

Canterbury and Flanders in the late tenth century

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides an edition, translation and discussion of four letters written by Flemish abbots to the archbishops of Canterbury between the years 980 and 991 and preserved in two manuscripts drawn on the archiepiscopal archives in the early eleventh century (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. xv and Cotton Vespasian A. xiv). The letters document the increasing importance of cross-Channel relations in the late tenth century and provide context for a number of hitherto unexplained indications of cultural, religious and financial exchanges between the county of Flanders and England.

In the early years of the eleventh century, persons unknown working at two religious houses, one in Canterbury or Glastonbury, the other in Worcester or York, produced collections of letters drawing directly or indirectly on much the same body of material. The main content of both collections was the letters of Alcuin; but in each case the compiler chose to incorporate a number of letters relating in one way or another to the archbishops of Canterbury. Among the ‘Canterbury letters’ preserved in these manuscripts (London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. xv and Cotton Vespasian A. xiv), we find four letters written by the heads of three abbeys in Flanders to successive archbishops of Canterbury, which are of special interest for the evidence they provide of a little-known aspect of Anglo-Flemish relations in the late tenth century. The letters throw light on the relations between ecclesiastical groups across the English Channel, with repeated reference to the abbots’ friendship (*familiaritas*) with the archbishops. The present edition offers an edition of the four letters, three of which have been collated for the first time from both manuscripts.

THE FOUR LETTERS

*A letter from Wido, abbot of Saint-Peter, Ghent, to Dunstan,
archbishop of Canterbury*

The first letter comes from the monastery of Saint-Peter in Ghent, a seventh-century foundation of Saint Amand. In 944, the abbey was reformed by Count Arnulf I (918–65) and Abbot Gérard of Brogne as part of the count’s active policy to transform monastic communities into efficient strongholds of comital authority and to use their material and intellectual resources to the advantage of

his relations with neighbouring powers.¹ As a result, the monks of Ghent became deeply involved in international politics, especially in relation to England. In 956–7, Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury, was exiled after an altercation with the new King Eadwig. Since relations between the English court and the count of Flanders had been strained for some time,² Arnulf eagerly accepted the dissident abbot in his county and arranged for him to stay at Saint-Peter, where he remained until the summer of 957.³ The accounts of Dunstan's biographers and the cordial relations between Dunstan and Flemish abbeyes in later years suggest that his sojourn in Ghent was one he fondly remembered.⁴ He appears to have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to observe a monastic community that had lived through an age of intensive reform, maintained good relations with the lay elite, and thrived as a result of both.⁵

¹ See Gérard de Brogne et son oeuvre réformatrice. *Etudes publiées à l'occasion du millénaire de sa mort (959–1959)* (Maredsous, 1960) and W. Mohr, *Studien zur Klosterreform des Grafen Arnulf I. von Flandern. Tradition und Wirklichkeit in der Geschichte der Amandus-Klöster* (Louvain, 1992).

² There is some evidence of military confrontations along the coast of Flanders. B. Booth suggests that these were part of the actions taken by king Æthelstan and Louis IV d'Outremer against the expansionist policy of Count Arnulf ('... ad antiquum Anglice gentis amicum... Contribution à l'étude des relations entre Flandres, Angleterre et Normandie du IXème au XIIème siècle', Unpubl. *mémoire de licence* (Brussels, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 2001–2), p. 27; see also pp. 30–1 for the political motives for Dunstan's exile). I should like to thank the author for his permission to consult this work and Alain Dierkens for lending me his copy.

³ P. Grierson, 'The Relations Between England and Flanders Before the Norman Conquest', *TRHS* 4th ser. 23 (1941), 71–112, at 88–9, and N. Brooks, 'The Career of St. Dunstan', *St Dunstan: his Life, Times and Cult*, ed. N. Ramsay, M. Sparks and T. Tatton-Brown (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 1–23, at 14–18. Booth rejects the possibility of a previous alliance between Dunstan's supporters and the count of Flanders on the grounds that relations with Edgar had been troubled ('... ad antiquum', p. 32). On the subject of relations between England and the Continent in general, see J. Sarnowsky, 'England und der Kontinent im 10. Jahrhundert', *Historisches Jahrbuch*, 114 (1994), 47–75.

⁴ The two earliest hagiographers of Dunstan have very little to say about Dunstan's years in Ghent. Adelardus of Ghent, his second biographer who wrote around 1006–12, claims that Dunstan restored the abbey ('in maiori elegantia renovavit') and that he was responsible for the translation of St Wandrille (*Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. W. Stubbs, RS 63 (London, 1874), 59–60; see Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 106–7). At least part of his account can be dismissed: the translation actually took place in 944 (see N. N. Huyghebaert, *Une translation de reliques à Gand en 944. Le Sermo de adventu Sanctorum Wandregisili, Ansberti et Vulfranni in Blandinium* (Brussels, 1978) and E. M. C. Van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint-Wandrille: the "Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranni"', *ANS* 12 (1990), 233–51, at 241). For a discussion of the early hagiography of Dunstan, see E. John, 'The Sources of the English Monastic Reformation: a Comment', *RB* 70 (1960), 197–203, H. Dauphin, 'Le renouveau monastique en Angleterre au Xe siècle et ses rapports avec la réforme de saint Gérard de Brogne', *RB* 70 (1960), 177–96, at 181–2), M. Lapidje, 'B. and the Vita S. Dunstani', *St. Dunstan*, ed. Ramsay et al., pp. 247–59, and F. M. Biggs et al., *Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture, I: Abbo of Fleury, Abbo of Saint-Germain-des-Prés and Acta Sanctorum* (Kalamazoo, MI, 2001), 179–82.

⁵ Dunstan's later biographers, Osbern and Eadmer, claim that Flanders became his second fatherland (*patria*), while William of Malmesbury even suggests that Dunstan occupied the

In 959, two and a half years after his return to England, Dunstan was appointed archbishop of Canterbury.⁶ His promotion evidently raised hopes in Flanders for better relations with the English court. In an undated letter to Dunstan, Count Arnulf requested the archbishop's support in his attempts to restore diplomatic relations with King Edgar.⁷ Unfortunately, it is impossible to know if this letter was sent by Arnulf I or by his grandson, Arnulf II (965–88), but the suggestion that it was written on the occasion of a diplomatic mission led by the abbot of Saint-Bertin in 961–2 is attractive.⁸ The quality of the Latin used in the letter and the association of the count with monastic institutions at that time suggest that the letter itself was written by a monk, most likely one from Saint-Bertin or Saint-Peter. Despite the uncertain date of the letter and despite the uncertain monastic involvement, it is beyond doubt that the Flemish abbeys benefited from Dunstan's positive reaction to the letter and from his efforts to promote a positive image of Flanders at the English court. It is, for example, assumed that he inspired King Edgar in 964 to donate important and lucrative estates in Lewisham, Greenwich and Woolwich to the monks of Ghent.⁹

abbatial throne of Saint-Peter. D. Dales argues that he might have acted as an unofficial prior (*Dunstan: Saint and Statesman* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 46).

⁶ Dauphin, 'Le renouveau', pp. 183–4, and D. Whitelock, 'The Appointment of Dunstan as Archbishop of Canterbury', in her *History, Law and Literature in 10th–11th-century England* (London, 1981), no. IV, 232–47.

⁷ *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, pp. 359–61. On Dunstan's relations with Edgar, see N. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (London, 1984), pp. 247–9.

⁸ Folcuin, *Gesta abbatum Sithiensium*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH SS. 13 (Hanover, 1881), 632. The problem of the authorship of this letter remains unresolved. Stubbs himself preferred Arnulf I. Grierson argued that all of the letters in the collection date from the years 980–90 and that the request for an introduction to the king suggests a new ruler in England, which would apply well to the time of Count Arnulf II ('The relations', p. 91). C. Brett has, however, shown that at least one letter dates from the second quarter of the tenth century ('A Breton Pilgrim in England in the Reign of King Æthelstan', *France and the British Isles in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. G. Jondorf and D. N. Dumville (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 43–70). J. Dunbabin appears to have misinterpreted Grierson's comments regarding Arnulf's reference to friendship or *familiaritas* with the archbishop and dates the letter to the time of Arnulf II, however without offering any convincing arguments to that effect ('The Reign of Arnulf II, Count of Flanders, and Its Aftermath', *Francia* 16 (1989), 53–65, at 58 and 60). J. Campbell is also inclined to attribute the letter to Arnulf II ('England, France, Flanders and Germany in the Reign of Ethelred II: Some Comparisons and Connections', *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London, 1986), pp. 191–207, at 198). Finally, Dales associates the letter with the diplomatic mission of 961–2 (*Dunstan*, p. 46).

⁹ On the disputed authenticity of this charter, see J. Dhondt, 'La donation d'Elfrude à Saint-Pierre de Gand', *Bull. de la Commission Royale d'Histoire* 105 (1940), 117–64, at 119 and 124–5. J. Campbell assesses the extent of the donations ('England', p. 205). In 1016, Edward the Confessor visited Ghent, where he issued a charter to confirm his intention to restore a number of possessions to the monks of Saint-Peter. He fulfilled his promise by issuing a

Together with King Edgar, Æthelwold of Winchester and Oswald of York, Dunstan ensured that a 'Benedictine wind' blew throughout England by overseeing the reform of a large number of monastic communities.¹⁰ A small role in these changes was reserved for the monks of Ghent. In the early 970s, Bishop Æthelwold and a large number of English bishops, abbots and abbesses ratified the *Regularis concordia*, a customary for use in reformed monasteries. Although scholars now agree that the impact of the reforms of Gérard of Brogne and of the customary of Saint-Peter on the English reform programme was fairly limited when compared to the influence exerted by Cluny and Fleury,¹¹ the introduction to the *Regularis concordia* explicitly mentions the fact that monks from Ghent and Fleury had been invited to participate in the preliminary debates.¹² It also appears that Flanders and England exchanged other types of information and that relations were, up to a point, personal. After the body of Saint Gudwall was transferred to the abbey of Saint-Peter in 959, the cult of this little-known saint quickly found its way to Worcester.¹³ An entry for the year 981 in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* mentions the death of Abbot Womar (953–80), Dunstan's host in Ghent; and Womar's inclusion in the *Liber Vitae* of the

charter to this effect in 1040 (Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 95 and 101; Dhondt, 'La donation'; and S. Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy', *ANS* 13 (1991), 173–205, at 177–81). The importance of these charters to the monks of Saint-Peter in the later middle ages is attested in a manuscript from the fourteenth to fifteenth century which is entirely devoted to the monks' estates in England (Ghent, University Library, 536).

