (d. 1088), suggests a concern to identify the person at the Last Judgement.³⁰ These markers – internal and external – signify that in burial the elite conformed to ecclesiastical authority and, more importantly, to Christian theology.

The correct delivery of pastoral care was clearly important to reforming churchmen in the second half of the tenth and first quarter of the eleventh centuries, but conciliar evidence suggests it was not nearly so central to the concerns of twelfth-century churchmen. This decline in interest is particularly striking if one compares the provisions made in the law codes drawn up by Wulfstan I for kings Æthelred II and Cnut with the canons of councils held by the archbishops of Canterbury in the twelfth century. Thus v Æthelred begins:

First, namely, that we shall love and honour one God and zealously hold one Christian faith and entirely cast off every heathen practice, and we all have confirmed both with word and with pledge that we shall hold one Christian faith under the rule of one king.

²⁹ V. Thompson, 'Constructing salvation: a homiletic and penitential context for late Anglo-Saxon burial practice', in S. Lucy and A. Reynolds, eds., *Burial in Early Medieval England and Wales* (London, 2002), pp. 229–40.

³⁰ See, for example, Figure 12.

Figures 16a, b Burial casket of Gundrada of Warene (with close-up of her name), similar to its surviving twin for her husband, William I of Warene (d. 1088). The lead burial caskets date from the mid-twelfth century, when the couple were reburied in the monastery of St Pancras, Lewes, and are now kept at the church of St John the Baptist at Southover (Lewes, East Sussex).

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He enjoins the regular payment of tithes, plough alms and other dues, sets out how feasts and fasts should be observed and enjoins that 'every man should confess frequently and freely prepare himself often and frequently for going to communion'.³¹ There is a concern here with promoting and regulating lay religion. The conciliar canons of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries are much more prosaic, being concerned with procedure and regulation rather than encouraging the delivery of pastoral care: baptism must be celebrated at Easter or Pentecost unless there is a danger of death, the laity must pay tithes, no charge should be made for chrism, baptism, penance, visitation of the sick and divine unction or communion, nor for burial. There is also an absence of evidence for diocesan synods in the later period. The decline in the legal texts' preoccupation with pastoral care is accompanied by a decline in the survival of liturgical pastoral rites. There is also a decline in homiletic evidence: the final decades of the tenth century witnessed the composition of at least four vernacular sermon collections, the anonymous Vercelli and Blickling collections, and those by Ælfric and Archbishop Wulfstan; the texts of the latter were expanded upon and widely copied in the eleventh century, although the manuscript evidence suggests they were owned only by members of the clerical elite. The evidence for the twelfth century is, however, much sparser, suggesting a lack of interest amongst higher churchmen in the business of the *cura animarum*.

The early eleventh-century churchmen's preoccupation with promoting correct Christian practice has been linked, in part, to a desire to reinforce the kingdom's defences in the face of attacks by the northmen, leading in 1009 to a call for a nationwide three-day fast. Much less attention, however, has been paid to the apparent indifference to pastoral care shown by the post-Conquest clergy. In part, at least, this is because here the leaders of the Church in England were no different from their European contemporaries: higher clergy, as evidenced by the conciliar canons elsewhere, were not much interested in pastoral care. Individuals, such as Robert of Arbrissel in northwestern France and Norbert of Xanten in Flanders, were concerned to preach to the laity, but on the whole reformers seem to have directed their efforts to regulating the lives of the clergy rather than those of the laity. Local factors have also been adduced to explain the post-Conquest episcopate's apparent apathy towards the *cura animarum*. From

³¹ v. Æthelred 1, 22: F. Liebermann, ed., *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen* (3 vols.; Halle, 1903), i, pp. 236–7, 242–3; *Councils and Synods*, i, pp. 344, 355.

the mid-eleventh century onwards there was an influx of Continental churchmen into higher office, exacerbated by the Conquest, and the language problems which ensued have often been thought to explain, in part, the apparent indifference to pastoral care within the twelfth-century English Church. Brichtic, the parish priest of the Somerset village of Haselbury in the mid-twelfth century, complained that the local hermit was able to converse in French with the lords and bishop, whilst his own ignorance of the language rendered him dumb when he met the bishop. Such language barriers must have existed elsewhere and probably, in the face of an ill-educated clergy, posed problems for the effective working of diocesan synods.