¹⁰ C. Cubitt, 'The Tenth-Century Benedictine Reform in England', *EME* 6 (1997), 77–94. Although the reformers would have to deal with considerable resistance in the remaining years of the tenth century, the internal discipline was re-established and the recruitment of monks as church leaders soared (G. Lanoë, 'Approche de quelques évêques moines en Angleterre au Xe siècle', *CCM* 19 (1976), 135–50).

¹¹ L. Kornexl, 'The *Regularis concordia* and its Old English Gloss', *ASE* 24 (1995), 95–130, at 103–4; *Wulfstan of Winchester: the Life of St Æthelwold*, ed. M. Lapidge and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1991), pp. lix–lx; and C. A. Jones, *Ælfric's Letter to the Monks at Eynsham* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 19–20 and 42. H. Dauphin argues that Æthelwold, the prime instigator of the *Regularis Concordia*, had stronger connections with Fleury and Corbie than with Ghent ('Le renouveau', p. 181). Even so, the influence of Fleury on the RC was only marginal and indirect (I. B. Milfull, *The Hymns of the Anglo-Saxon Church: a Study and Edition of the 'Durham Hymnal'* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 16). Lapidge suggests that Æthelwold only mentioned Ghent 'out of deference to Womar', the abbot of Saint-Peter who had retired to Winchester in the 970s ('Æthelwold as a Scholar and Teacher', *Bishop Æthelwold: his Career and Influence*, ed. B. Yorke (Woodbridge, 1988), pp. 89–117, at 99).

¹² *Regularis concordia Angliacae nationis*, ed. T. Symons, in *Consuetudinum saeculi X/XI/XII monumenta non-Cluniacensia*, ed. K. Hallinger, *Corpus Consuetudinum Monasticarum* 7.3 (Siegburg, 1984), 71. For further comments, see J. Wollasch, 'Reformmönchtum und Schriftlichkeit', *FS* 26 (1992), 274–86, at 279.

¹³ N. Baker and R. Holt, 'The City of Worcester in the Tenth Century', *St Oswald of Worcester: Life and Influence*, ed. N. Brooks and C. Cubitt (London and New York, 1996), pp. 129–46, at 145.

New Minster, Winchester, has been taken to indicate that he retired to England in the final years of his life.¹⁴

It was in the context of these exchanges that Wido was appointed the new abbot of Saint-Peter in 980.¹⁵ His abbacy lasted until 30 September 986, and was not remembered as particularly eventful.¹⁶ He was, however, the author of the earliest known letter from a Flemish abbot to an archbishop of Canterbury, in this case Dunstan himself (Letter 1). If the suggested dates of Wido's abbacy are correct, the letter can be dated between the autumn of 980 and the summer of 986. The contents of the missive are prosaic: the abbot excuses himself for sending a delegation so quickly after a recent visit to the archbishop, claiming that he has been forced to do so because of specific circumstances. Apparently, the abbey had suffered from the loss of seasonal pastures, a recurring but disastrous phenomenon. In his letter, Wido requests financial support, expressing his wish that Dunstan's delegation would accompany his own messenger Liefsin, who had been a member of the previous mission and had evidently not yet returned, on his journey back to Ghent.

The exact nature of the recurring losses Wido refers to remains unclear.¹⁷ It seems likely, however, that they concerned the saltmarsh pastures of Flanders'

¹⁴ 'Domnus abba Uoumarus qui olim coenobio Gent prelatu hanc devotus adiit gentem huiusque se familie precibus humillime commendavit.' (*Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey Winchester*, ed. W. de G. Birch (London, 1892), p. 24). Womar's association was, however, with the Old Minster: see Lapidge, 'Æthelwold', pp. 98–9, and *The Liber Vitae of the New Minster and Hyde Abbey, Winchester*, ed. S. Keynes, EEMF 26 (Copenhagen, 1996), 88, noting that there is no reason to believe on this basis that Womar retired to England.

¹⁵ *Les annales de Saint-Pierre et de Saint-Amand: Annales Blandinienses - Annales Elmarenses - Annales Formoselenses - Annales Elnonenses*, ed. P. Grierson (Brussels, 1937), pp. 21–2. Womar probably died on 27 August 980, while Wido himself is believed to have died on 30 September 986. Wido is mentioned in at least eight charters, the first of which is dated 950/3. In charters from 960, 962, 964 and 975/80, a prior named Wido is mentioned in the list of witnesses, while others from 981 to 982/3 mention Wido as the abbot of Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavo in Ghent (*Diplomata Belgica ante annum millesimum centesimum scripta*, ed. M. Gysseling and A. C. F. Koch, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1950) I, 148, 151, 154, 158, 169, 171, 173 and 174).

¹⁶ One notable exception is the dissolution of the personal union (966–81) of the abbeys of Saint-Peter and Saint-Bavo (A. Verhulst, 'De restauratie van de abdijen van Sint-Pieters en Sint-Baafs te Gent tijdens de 10e eeuw', *Feestbundel aangeboden aan prof. dr. D. P. Blok ter gelegenheid van zijn 65^{de} verjaardag en zijn afscheid als hoogleraar in de nederzettingsgeschiedenis in verband met de plaatsnaamkunde aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam*, ed. J. B. Berns, P. A. Henderikx, P. H. D. Leupen and E. N. Palmboom (Hilversum, 1990), pp. 336–42, at 338–40).

¹⁷ Booth's suggestion that Wido is referring to failed harvests and to famine in the region of Ghent is not supported by the document itself; neither is the suggestion that Wido asked for goods rather than money ('... ad antiquum', p. 33; see also G. Mann, 'The Development of Wulfstan's Alcuin Manuscript', *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. M. Townend (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 235–67, at 243).

coastal area, where the monks of Saint-Peter held important estates.¹⁸ In the late tenth century, the region's exploitation system underwent a major transition from small-scale, unembanked sheep farms (*marisci*) to large, embanked pastures that allowed large-scale stockbreeding (and would in the long term lead to the introduction of crops).¹⁹ On these newly won territories, estate holders set out large numbers of sheep to produce wool for the expanding cloth industry (thus turning Flanders into one of the commercial core-regions of North-Western Europe from the late eleventh century onwards).²⁰ A privileged monastic community such as Saint-Peter must have seen its income rise over the course of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.²¹

The downside to the lucrative embankments, however, was that the pastures dried out and sank, thus increasing the risk of flooding when the dykes gave way or when heavy rains saturated the soil. In addition, the creeks and channels which evacuated the tide-waters that had previously submerged the land,²² regularly burst their banks and allowed seawater to destroy the pastures.²³ Wido's

¹⁸ From the final decades of the tenth century onwards, the counts systematically included ecclesiastical institutions in their efforts to steer commercial and administrative life in Flanders. See J. Dhondt, 'Développement urbain et initiative comtale en Flandre au XIe siècle', *Revue du Nord* 30 (1948), 133–56, at 153, and E. Thoen, 'The Count, the Countryside and the Economic Development of the Towns in Flanders from the Eleventh to the Thirteenth Century. Some Provisional Remarks', *Studia historica oeconomica: liber amicorum Herman Van Der Wee*, ed. E. Aerts *et al.* (Louvain, 1993), pp. 259–78, esp. 262. Regarding the scale of contemporary economy, see A. Verhulst, *The Rise of Cities in North-West Europe* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 52–3, J. P. Devroey, 'Courants et réseaux d'échange dans l'économie franque entre Loire et Rhin', *Mercati i mercanti nell'alto medioevo: l'area euroasiatica e l'area mediterranea 23–29 aprile 1992*, *SettSpol* 31 (Spoleto, 1993), 327–93, at 383–4, and A. Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 32–3.

¹⁹ D. Tys, 'De omgang van de mens met overstromingsgevaar in de Belgische kustvlakte tussen de 8ste en de 12de eeuw, enkele aanwijzingen', *Jaarboek voor ecologische geschiedenis*, 1999, pp. 23–37. ²⁰ Thoen, 'The Count', pp. 259–70.

²¹ On the transition to large-scale stockfarming and the impact of these changes on monastic economies, see A. Verhulst, 'Sheep-breeding and Wool Production in Pre-thirteenth Century Flanders and their Contribution to the Rise of Ypres, Ghent and Bruges as Centres of the Textile Industry', *Ypres and the Medieval Cloth Industry in Flanders: Archaeological and Historical Contributions. Good Yarn! Archaeological and Historical Research into the Medieval Cloth Industry of Flanders – Ypres, November 29–30, 1996*, ed. M. Dewilde *et al.*, *Archeologie in Vlaanderen. Monografie 2* (Zellik, 1998), 33–42. Verhulst argues that the first significant commercial transports to Ghent took place in the late tenth century (*ibid.* p. 34).

²² Although Dudo of Saint Quentin's *Gesta ducum Normannorum* are at times fanciful, the story of Rollo's refusal to accept Flanders from the king of France 'on grounds of the obstructive marshes' is interesting (E. Christiansen, *Dudo of Saint-Quentin: History of the Normans* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 49). I wish to thank Liesbeth Van Houts for drawing my attention to this reference.

²³ According to M. K. E. Gottschalk, there is no documentary evidence of a storm surge in Flanders during the tenth century (*Stormvloeden en rivieroverstromingen in Nederland, I: De periode voor 1400* (Assen, 1971)). She has interpreted all references to floodings as river floods, espe-

query might refer to the loss of either *marisci* or the new type of embanked pastures, a regular occurrence in the tenth century.²⁴ Another, less plausible explanation might be that the phrase ‘hornotina deperierunt saltuum pascua’ refers to the clearings in the woodlands in central Flanders. The clearings were excellent locations for pig-breeding. How Wido’s reference to regular destructions of these areas might be explained is difficult to tell, but the importance of pig-breeding in the forested areas is attested by contemporary sources.²⁵ Whatever the real nature of Wido’s complaint, the fact that he came to the idea of asking for help from the archbishop of Canterbury gives some insight into the nature of Anglo-Flemish relations. Wido’s letter, and the reference to a previous mission to Canterbury, show that King Edgar’s donation to the monks of Ghent was not an isolated act, but part of a chain of sustained action on Dunstan’s part to support the Flemish monastery. Wido clearly saw Dunstan as a benefactor of the abbey, a person with whom its monks exchanged much more than mere expressions of goodwill.

*A letter from Falrad, abbot of Saint-Vaast,
to Æthelgar, archbishop of Canterbury*

That this was by no means a unique relationship is shown by the other letters in this edition. On 19 May 988, the archiepiscopal throne of Canterbury became vacant. Æthelgar, Dunstan’s successor, died on 13 February 990 and was succeeded by Sigeric (990–4).²⁶ During his brief period of office, Æthelgar received at least two letters from Flemish abbots, both requesting prayers and material support. The first (Letter 2) was written by Falrad of Saint-Vaast in Arras. According to De Cardevacque, Falrad’s abbacy lasted from the final months of 992 until 1004, although the letter in this edition shows that he succeeded Abbot Malfrid before February 990.²⁷ This is corroborated by the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium* (c. 1024), the only significant

cially with reference to Sigebert of Gembloux’s entry for 988 in his *Chronica* (ed. L. C. Bethmann, MGH SS 6 (Hanover, 1844), 353). Wido’s letter might be used to confirm the prevailing opinion among specialists that regular river floods, rather than catastrophic storm surges, dominated the long-term history of the landscape in Flanders.

²⁴ On the embankments on the estates of Saint-Peter’s abbey, see Tys, ‘De omgang’, pp. 30–1. Especially in the region north of Bruges, more specifically from Oudenburg to Aardenburg and Zeeland, *marisci* formed an important part of the monastic economy (A. Verhulst, *Landschap en landbouw in middeleeuws Vlaanderen* (Brussels, 1995), p. 19).

²⁵ Thoen, ‘The Count’, p. 273.

²⁶ Æthelgar had been a monk at Glastonbury and Abingdon, and was thereafter abbot of the New Minster, Winchester (964–88) and bishop of Selsey (980–8). Sigeric, who had been a monk at Glastonbury, became abbot of St Augustine’s, Canterbury, in 980, and bishop of Ramsbury in 985. He died on 24 October 994 (Brooks, *Early History*, p. 279).

²⁷ E. De Cardevacque and A. Terninck, *L’abbaye de Saint-Vaast: Monographie historique, archéologique et littéraire de ce monastère* (Arras, 1866), p. 91.

source for Falrad's turbulent abbacy.²⁸ Although the *Gesta* shows a great deal of partiality in favour of the bishops of Cambrai, Falrad's main adversaries, it is clear that the abbacy of Saint-Vaast was a contentious issue to say the least. Brought under the influence of the counts of Flanders in the early tenth century by Baudouin II, the abbey and the *castrum* of Arras had been used by his successors as a centre from which to expand their influence in Arras–Cambrai. Although it had suffered from Viking attacks and from alienations by the local nobility, the abbey, with its enormous estates and its own troop of *milites*, was a force to be reckoned with. Falrad, as much a warlord and a feudal potentate as an abbot, forcibly tried to extricate his abbey from the jurisdiction of the local bishops. In the *Gesta*, he was described as a false monk, whose life was marked by a involvement in secular affairs and a tendency to abandon himself to sins of the flesh.²⁹ Although it is impossible to verify the description of the abbey as a brothel, it is clear that Bishop Rothard (c. 976–95) vehemently disagreed with the abbot on the subject of the abbey's exemption from episcopal authority. In a sequence of events dated in the *Gesta* to c. 990, Falrad produced a charter, allegedly issued by Bishop Vindicianus in 680, which put the abbey directly under the supervision of the Holy See.³⁰ In the aftermath of Rothard's death in 995, Count Baudouin IV strategically supported Falrad's rebellion and struck deals with Walter I and II, the wardens of the *castrum* of Arras. In the following years, the abbot had his men raid and burn the bishop's estates.³¹ In 1004, however, Baudouin sensed that he was losing control over the situation. He called upon Bishop Erluin and the monks of Saint-Vaast and deposed Falrad. Falrad's successor Heribert would turn out to be 'not very suitable' (*minus idoneus*), and in 1008 he was replaced by the reformer Richard of Saint-Vanne, whose vigorous but diplomatic policy initiated friendlier relations between the bishop of Cambrai and the count of Flanders.³²

²⁸ E. Van Mingroot, 'Kritisch onderzoek omtrent de datering van de *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 53 (1975), 281–332, and 'Gerard Ier de Florennes', *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* (Paris, 1984) XX, 742–51.

²⁹ *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, ed. L. C. Bethmann, MGH SS. 7 (Hanover, 1846), 446–7.

³⁰ J. F. Lemarignier, 'Exemption monastique et les origines de la réforme clunisienne', *A Cluny: Congrès scientifique. Fêtes et cérémonies liturgiques en l'honneur des saints Abbés Odon et Odilon 9–11 juillet 1949* (Dijon, 1950), pp. 288–340, at 335–40.

³¹ *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, ed. Bethmann, pp. 452–3. After his deposition, Falrad relocated to Reims, where he bribed the archbishop of Reims into supporting his cause. Although the abbot died in the year of his deposition, the author of the *Gesta* tells us that 'he sought bad company in the city and traded with the Jews' ('. . . in urbe turpem conversationem agebat, et cum Iudeis negotia exercebat.').

³² For a discussion of events leading up to the reforms of Richard of Saint-Vanne, see D. C. Van Meter, 'Count Baldwin IV, Richard of Saint-Vanne and the Inception of Monastic Reform in Eleventh-century Flanders', *RB* 107 (1997), 130–48.

Considering the absence of any evidence other than the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium* for this turbulent phase in the history of Saint-Vaast and the city of Arras, Falrad's letter to Archbishop Æthelgar is of the highest interest. It can be dated no more accurately than between the summer of 988 and February 990, but it seems likely that it was sent shortly after Æthelgar's accession. In the letter, Falrad explicitly requests a continuation of good relations between the archbishop of Canterbury and the abbey of Saint-Vaast, claiming that 'he [Dunstan] was the first among our greatest friends'. In the abbot's somewhat outlandish style, the former archbishop is referred to as one 'whose memory is not to be annihilated'. If his claim to friendly relations with Dunstan holds any water,³³ this would mean that Dunstan was actively remembered in the abbey, most likely by means of his inclusion in the (now lost) *Liber memorialis*. The letter continues to assert that its author is convinced of Æthelgar's competence in spiritual matters and of his being a dignified successor to Dunstan. To conclude, the abbot and his monks express their intention 'not to desist pouring out prayers to God for the well-being of your office'.

Except for maintaining or establishing good relations with the archbishop of Canterbury, Falrad's letter served the purpose of reiterating queries regarding 'the *beneficia* that have been promised to us'. Clearly, it was up to the messenger to discuss these issues, although the letter seems to imply that the latter had no documents at his disposal to support the abbot's claims. Falrad stressed that he considered the bishop's gifts to be *exenia*, which simply means 'gifts to an important relation' but which also carries the significance of 'obligatory exchanges of gifts between ecclesiastical partners'. Such use of ambiguous vocabulary might suggest that Falrad was looking at his 'partnership' with an English dignitary as a means of strengthening his position in the city of Arras and more generally in Flanders. There are no clear indications as to when the forged charter of Bishop Vindicianus was first used to assert the abbey's independence from the episcopal authority, but if Falrad's letter is to be understood as part of a political strategy, preparations for a confrontation with the bishop should be dated as early as 990, probably even a year or two before that.

In the *Gesta episcoporum Cameracensium*, the involvement of the count in the rebellion of the abbot is presented as the result of a gross misjudgement on the count's part and one that post-dated the death of Rothard in 995. It is, however, interesting to note that the accession of Æthelgar nearly coincided with that of Count Baudouin IV of Flanders (30 March 988–1035), who abandoned the peaceful policy of his predecessor Arnulf II and set out to gain more influence in the bishopric of Cambrai–Arras. These ambitions

³³ Brooks does not rule out the possibility of Dunstan travelling to Saint-Vaast during his exile ('The Career', p. 16, n. 54). I do not think the words *amicitia* or even *familiaritas* necessarily refer to a personal relationship with the monks.

were enhanced when the city of Arras was given back to Flanders by the king of France in April of 988.³⁴ The rebellion of Falrad was an excellent, albeit perhaps fortuitous, instrument in the count's struggle with the bishop's party. It is, therefore, tempting to see a connection between the excellent relations of the counts with the archbishop of Canterbury and Falrad's appeal to the latter. The support of Æthelgar would have given Falrad and Baudouin another argument against Rothard and his successor Erluin (995–1012), who had argued that Benedict's rule for the monks required the supervision of a bishop over each abbot. Not Æthelgar himself, but his successor Sigeric would demonstrate a considerable degree of concern with the situation in Arras by staying there on his return from receiving the pallium in Rome.³⁵ This journey is usually dated between late 990 and early 991; and although the itinerary does not shed light on the question of whether Sigeric actually stayed at the abbey itself, it is reasonable to assume that this would have been the most appropriate place for him to spend the night. In any case, manuscript evidence does suggest that permanent relations were indeed established around this time.³⁶

*Letters from Odbert, abbot of Saint-Bertin,
to Æthelgar and to Sigeric, archbishops of Canterbury*

The anxiety at the death of Dunstan among Flemish monasteries and the nature of their relations with England is reflected in two letters from Odbert, abbot of Saint-Bertin, to successive archbishops of Canterbury. Relations between this abbey and England are better attested than are relations between England and Saint-Vaast, although even in this case the information is sparse and mostly disconnected from its original context. Situated near the important port of Wissant,³⁷ the abbey of Saint-Bertin is first associated with England by the name of what appears to be an Englishman in the list of eighth-century

³⁴ Lemarignier, 'Exemption', pp. 337–8.