But the picture for twelfth-century England is not as bleak as it looks. The copying of pastoral texts, including penitentials and homilies, in the vernacular at Worcester under Bishop Wulfstan II (d. 1095) and at Exeter under Bishop Leofric (d. 1072) testify to the primacy of pastoral care for individual bishops. In the early twelfth century Bishop Gilbert of Limerick, as we have seen, outlined a more extensive list of the duties of a parish priest than anything which survives from the writings of the tenth- and early eleventh-century English reformers, and went on to specify in more detail how these various offices should be performed. Bishop Herbert Losinga (d. 1119), who moved the East Anglian see from Thetford to Norwich in 1096, left the text of fourteen sermons in Latin. Whilst it is usually assumed that these were written for a monastic audience, to be read aloud in the refectory, Martin Brett has shown that they were addressed to a mixed audience, similar to that which has been adduced for Ælfric's *Catholic Homilies*, as is demonstrated by Herbert's reference to married women in his sermon for Candlemas. Although Bishop Herbert's sermons survive in a single manuscript they point to a wider preaching tradition within the twelfth century.³² The vernacular homilies copied at the cathedral priory of Rochester in the mid-twelfth century demonstrate a concern to instil basic catechetical precepts; these texts were copied contemporaneously with Latin texts more suited to a monastic audience, suggesting this collection was aimed at either elementary students or the lay community.³³ Two studies of twelfth-century vernacular homilies suggest that they were not mere copies of earlier texts, but rather reflected the concerns of the new pastoral theology of the parish schools; a

³² E. M. Goulburn and H. Symonds, eds., *The Life, Letters and Sermons of Bishop Herbert de Losinga* (2 vols.; Oxford, 1878); M. Brett, *The English Church under Henry I* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 116–17.

³³ London, BL, MS Cotton Vespasian D. xiv.

collection of vernacular sermons compiled in the east Midlands in the twelfth century denounced marital infidelity, non-payment of tithes and non-attendance at church, and seems to have been composed for public preaching at diocesan level.³⁴ The twelfth-century evidence is thus biased towards the higher clergy, secular and regular: Abbot Samson of Bury is reported to have preached in the vernacular. The higher clergy in this period do not seem to have shared Ælfric's earlier aspirations to provide materials for regular preaching in local churches, but it is clear they were as conscientious as pastors as their late tenth- and early eleventh-century counterparts. Their continued interest, when combined with the wider community's investment in local church building, is witness to the abiding preoccupation with the delivery of pastoral care that existed throughout these three centuries.

³⁴ Cambridge: Trinity College, MS B.14.52 (335): Old English Homilies Second Series: *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century from the Unique Ms B.14.52 in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge*, ed. R. Morris (EETS original ser. 33; 1873).

CHAPTER V.3

Saints and cults

Paul Antony Hayward

No two cult centres in England have exactly the same history between ad 900 and 1200, but if there is a general pattern it is that the period saw three great surges of interest in saints and their cults: the first took place at the end of the tenth century, the second in the six decades between 1070 and 1130 and the third and the most diffuse during the last three decades of the twelfth century. These periods saw efforts on the part of the leading churches to introduce new cults or to renew old ones. At Thorney, for example, there was much activity during the first two phases: diverse cults were relocated to the abbey when it was founded in the 970s; several of these cults – those of Botulf, Tancred, Torhtred and Tova – were subsequently equipped with *vitas* by Folcard, the *vicarius* whom William the Conqueror appointed in about 1069;¹ in 1098 the relics were translated to a new church built by Abbot Gunther, who had succeeded Folcard in 1085; more relics were then acquired in 1105 and 1111 – relics of Theodore the Martyr and then relics of the founder St Æthelwold himself;² but there is little sign that the abbey's repertoire of cults was expanded or that they were provided with further textual support during the remainder of our period. Similar narratives, marked by bursts of interest and lengthy periods of neglect, could be detailed for many cult centres in England, most of them adhering to the broad chronological contours defined above.

Exactly what these patterns of growth and recession signify is the question before this essay. It will assess the capacity to explain these phenomena of the three broad approaches to the cult of saints that have gained

For Folcard and his works, see M. Lapidge and R. C. Love, 'The Latin hagiography of England and Wales (600–1550)', in G. Philippart, ed., *Hagiographies: histoire internationale de la littérature et de l'art latine et vernaculaire, en Occident, des origines à 1500* (Turnhout, 2001), vol. III, *hagiographie latine et vernaculaire, en Occident*, ed. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, eds. and trans., *William of Malmesbury: Gestā pontificum Anglorum*, iv, 1865 (2 vols.; OMT; Oxford, 2007), i, pp. 494–5.

For these translations, see the annals in Oxford, St John's College, MS 17, fol. 29v, and London, B.L., MS Cotton Nero C.vii, fol. 80v.