³⁵ The itinerary is preserved in London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius B. v, 23v: see *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. Stubbs, pp. 391–5, and V. Ortenberg, 'Archbishop Sigeric's Journey to Rome in 990', *ASE* 19 (1990), 197–246.

³⁶ A well-known example is the Leofric Missal, compiled in Saint-Vaast in the late ninth century and exported to England in the tenth century. Around the year 1000, the monks of Glastonbury added a few masses before sending it to Bishop Leofric of Exeter (*The Leofric Missal*, I: *Introduction, Collation Table and Index*, and II: *Text*, ed. N. Orchard, HBS 113–14 (2002); superseding *The Leofric Missal*, ed. F. E. Warren (1883); see also V. Ortenberg, *The English Church and the Continent in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (Oxford, 1992), p. 30, and P. Grierson, 'The Relations', p. 92). The presence in London of a parish church dedicated to Saint Vaast in the eleventh century equally suggests strong links with the abbey: see C. N. L. Brooke and G. Keir, *London 800–1216: the Shaping of a City* (London, 1975), p. 124.

³⁷ G. Dunning, 'Trade Relations between England and the Continent in the Late Anglo-Saxon period', *Dark-Age Britain*, ed. D. B. Harden (London, 1956), pp. 218–33, at 221.

abbots.³⁸ In the mid-880s, King Alfred the Great gave a position at court, or in his kingdom, to Grimbold of Saint-Bertin, who died seemingly at Winchester in 901.³⁹ Because of its wealth, its status as a centre of intellectual and artistic excellence, and its strategic position, the abbey of Saint-Bertin quickly drew the attention of the counts of Flanders, who, by the early tenth century, were using it as their personal necropolis.⁴⁰ Just as in Ghent, the abbey was transformed into a political centre. When Edwin, half brother of King Æthelstan, died at sea in 933 while fleeing after a failed rebellion, and his body was found on the beach, the count had him buried at Saint-Bertin.⁴¹ In 944, Count Arnulf reformed the monastic community with the aid of Gérard of Brogne,⁴² at which point a number of dissenting monks crossed the channel to King Edmund (939–46), who used this opportunity to antagonize Arnulf and gave them Bath abbey as a residence.⁴³ In 961–2, Arnulf sent the monk Adelulf on a mission to England,⁴⁴ and according to a tradition that can be traced back to the twelfth century, Dunstan apparently sojourned in the abbey on his way to Rome to receive the archiepiscopal *pallium*.⁴⁵ By this time, Saint-Bertin had apparently become popular with pilgrims, although the relations between the abbey and England during the later tenth century are obscured by a lack of sources.

Odbert is traditionally supposed to have been abbot of Saint-Bertin from 986 to 15 July 1007.⁴⁶ In the *Gesta abbatum Sithiensium* we find no information

³⁸ Grierson, 'The Relations', p. 83.

³⁹ For Grimbold in England, see S. Keynes and M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great* (Harmondsworth, 1983), pp. 332–3; also Ortenberg, *The English Church*, pp. 23–4.

⁴⁰ Grierson, 'The Relations', p. 86 and K. H. Krüger, 'Sithiu/Saint-Bertin als Grablege Childerichs III. und der Grafen von Flandern', *FS* 8 (1974), 71–80, at 78–80.

⁴¹ Dauphin, 'Le renouveau', p. 177.

⁴² A. Dierkens, *Abbayes et chapitres entre Sambre et Meuse (VIIe-XIe siècle): Contribution à l'histoire religieuses des campagnes du Haut Moyen Âge* (Sigmaringen, 1985), pp. 238–9. For further comments regarding the reforms in Saint-Bertin, Saint-Peter in Ghent and Saint-Bavo in the same city, see Verhulst, 'De restauratie'.

⁴³ Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 89–90. See also S. Keynes, 'King Æthelstan's Books', *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England*, ed. M. Lapidge and H. Gneuss (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 143–201, at 159–65.

⁴⁴ Folcuin mentions this in his *Gesta* (ed. Holder-Egger, p. 632).

⁴⁵ Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 91–2.

⁴⁶ These dates were first suggested by H. De Laplane (*Les abbés de Saint-Bertin d'après les anciens monuments de ce monastère*, 2 vols. (Saint-Omer, 1854–5) I, 137–9), who deduced the date of Odbert's death from the inscription on the latter's tombstone (De Laplane, 'Saint-Bertin ou compte-rendu des fouilles faites sur le sol de cette ancienne église abbatiale 1844', *Mémoires de la Soc. des Antiquaires de la Morinie*, 7 (1844–6), 1–285, at 44–5). Odbert's entry into the community of Saint-Bertin probably post-dates 961–2, as he is not mentioned in Folcuin's list of monks (ed. Holder-Egger, p. 633). A. Boutemy places Odbert's election around 987, although he does not offer any conclusive evidence to that effect ('Un grand enlumineur du Xe siècle:

whatsoever on the abbey's history between the years in which Folcuin finished his chronicle (961–2) and the year 1021.⁴⁷ Simon of Ghent, the *Gesta's* twelfth-century continuator, claimed he could find nothing on this period that was worth recording.⁴⁸ Even the fourteenth-century chronicler John of Ypres, who supposedly retrieved the abbot's name from a necrological document, admitted that, regarding Odbert, 'no information is available regarding his end and his other deeds'.⁴⁹ In contrast, modern witnesses and manuscript evidence attest to the spectacular level of craftsmanship in the scriptorium of Saint-Bertin during Odbert's abbacy. In his *Petites annales Bertiniennes*, the sixteenth-century local historian Dom Tassart noted that, in 994, Odbert had commissioned the monk Heric to produce a copy of Cassiodorus's *Historia tripartita*. In 999, he did the same with a lavishly-illustrated psalter: the colophon of the preserved manuscript even refers to Odbert as the illustrator.⁵⁰ Other than that, around twenty high-quality manuscripts have been dated by modern scholars to his abbacy.⁵¹

It seems all the harder to credit, then, that no significant narrative or administrative documents have been preserved from Odbert's abbacy (or, for that matter, any of the other abbots from this period).⁵² Before discussing Odbert's

l'abbé Odbert de Saint-Bertin', *Annales de la Fédération Arch. et Hist. de Belgique* 32 (1947), 247–54, at 247).

⁴⁷ For comments on this lack of sources, see K. Ugé, *Creating the Monastic Past in Medieval Flanders* (Woodbridge, 2005), p. 48.

⁴⁸ '... nobis licet nihil sit compertum scriptu memorabile' (ed. Holder-Egger, p. 635). The anonymous author of an early-eleventh-century hagiographical text known as the *Vita et miracula Sancti Bertini falso adscripta Folcardo* (BHL 1297) recorded two miracles that occurred during Odbert's abbacy. One of the miracles (also known as BHL 8650) records the vaguely-remembered story of how Saints Vincentius, Omer and Bertin saved the abbey from fire. The other tells the story of how Odbert was asked to preside over a duel between a lay officer of the abbey and an usurper of one of the abbey's estates (*AASS Septembris II*, 624–7 or ed. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 15/1 (Hanover, 1887), 516–22). Although the second miracle holds some interest for the study of social relations in the early eleventh century, neither reveals much about Odbert's abbacy.

⁴⁹ '... de fine huius domini abbatis et aliis factis eius nichil habemus' (Simon of Ghent, *Gesta abbatum Sithiensium*, ed. Holder-Egger, MGH SS 25 (Hanover, 1880), 779).

⁵⁰ Boutemy, 'Un grand enlumineur', pp. 248–9.

⁵¹ R. Kahsnitz, 'Der christologische Zyklus im Odbert-Psalter', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 51 (1988), 33–125 for examples and a comprehensive bibliography on the manuscripts from Odbert's abbacy. A 'portrait' of Odbert is discussed in G. Schüssler, 'Der Symbolische Buchstabe. Ungewöhnliche Künstlerbildnisse des Mittelalters', *Text als Realie. Internationaler Kongress Krems an der Donau 3. bis 6. Oktober 2000*, ed. K. Brunner and G. Jaritz (Vienna, 2003), pp. 359–86, at 374–5 and 384. For more bibliography (including some unpublished dissertations that have superseded Boutemy's study), see Ugé, *Creating*, pp. 46–9.

⁵² Two diplomatic documents from Odbert's abbacy have been preserved: one from 993 (a confirmation of a charter by Abbot Walter from 975) and another from c. 994 (ed. D. Haighneré, *Les chartes de Saint-Bertin d'après le Grand Cartulaire de Dom Charles-Joseph Dewitte*, 4 vols. (Saint-Omer, 1886) I, at 21, no. 64, and 21–2, no. 66).

letter to Æthelgar, it is necessary to draw attention to the fact that his letter-writing is not the only indication of close relations with England. André Boutemy has noted a striking similarity between the decoration of the manuscripts (notably the luxurious acanthus in the illustrated initials) and contemporary manuscript production in England, particularly from the scriptoria of Canterbury.⁵³ At least two English artists, probably originating from Canterbury, worked at the scriptorium of Saint-Bertin,⁵⁴ and the stylistic influx from England also had repercussions on the plastic arts, notably sculpture, at the abbey.⁵⁵ That the exchanges went in two directions is attested by the presence in England around the year 1000 of a Prudentius manuscript and a hymnal made in Saint-Bertin.⁵⁶

The lack of information on the abbacy of Odbert, and on the history of the abbey over a period of nearly sixty years (962–1020), together with the fascinating artistic enterprises that saw the light around the year 1000, make it all the more surprising that Odbert's letters have been virtually ignored by continental scholars. The first letter (Letter 3) is an interesting antependium to Falrad's missive (Letter 2), as it is also addressed to Dunstan's successor Æthelgar. It appears to be somewhat later than Falrad's, as it refers to previous promises and donations by the archbishop. Superior in style to that of Odbert's colleague in Saint-Vaast, the letter displays literary erudition that so far has eluded scholars' attention. Odbert duly congratulates Æthelgar on his appointment, albeit in a far less elaborate manner than Falrad. He quickly moves on to the core of his message. Plagued by 'worldly misfortunes',⁵⁷ the monks are in dire need of financial support. The abbot thanks Æthelgar for his promise to support the monks and to count them among his servants ('intra numerum . . . famulantium'). To underscore his willingness to establish privileged relations, Odbert specifically uses expressions that go far beyond what is institutionally realistic ('vosque nobis fore . . . patronum' and 'beneficio'). For such a privilege, he offers the monks' eternal gratitude and the all-important intercession with God. It is in this light, I believe, that the aforementioned exchange of

⁵³ Boutemy, 'Un grand enlumineur', p. 249.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 252–3 and R. Gameson, 'Book Production and Decoration at Worcester in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *St Oswald*, ed. Brooks and Cubitt, pp. 194–293, at 204.

⁵⁵ Boutemy, 'Un grand enlumineur', p. 253, n. 13, and Ugé, *Creating*, p. 47.

⁵⁶ Ortenberg, *The English Church*, p. 30, and Milfull, *The Hymns*, p. 19. The exchange of books between bishops and monasteries was not unusual; see a letter from 986 by Archbishop Gerbert of Reims to the monks of Saint-Peter in Ghent in which he requested the return of some of his books and a similar one by Adalbero of Reims from 987 (ed. F. Zwiëgle, *MGH Die Briefe der Deutschen Kaiserzeit 2: Die Briefsammlung Gerberts von Reims* (Munich, 1988), pp. 126 and 135).

⁵⁷ This might be a reference to invasions of the lower nobility of the abbey's estates (A. Derville, *Saint-Omer des origines au début du XIV^e siècle* (Lille, 1995), pp. 34–7).

expertise in the production of manuscripts and the sudden increase of popularity of the patron saint of the abbey in English liturgical books in the late tenth century is to be understood.⁵⁸

It will never be possible to assess the nature of the archbishop's 'patronage' of Saint-Bertin: no relevant charters from this period have been preserved, nor are there any later documents that give us an idea of an exchange of goods at this point in history. However, that it involved financial support and a considerable degree of exchange of 'cultural capital' can be deduced from the surviving illuminated manuscripts and from Odbert's letter itself. Some further indications of the nature of the relations between the two institutions can be deduced from Odbert's second letter (Letter 4), written shortly after Æthelgar's death in 990 and certainly before the spring of 991. This letter contains an invitation for the archbishop-elect, Sigeric, to stay at Saint-Bertin on his way to Rome to receive his *pallium*. Evidently, Odbert was feeling a pressing need for immediate action following Æthelgar's death. The respectful but somewhat distant tone of the letter indicates that the abbot was on less personal terms with the archbishop than he had been with the latter's predecessor. Few words are wasted on a *captatio benevolentiae* or on a celebration of good relations: with a new individual in power, Odbert felt insecure about Sigeric's willingness to commit himself to the relationship that had existed under Æthelgar. This is why he stresses that 'We wish your fatherhood to know and remember how we deserved the grace and fatherhood and the mutual brotherhood of association with your predecessor, bishop Æthelgar; this was so great that, above all the monasteries of Francia, he adopted that of Saint-Bertin with special fondness.'

The conventions of early medieval social behaviour dictated that personal contacts were crucial in the creation and the maintenance of political and religious alliances. Much as lay rulers (especially the Ottonians but also the kings of France and the counts of Flanders) needed to develop complex itineraries to maintain their authority in their territories, the archbishops' special relation

⁵⁸ Regarding the cult of Bertin in England, see Ortenberg, *English Church*, pp. 33–4. Saint Omer briefly enjoyed some popularity at the end of the tenth century (*ibid.* p. 36, and F. Barlow, *The English Church 1000–1066* (London, 1979), pp. 19–20), but it appears that only the cult of Bertin was actively promoted around this time. Eleventh-century authors from Saint-Bertin who worked for English patrons helped to increase his popularity (see below, n. 61 and H. Clover, 'Folcard', *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* (Paris, 1971), XVII, 741–3). See also J. Nightingale, 'Oswald, Fleury and Continental Reform', *St Oswald*, ed. Brooks and Cubitt, pp. 23–45, at 25–6. As Lapidge has noted, patronage of the production of cultural artefacts necessarily involved links between a patron and an entire monastic community (M. Lapidge, 'Artistic and Literary Patronage in Anglo-Saxon England', *Committenti e produzione artistico-letteraria nell'alto medioevo occidentale 4–10 aprile 1991*, *SettSpol* 30, 2 vols. (Spoleto, 1992) I, 137–89, at 181–2).

with a Flemish monastery could only be crowned by a personal appearance.⁵⁹ Such visits to the Continent were obviously quite rare and mostly coincided with the journey of a newly appointed archbishop to Rome to receive his *pallium*.⁶⁰ This appears to have been the case at Saint-Vaast in 991. One can assume that such visits would have included the ritual confirmation of the alliance between the two parties and donations on behalf of the new benefactor. Odbert's letter contains a brief yet unique account of Æthelgar's two visits to Saint-Bertin in the course of his journey to and from Rome, probably late in 988. According to the text, Æthelgar's arrival was a major event for the monastic community, as the archbishop had come to bring them 'the privilege of his fondness'. This resulted in an alliance which placed them simultaneously in the position of father to son and of brother to brother. In return for the monks' fidelity to the archbishop, the abbot argued, Æthelgar had promised to rebuild the monastery from its foundations.

As the intention of the letter was to invite Sigeric to visit the abbey on his way to or from Rome, Odbert might have exaggerated the extent of Æthelgar's donations and promises. However, Odbert's first letter indicates that Æthelgar did indeed donate money to the monks and that he was expected to do so at regular intervals. Considering the political circumstances of the time and the lack of reliable information on the relations of Flemish counts with England in these years, it is acceptable to assume that by visiting the abbey, Æthelgar not only strengthened his links with Flemish monasteries, but also recognized the authority of Baudouin IV, who had just succeeded Arnulf II. Since the reign of Edgar, relations between the archbishops of Canterbury and the kings of England had deteriorated, but it is nevertheless significant that this letter echoes Count Arnulf's own missive to Dunstan with a request for an intercession with the king.⁶¹ It was, therefore, important for several parties that Sigeric

⁵⁹ Regarding the itinerant nature of secular rulership, see K. F. Werner, 'Missus – marchio – comes. Entre l'administration centrale et l'administration locale de l'empire Carolingien', *Histoire comparée de l'administration (IV^e–XVII^e siècles)*. *Actes du XIV^e colloque historique franco-allemand. Tours, 27 mars–1^{er} avril 1977*, ed. W. Paravicini and K. F. Werner (Munich, 1980), pp. 191–239, at 193–4, K. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London, 1979), *passim*, and, by the same author, *Medieval Germany and its Neighbours 900–1250* (London, 1982), pp. 80–96.

⁶⁰ A tradition that can be traced back to the twelfth century claims that Dunstan stayed at Saint-Bertin during his journey to Rome, which would have taken place shortly after 960 (Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 91–2).

⁶¹ For connections between St Bertin's and England in the eleventh century, see Grierson, 'The Relations', pp. 95–100, and Ortenberg, *The English Church*, pp. 26–30. In 1041, an unnamed monk from Saint-Bertin wrote an encomium of Queen Emma, wife of King Æthelred and then of Cnut; see *Encomium Emmae reginae*, ed. A. Campbell (London, 1949), Camden Classic Reprints 4 (Cambridge, 1998). In 1055, Herman, bishop of Ramsbury left England and spent three years at the abbey as an exile. After his return in 1058, the bishop was joined sooner or

should renew his predecessor's alliance with Saint-Bertin. Grimwald, the messenger who carried Odbert's letter,⁶² was to discuss a possible date for the archbishop's arrival at the abbey, so that the necessary preparations could be made. The conspicuous absence of Saint-Bertin on the list of places Sigeric visited on his return from Rome does not rule out the possibility that he visited the abbey on his outward journey.⁶³

CONCLUSION

The four letters discussed above not only document the increasing exchanges between England and Flanders in the late tenth century, but also suggest liaisons that had clearly been operative for several years, if not decades. It is not likely to be a coincidence that the monasteries concerned maintained close relations with the Flemish counts, who used these institutions in their policy to consolidate and expand their political and territorial influence. Although Dunstan's personal relations with the Flemish abbeys in his first years as an archbishop remain somewhat obscure, he and his successors lived and worked in an age when reformed monasticism was a powerful element in the English church. The initial impact of Flemish institutions on the reforms in England may have been limited, but the letters show that the final decades of the tenth century witnessed the increasing importance of cross-Channel exchanges. Around the time of Odbert's letters to Æthelgar and Sigeric, his scriptorium began to exchange know-how and manuscripts with English institutions. Here and elsewhere, the cult of local patron saints began to be exported to England. Somewhat older seem to be the financial exchanges between the archbishops and the abbeys. The abbeys of Saint-Peter and Saint-Bertin enjoyed the protection of Dunstan, Æthelgar and Sigeric, and the relationship was a significant and tangible one, not a distant acquaintance of like-minded spirits. In Saint-Vaast, Abbot Falrad might have been thinking about his future confrontations with the local bishop. The abbots' use of ambiguous vocabulary like *patronus* and *beneficium* reflects their efforts in humouring the archbishops. Since both parties were aware of the fact that such relations were unrealistic, it might be suggested that the usage served its purpose in extend-

later by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, who was to become one of the most important hagiographers of the second half of the eleventh century in England; see *Goscelin of Saint-Bertin: the Hagiography of the Female Saints of Ely*, ed. R. C. Love (Oxford, 2004), pp. xx–xxi.

⁶² A monk of this name is mentioned in Folcuin's *Gesta* (ed. Holder-Egger, p. 633). If both Grimwalds are indeed the same person, the fact that an older member of the community was sent out might reflect the gravity of the occasion. This might also explain the use of the word *nonnus* in Odbert's letter.

⁶³ *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. Stubbs, p. 395; see also Barlow, *The English Church*, p. 292, and Ortenberg, 'Archbishop Sigeric's Journey to Rome'. On the itinerary of Sigeric's successor Ælfric, see Booth, '... ad antiquum', p. 35.

ing the meaning of *familiaritas* beyond the common and to establish privileged relations between the Flemish monasteries and the archbishops. The shadow of the count of Flanders loomed large over these proceedings, and the letters prove that his influence on Flemish monasticism continued to extend beyond the local.

APPENDIX

Text and translation of letters 1–4

As indicated above, the four letters in this edition are preserved in two manuscript copies:

A. London, British Library, Cotton Tiberius A. xv can be dated *c.* 1000–10.⁶⁴ The manuscript was produced either at Glastonbury abbey or, perhaps more likely, at Christ Church, Canterbury. It has been described in detail by Caroline Brett, in her edition of a letter of recommendation for a Breton pilgrim;⁶⁵ so it will suffice here to note that the manuscript consists mainly of a selection of Alcuin's letters (126 in total),⁶⁶ supplemented by twenty-four letters of theological, historical and literary interest, most pertaining to the archbishops of Canterbury and dated between *c.* 924 and *c.* 990.⁶⁷ The manuscript was badly damaged by fire in 1731, so that up to two-thirds of some pages are nearly, or, in some cases, completely illegible to the naked eye.⁶⁸

B. London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A. xiv was made for Wulfstan, archbishop of York (1002–23), and can also be dated *c.* 1000–10.⁶⁹ Its contents are, except

⁶⁴ H. Gneuss, 'A Preliminary List of Manuscripts Written or Owned in England up to 1100', *ASE* 9 (1981), 1–60, at 25 (nos. 368–9). ⁶⁵ Brett, 'A Breton Pilgrim', p. 53.

⁶⁶ The body of secondary literature relating to these letters is vast. C. Hohler argues that assembling the collection must have been a tremendous undertaking ('Some Service Books of the Later Saxon Church', *Tenth-century Studies*, ed. D. Parsons (Chichester, 1975), pp. 60–83, at 74).

⁶⁷ The remaining documents include two papal letters to the English people, a letter of Saint Augustine on the nature of the resurrection, and correspondence between Ebbo of Reims and Halitgar that served as an introduction to the latter's *De vitiis et virtutibus*. Other, stray fragments include a leaf of a tenth-century continental copy of John's Gospel (D. Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History of Late Anglo-Saxon England: Four Studies* (Woodbridge, 1992), p. 146, n. 366), part of a twelfth-century copy of a charter of William II of Normandy for the chapel of Notre Dame in Cherbourg (dated 1063–5), an eighth-century fragment of Junilius' *De pastibus divinae legis* (II, 13–17), and a few texts by Richard Rolle (*Apocalipsis Iesus Christi, Officium de sancto Richardo heremita* and *Super mulierem fortem*; see Brett, 'A Breton Pilgrim', p. 51). ⁶⁸ Brett, 'A Breton Pilgrim', p. 40.

⁶⁹ Gneuss attributes it to a scriptorium in Worcester or York ('A Preliminary List', p. 26), while Mann places it in Wulfstan's workshop ('The Development', p. 235). Throughout his career as an archbishop, Wulfstan assembled collections of canonical, liturgical and homiletic texts for his personal use. Several manuscripts that are preserved from this time represent phases in the evolution of this manual (see Jones, *Ælfric's Letter*, pp. 72–3, and especially Mann, 'The Development', p. 255).

for some documents regarding ecclesiastical jurisdiction, derived from the same corpus of letters as used by the compilers of Tiberius A. xv.⁷⁰ Variants show that the compilers of the two manuscripts copied the letters independently from a lost manuscript, or perhaps from loose leaves.⁷¹ Despite the fact that the scribes of B were ostensibly quite inexperienced (numerous orthographical errors, irregular shapes and a careless attitude towards presentation),⁷² the manuscript resolves a number of omissions and abbreviations in A.

Previous editions of the letters are unsatisfactory. In the sixteenth century, John Leland published brief excerpts from B.⁷³ In 1874, the first complete edition of the letters appeared in Stubbs's *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*. Although Stubbs went to great lengths to establish readings from the charred pages of A, and to reconstruct the texts that were only known from this manuscript, his edition of the four letters (among others) relied heavily on notes made on B by P. Jaffé (d. 1870). Jaffé's papers had been sent to Stubbs by Dümmler and Wattenbach, with the permission of Pauli.⁷⁴ As a result, Stubbs's reconstruction of the letters relied on educated guesswork.⁷⁵ Dorothy Whitelock was the first to present a collated edition of one of the letters (no. 4), albeit without commentary and text-critical apparatus.⁷⁶ For the present edition, all four letters have been collated afresh from the manuscripts. By using an ultra-violet lamp, I was able to extract the majority of the words and, in some cases, letters in A that had been illegible to Stubbs. In a number of cases, this has led to a new interpretation of the sections for which Stubbs relied exclusively on Jaffé's notes from B. For the translations, I have attempted to stay as close as possible to the style and the rhetoric of the originals. Because of their convoluted style, but also because of the idiomatic vocabulary and the purposeful ambiguity in the use of words such as *patronus*, *beneficium* and

⁷⁰ Brett, 'A Breton Pilgrim', pp. 68–9. ⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 55.

⁷² Wido's letter, in particular, was very poorly reproduced. For a discussion of the manuscript and its scribes, see Mann, 'The Development', pp. 239–41.

⁷³ *Joannis Lelandi antiquarii de rebus Britannicis collectanea*, 2nd ed., 3 vols., ed. T. Hearne (London, 1774) II, 403.

⁷⁴ Stubbs had given advice to Pauli while the latter was preparing vols. 27 and 28 in the *Scriptores* series of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*. Pauli himself arrived in England in 1876 (H. Bresslau, *Geschichte der Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Hanover, 1921), pp. 559–61). On Jaffé's transcriptions, see *Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, ed. Stubbs, pp. liv–lv. Although Stubbs does not refer to Jaffé's transcriptions in the notes to his edition of the fourth letter, variants indicate that they also served as the source for Stubbs's edition.

⁷⁵ Although Brett is critical of Stubbs's methods as an editor, one has to give him credit for extracting most of the words from some of the pages in Cotton Tiberius A. xv that are almost completely destroyed by fire and water. Stubbs himself claimed that 'I cannot venture to affirm that I have recovered the exact text in many places, but I hope that whoever, coming after me, proves more successful, will ascribe my failure to a lack of power, rather than to a want of pain.' (*Memorials of Saint Dunstan*, p. liv). I have compared Stubbs's edition of Arnulf's letter to Dunstan with the sole manuscript version, but, while these damaged pages still did not reveal all their secrets, I could come up with only a handful of minor emendations which hardly warranted a new edition.

⁷⁶ *Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church*, I: A.D. 871–1204, Part I: 871–1066 (Oxford, 1981), pp. 175–7 (no. 37).

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exenia, the letters do not reveal their full meaning unless they are read in the original Latin.

LETTER 1

Letter from Wido, abbot of Saint-Peter in Ghent, to Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury (Autumn 980–30 September 986)

Manuscripts

A BL Cotton Tiberius A. xv, 156v–157r.

B BL Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, 171rv.

Previous edition

Memorials of Saint Dunstan, ed. Stubbs, 380–1 (no. XVII).

Epistola Widonis ad Dunstanum archiepraesulem^a

Meritorum^b virtutum pontificali donato^c dignitate principaliter domino serenissimo archypraesuli^d D[unstano],^e frater^f Wido^g peccator Blandiniensis coenobii destinatus rector cum unanimi fratrum collegio^h optabile caelici principatus contubernium.

Minore quidem ambigentes fiducia, dulcissime pastor, vestrae paternitatis expeteremusⁱ magnificentiam, ni plurimum nota et saepius comperta affabilitatis vestrae nos animaret benignitas. Post recentem itaque nuperrimae legationis commendationem per fratrem nostrae societatis^j nonnum^k (B: 171v) Leofsinum^l vobis directum,^m licet iudicandi minus verentes, maxime tamen confidentes hoc litterarum indiculo vestrae celsitudinis pul(A: 157r)samus aures, a qua clementissimum benignae subventionis praestolamur suffragium. Ut vere namque fateri compellimur, peccaminum nostrorum exigente mole, nostris in regionibus,ⁿ ut saepius, hornotina deperierunt saltuum pascua. A vestrae igitur dapsilitatis largitate^o sustentationem adipisci^p speramus^q et humiliter ponimus, ut in hoc et in quibuslibet benedictionum impensis, prout vestrae multiplici libuerit sufficientiae^r nos dignemini clementer solari. Si igitur praesentium latores apud vestrae celsitudinis^s praesentiam praefatum nonnum Liefsinum^t invenerint, eis^u in commune^v vestrae miserationis iniungere^w dignemini^x destinationem. Si vero ille iam praecessit, hos ipsos sufficere non diffidimus. Vale.

^a Rubric in capitals (including the alternative *Widonis*) A. ^b Red initial A. Two-line red initial B.

^c *Meritorium* . . . *donato* in rubricated capitals B. ^d *archiepraesuli* A. ^e The name is abbreviated in both A and B.

^f D rubricated and *frater* in rubricated capitals B. ^g B has *Guido* (?), with G rubricated.

^h In B, a contemporary hand added *g* above the line. ⁱ *expeteremus* B. A contemporary hand added *te* above the line.

^j *societate* B. A contemporary hand added *is* above the line. ^k *nonnum* written after an erasure B.

^l Only B. A has *N* for *nomen* and a modern hand added *Liefsinum* above the line. ^m *directam* B. ⁿ *in gionibus* B, corrected above the

line. ^o *r* above the line B. ^p *adipis* AB, with *is* over an erasure B. ^q *speraramus* B, with the first *ra* cancelled. ^r *sufficentie* B, with an erased letter between *n* and *t*. ^s *misseratio* before *celsitudinis* B, obliterated by point marks below each letter. ^t *N* for *nomen* A, with *Liefsinum* added above the line by a modern hand. ^u B has *i* above *es*. ^v A contemporary hand added *mune* above an abbreviated *co* B. ^w A contemporary hand added *n* above *u* and *g* B. ^x *degnemini* A.

Translation

Letter from Wido to Archbishop Dunstan

To the most honourable Archbishop Lord Dunstan, who was given his pontifical honours chiefly because of his great merits, brother Wido the sinner, appointed rector of the abbey of Blandinium, together with the unanimous assembly of brothers, in friendship of the desirable realm of heaven, [greetings].

We would be less certain, sweet shepherd, of making an appeal to the magnificence of your fatherhood, if the often remarked and even more often experienced generosity of your kindness had not inspired us. After the recent commendatory embassy sent to you through a brother of our community, the monk Liefsin, one may say that it is for that reason that we are less afraid of being judged but rather completely trustful that we will make ourselves heard with this letter by your highness, from whom we request the merciful support of his aid. For we are compelled to confess that, because of problems caused by our sins, the yearly pastures of the estates⁷⁷ have been lost, as happens so often. For that reason, we hope to receive support from your sumptuous generosity and we humbly put it to you, so that in these and the blessings through other things that may befall us, we will be worthy of being mercifully solaced by your multiple subventions. If the carriers of the present message would find the aforementioned monk Liefsin in the presence of your highness, we would like them to return together with the embassy of your divine mercy. If, however, he has already set forth, we trust that they will be sufficient. Greetings.

LETTER 2

Letter from Falrad, abbot of Saint-Vaast in Arras, to Æthelgar, archbishop of Canterbury (Summer 988–January or February 990)

Manuscripts

- A. BL Cotton Tiberius A. xv, 161rv.
B. BL Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, 158v–159r.

⁷⁷ The meaning of *saltuum* in this context remains unclear. The classical meaning of *saltus* is mostly ‘upland, wooded pasture’ or ‘passage through mountains or forests’. In Medieval Latin, however, the word *saltuarius* was used to signify the function of manorial baillif, which seems to indicate that the meaning of *saltus* had shifted somewhat to a general understanding of *saltus* as ‘domain’ or ‘estate’.

Previous edition

Memorials of Saint Dunstan, ed. Stubbs, 383–4 (no. XIX).

[Epistola ad Aedelgarum archiepiscopum]^a

Antistanti^b naviter sanctitatis summa archipraesuli honore^c Aedelgaro^d abba Falradus inmeritus istius aevi obtentum^e futurumque aeternae in Christo^f beatitudinis bravium, promptumque^g fidelis servitutis obsequium.

Praeessoris vestri non oblitterandae memoriae (B: 159r) Dunstani memorialis nexilis amicitiae vinculo nodoque ita usi sumus, ut inter amicissimos nobis non secundus haberetur amicus. Cuius summos gradus dignitatis adquisivit vobis summa claritudo^h ingenii in omni studio (A: 161v) praefulgens luceⁱ sanctitatis, non tantum accipiens ab excelsis gradibus honorum pretii^j quantum addens decoris tui. Cuius loco, pro competentibus merito vobis virtutum insignis, vos substitutum^k gaudemus, et ut alter ille nobis quodammodo fieri dignemini, sicuti praesentia vestri promisit onomatis, quamquam nullius pretio^l servitutis mercemur precari cordetenus per mille meandros gliscimus. Nunc ergo^m si statu utriusque hominis vigetis incolumis, vobiscum agitur quod medullisⁿ imis^o gratulamur. Proinde vestrae sublimitatis excellentiam praescire volumus nos una cum omnibus,⁷⁸ nullis licet suffragantibus meritis, mihi^p commissis, sacri scilicet ordinis viris, pro benignissimo regiminis vestri statu preces divinitati^q die noctuque effundere non desistere, quae universam^r suam conditam movet seseque essentialiter immobilem^s servat, veluti exigit^t caritas intepescens vestrae in nos fraternitatis.⁷⁹ Caeterum majestati vestrae curavimus delegere, de beneficiorum exeniis^u nobis promissis ne^v pigeat per litteras aut per internuntium remandare,^w ac tali freti fiducia, ut eclipticos loquar, et^x nos sine mora. Valere vos faciat Trinitas Sancta semper memores vestri memoris.

^a Phrase in red capitals A. ^b Red initial *A* in A. In B, an intended initial was not inserted.
^c *honoro* AB. ^d *Adelgaro* in A, *AE* B. ^e Omitted in Stubbs. ^f *o* on an erasure B.
^g *promptumque* B. ^h *tu* above the line B. ⁱ *societate* B. A second hand in B worked approximately from here to the word *statu*. ^j *praetii* A. ^k *substitutum* B. ^l *pretiosae* in Stubbs; *praetio* B. ^m *g* with abbreviation mark B; *igitur* in Stubbs. ⁿ *medulis* A. ^o *medullimis* B.
^p B added the first *i* above the line. ^q *divinitate* A. A modern hand has drawn a vertical line across the final *e*. ^r *inversam* A, corrected above the line. ^s *essentialiter immobilem* B.
^t *exiit* in Stubbs. ^u Second scribe of B from this word. ^v *non* in B. ^w *remandari* (?) A; *remeandare* B, with the second *e* obliterated by point marks. ^x Both copyists interpreted these words as *loquaret*.

⁷⁸ Paraphrase of Cassian, *Conlationes XXIII*, XIII.xv.

⁷⁹ Paraphrase of Cassian, *Conlationes XXIII*, XI.xiii.

Translation

[Letter to archbishop Æthelgar.]

To Æthelgar, most zealous priest in the highest honour of holy archbishop, the unworthy abbot Falrad [wishes you] the reward of eternal blessedness in Christ, stretching over this age and the future, [and offers you] the ready obedience of faithful service.

Not to obliterate the memory of your memorable predecessor Dunstan, we have made use of this tie, nay knot of close friendship to such an extent that among the friendliest of our acquaintances he was second to none. His highest clarity of mind, shining with the light of sanctity, has acquired for you the highest degrees of honour, not so much receiving the reward of honours from this high degree but adding to it to your glory. Whose place, because of the jewels of the virtues that are rightly associated with you, we are happy you have taken, and through a thousand meanders our sincerest wish is to pray so that you would deign to be made another [Dunstan] to us, much as the presence of your name indicates, although we cannot acquire this with the mere price of servitude. Now, if both of you are in good health, he will confer to you that we thank you from our deepest inner selves. For that reason, I would like the excellence of your highness to know beforehand that I, together with everyone entrusted to me, although with the support of no merits on my part, namely men of the holy order will not cease to pour out prayers day and night for the benefit of the state of your most generous government to the divinity, which moves the universe it has created but remains essentially immobile itself, just as the warming affection of your brotherhood towards us requires. Moreover we have taken care to make a delegation concerning the gifts of benefactions promised to us, that it should not irk you to send them in return by means of letters or a messenger, and we too rely without delay on this guarantee, to speak in inadequate terms. May the Holy Trinity protect you, always remembering the one who remembers you.

LETTER 3

Letter from Odbert, abbot of Saint-Bertin, to Æthelgar, archbishop of Canterbury (c. 989–90)

Manuscripts

A. BL Cotton Tiberius A. xv, 161v–162v.

B. BL Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, 160r.

Previous editions

Memorials of Saint Dunstan, ed. Stubbs, 384–5 (no. XX).

Some excerpts in G. Mann, ‘The Development of Wulfstan’s Alcuin Manuscript’, *Wulfstan, Archbishop of York*, ed. Townend, p. 255, n. 55 (‘Gratualmur (*sic*) . . . unumuelle’) and 56 (‘Aelemosine . . . communem’) (apparently based on Stubbs).

Divini^a cultus amatorum summo^b archipraesuli in(A: 162r)clito A[edelgaro]^c stola iocun-

ditatis praecipue vernanti, frater O[dbertus],^d quem Scithiensis^e coenobii abbatem fatentur, cum commissa fratrum caterva, quae Domino vernula, precumque affamina cum salutis successu.

Quam inhianter vestrae desideremus salutis successum aevique longaevitatem, non verbis aut apicibus quimus^f affari, cum equidem^g omnis nostrae^h spei fiducia in vestri consistat iuvaminis anchora. Siquidem, vestra vigente incolomitate, non adeo nos saecularia detrimenta concutient. Gratulamur etiam non modice vestrae benignissimae sponcionisⁱ relevati^j magnificentia^k quia nos inmeritos^l vestra voluit pietas intra^m numerum aggregare devote vobis famulantium, vosque nobis fore perseverantem patronum eotenus ut unanimiter vestris insistensⁿ commodis *unum* inter nos et vestram paternitatem fieret *nolle, unum velle*. Tanto^o ergo adepto beneficio nihil constat nobis esse iocundius.^p Ac pro tanta gratia sciat vestra excellentia nos perhennes futuros, in quantum sat erit posse, apud Dei praesentiam intercessores. Aelemosinae vero vestrae, quod mihi inposuistis negotium, ita, Deo cooperante, me confido mox peregisse per clericum nostrum communem, vestrum etiam omnimodis servulum fidelissimum, Richarium, et per Sigebertum,^q quo vobis merces digna maneat, meque innoxium (A: 162v) a fraudis dolo servare^r studui. Haec vero nostra fragilitas vestram pronis votis potissimum exorat clementiam, quatenus nobis propriis servulis vestris imperare dignetur quaedam sibi placita beneficia, quia promptissimo^s parebimus devotionis^t obsequio. Valeat sublimitas celsitudinis vestrae plurimum in Domino.

^a In A, *D* is a rubricated, two-line initial. In B, an intended two-line initial was never inserted. In reference to the previous letter from Falrad (no. 2), this letter was headed *Item ad eundem* in A.

^b Uncertain reading; unique to A. ^c *A* in both ms. In B, the sentence up to *A*. is in capital letters. ^d *O*. AB ^e *b* was added above the line B. ^f In B, the hand changes to that of 158v. ^g *quidem* Stubbs. ^h *vestrae* A. ⁱ *sponcionis* Stubbs. ^j B switches back to the first scribe (scribe 2 of letter 2?). ^k MB has an abbreviation sign above the final *a*, suggesting that the scribe read *magnificentiam*. ^l *immeritos* Stubbs. ^m B has *r* above the line.

ⁿ *insistentes* A, *insistente* B; neither seems grammatically satisfying. ^o *tantum* B and Stubbs. ^p *iocundias* A. ^q *Sigebertum* B. ^r *observare* B. ^s Erasure between *m* and *t* B. The final *is* is marked with obliteration marks and corrected with *o* above the line. ^t *devotionis* A.

Translation

To the lover of the cult of the Lord, the most eminent archbishop the reverend Aethelgar, [who carries] the palm of everlasting glory and the robe of eternal loveliness, brother Odbert, who is known to be the abbot of the monastery of Sithiu, with his entrusted flock of brothers, as it were the domestic to the Lord and the executors of the prayers that lead to salvation.⁸⁰

It is not possible to express with words or letters how deeply we wish for your welfare and a long life, since all the confidence of our hope rests in the anchor of your aid. If indeed you are in good health, the worldly losses will not shake us as much. We greatly thank you for the splendour of the relief that was brought by your generous promise, since your piety is willing to include us unworthy among those who devotedly serve you, and you will be our enduring patron to the extent that,

⁸⁰ The final part of this sentence is a conjecture, as the phrase ‘precumque . . . successu’ may be corrupt.

whenever your interests are at stake, there will be but one unanimous wish between ourselves and your fatherhood. Nothing can be more joyous to us after the acceptance of such a great gift. And your excellency should know that we will, to whatever extent it will be possible to be sufficient, be perpetual intercessors before God. But I am confident that I will soon thus, with God's aid, have accomplished your almsgivings, of which you entrusted the management to me, by means of our common cleric, your most faithful servant in every respect, Richarius, and by Sigebert, who remains worthy of your support, and I have striven to keep myself innocent of the deceit of fraud. This frailty of ours implores your clemency most effectively with inclined prayers until your mercy will deign itself to donate the gifts of its own choice to ourselves, your servants, as we will readily make ourselves up for your devoted service. May the loftiness of your highness thrive in the Lord.

LETTER 4

Letter from Odbert, abbot of Saint-Bertin, to Sigeric, archbishop of Canterbury (c. 990)

Manuscripts

A. BL Cotton Tiberius A. xv, 145v–146v.

B. BL Cotton Vespasian A. xiv, 159rv.

Previous editions

Joannis Lelandi antiquarii De rebus Britannicis collectanea, ed. Hearne, II, 403 (excerpts, from B)

Memorials of Saint Dunstan, ed. Stubbs, 388–9 (no. XXII)

Councils and Synods with Other Documents Relating to the English Church, I: *A.D. 871–1204*, Part I: *871–1066*, ed. D. Whitelock (Oxford, 1981), pp. 175–7 (no. 37) (from A and B).

Norma^a sacrae religionis ab ipsis cunis inbuto emerito^b praesuli S[irico]^c frater Odbertus abbas cum coadunatis fratribus coenobii Sancti Bertini^d Scithiensis, cuncta prospero successu^e (B: 159v) pollentia in Rege regum.

Scire et meminisse cupimus paternitatem vestram, quomodo praedecessoris vestri Adalgari pontificis^f promeruimus gratiam^g ac paternitatis ipsius filiationem, et utriusque partis invicem^h fraternitatem; ita ut prae cunctis Franciae monasteriis Sancti Bertiniⁱ praecipua dilectione sibi assciverit coenobium.^j Namque Romam pergens, a nobis honorifice susceptus, Romaque rediens,^k ut tantum (A: 146r) decebat patrem magnificentius receptus, privilegium quoddam^l singulare nobis suae contulit dilectionis: quatenus ipse nobis pater pariterque frater, nosque ei filii et fratres in uno efficeremur Domino.⁸¹ Multa vero beneficia suae nobis largitus est elemosinae, plurima quoque sponndit vita comite se collatura; sed heu! Pro dolor, tali nos inmeritos fore patrono, secundum propheticum dictum palam patuit,^m quod dicit: 'Peccata nostra pro-

⁸¹ Possibly a reference to, Rom. XII.5: 'Unum corpus sumus in Christo'.

hibuerunt bonum a nobis.⁸² Apud domnumⁿ quippe Dunstanum locum optinimus^o familiarem; apud^p domnum^q Adelgarum vero^r ampliorem, ita ut monasterium Sancti Petri^s apostoli, ab ipso Bertino in primordio sui adventus^t constructum, a fundamentis statuerit restaurandum.^u Totis ergo praecordiatum^v votis suppliciter cernui vestram petendo, pulsando, quaerendo⁸³ praecantipamus pietatem, quatenus vestrae paternitatis mereamur adipisci dulcedinem, velut praesens frater Grimwaldus vobis intimabit, parati vobis nostrae fraternitatis exhibere communionem, si vestrae id sederit clementiae. Quem idcirco praemittimus, ut vestrum ad nos praescientes adventum in omnibus promtiores^w vestris inveniamur obsequiis adesse, obnixè rogantes ne nos transire velit vestra paternitas, nisi pernoctetur nobiscum. Si quid autem ex his quae nostratis reperiuntur, vobis (A: 146v) placuerit, tantum per eum nobis mandate;^x quia hilariter vestro praesto erit obsequio. Quia post dilecti patris nostri Adelgari decessum, Dei gratia, ut vere confidimus, contulit patronum. Valeat vestra paternitas in Domino.

^a In A, *N* is a rubricated, two-line initial. In B, an intended two-line initial was never added. B appears to have been copied by the second scribe of letter 2. ^b Omitted in Stubbs. ^c *S.* AB. ^d *Berbtini* B and Stubbs. ^e *successo* B, corrected into *successu*. ^f *pontificis praedecessoris vestri Adelgari* Leland. ^g *Scire to gratiam* edited in Leland. ^h *in invicem* B. ⁱ *Bertini* in capitals B. ^j *Ob* on an erasure B. ^k *raediens* B, corrected. Leland copied *Namque to rediens*. ^l *quod* B. ^m *potuit* (?) A. ⁿ *dominum* Leland. ^o *obtinuimus* Leland. ^p *apud* B and Stubbs. ^q *dominum* in Leland. ^r *vero Adelgarum* in B, Leland and Stubbs. ^s Capitals in B. ^t *adventus sui* edited in Leland. ^u *Apud* to *restaurandum* edited in Leland. ^v *praecordiatum* (?) in A. Marc Van Uytenghe has suggested an emendation to *praecordiorum*, deriving from *praecordia*. ^w *promptiores* in B. ^x It appears that the scribe of A originally wrote *mandata*.

Translation

To him that is imbued from the cradle with the standard of sacred religion, the reverend bishop Sigeric, brother Odbert, abbot, with the assembled brothers of the monastery of Saint-Bertin of Sithui, [wishes] that all may thrive for you with fortunate result in the King of kings.

We wish your fatherhood to know and remember how we deserved the grace and fatherhood and the mutual brotherhood of the association to your predecessor, bishop Æthelgar; this was so great that, above all the monasteries of Francia, he adopted that of Saint-Bertin with special fondness. For when he travelled to Rome, he was received by us with honour, and returning from Rome, he was received very magnificently as befits such a great father, and he granted us the exceptional privilege of his fondness: at that point, he became our father as well as our brother, and we became his sons and his brothers in the one Lord. He lavished us with alms and many gifts, and also promised that he would bestow more so long as he lived; but alas! we were unworthy of such a great patron, as is clearly evident from the saying of the prophet, which goes as follows: 'Your sins have withholden good [things] from you.' We had gained a position of great familiarity with lord Dunstan; with lord Æthelgar, however, it was greater, so much that he made arrangements to rebuild the monastery of the apostle Saint Peter, built by Bertin himself immediately after his arrival, from its foundations. Suppliantly on our knees with all manner of prayers that emerge from our hearts, we anticipate your kindness by asking, knocking, seeking, until we

⁸² Jer. V.25. ⁸³ Paraphrased from Luke XI.9 or Matthew VII.7.

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merit to obtain the sweetness of your fatherhood, just as brother Grimwald will inform you, ready as we are to show you the communion of our brotherhood, if it placates your clemency. We send him ahead so that knowing of your arrival with us in advance we will be found to be more prepared in every respect to be of service to you, meekly requesting that your fatherhood would not pass us by, if not spend the night with us. If some of the things that can be found in our region would please you, merely ask for it from us through him; he will happily comply with your request. For, since the passing of our beloved father Æthelgar, we truly trusted that the grace of God would give us a patron. May your fatherhood thrive in the Lord.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ I should like to thank Giles Constable, the late Philip Grierson, Pieter-Jan Lachaert, Ludo Milis, Paul Remley, Erik Thoen, Marc Van Uytfanghe and Melissa Provijn for commenting on the first draft of this paper.