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Book Author(s): Robert F. Berkhofer <suffix>III</suffix>

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CODA: LEARNING FROM TWICE TOLD TALES

The monastic stories of Saint Peter's, Saint-Denis, and Christ Church were selective constructions, contingent on present needs, and particular to each place. In each case, I traced how and why these stories crystallized in writing when they did, even if temporarily. At Saint Peter's in the mid-1030s, the new abbot, Wichard, a long-serving brother, was attempting to acquire (re)confirmations of his house's privileges. The political terrain of Ghent, on the border of the Empire and France, demanded confirmation by two kings, as well as the local lord, the count of Flanders. This situation was further complicated by rivals, the monks of Saint Bavo, who had contested local sacred and commercial space for nearly a century. Saint Peter's story is the clearest of the three under consideration because we have a mostly complete, perhaps autograph, manuscript containing narrative elements, guiding rubrics, and an elaborate chronological framework, allowing for direct reconstruction of its content, composition, and purposes. The story of Saint-Denis is less obvious because its dossier was a series of charter copies to support oral arguments and contained no narrative elements. Still, because it was composed for a particular occasion – rebutting the bishop of Paris' arguments at the Lateran Synod of 1065 – its main purpose, and thus its story, can still be understood. In the case of Christ Church, Canterbury, a story must be deduced from three later copies of a now-lost manuscript, which contained a mixture of documents and rubrics with no narrative elements. Reconstructing its content is challenging and, inevitably, its story is more speculative. Still, the rich outpouring of texts from post-Conquest Canterbury allows some understanding of its goals.

None of these three monastic stories remained unchanged or unchallenged for long. Medieval monks were constantly rewriting their pasts. In each case, one finds a distinct monastic view of the past at a particular juncture in time. Of course, it is perfectly acceptable – if difficult – to study fleeting historical phenomena. Even so, these stories (or parts of them) were useful enough to provoke sequels. However, these three monastic stories also share features, despite having been composed at different places and times. As roughly contemporaneous monastic writings, one anticipates

that aspects of language, style, or even thinking would be similar. However, there were also patterns of forgeries and historicizing which reveal underlying monastic outlooks, which are treated below.

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTS AND TRADITIONS

Every story needed a beginning. If commemorating the dead (brothers, benefactors, or saints) was a purpose of the story (as it frequently was), its beginning was also the start of remembering. If creating a usable past for the community was a goal, then the foundation of the house by its patron saint must have seemed the best place to begin. Such origin stories were crucial because they inherently imparted authority and credibility to a local story by coordinating it with a larger history of a place, a kingdom, the Church, or all of them at once. Monastic foundation stories were usually composed using a combination of collective memory (presumably handed down over generations) and various hagiographic texts.¹ Of course, composers could embellish such stories using older texts, which could be creatively misread, interpolated, or invented to convey the authority of tradition. Although the foundation stories of the three houses were distinct, they shared important features.

In the story of Saint-Peter's, Ghent, the composers fabricated an explicit narrative about the foundation. The *Ratio foundationis* provided key points which framed the overall story: foundation by the missionary Saint Amand (employing standard hagiographic tropes such as clearing ground in the wilderness, conversion of a pagan shrine, and the invented etymology of the place name, *Blandinium*); the presence of regular monks and an abbot from the start; and the dedication to Saint Peter and acknowledgment from the Pope (which implied independence). Perhaps even more important was what the story omitted or wished forgotten: the existence of the rival house of Saint Bavo's. The monks borrowed key names and details from their rival's past, which were then woven into their own foundation story as a way of co-opting – and thus controlling – the earliest known figures and locations. This framing narrative allowed the composer to contextualize later documents (especially Carolingian ones) within the story, since many of its main themes had already been established.

In the dossier of Saint-Denis, the story's beginning was not the foundation of the house by Denis, which was already established by hagiographies. Similar elements to Saint Peter's were present (the myth of a regular monastic foundation and the conflation of two church sites), though they were not

¹ Remensnyder, *Remembering Kings Past*, esp. 42–88 on the “legendary process.” Compare Bouchard, *Rewriting Saints and Ancestors*, 24–29, 292–9.

the main focus. Rather, the foundational story concerned monastic “liberties” within the first charters, especially King Dagobert granting immunity and Bishop Landry relinquishing episcopal control. These claims supported a case for freedom of the eleventh-century abbey from Bishop Godfrey, by demonstrating the antiquity of arrangements he had allegedly violated. Since the issue had already been debated at the royal court, the dossier’s story could be brief and skip over parts that everyone accepted, in order to focus on the controversial details. Thus, the phrasing of ancient royal, episcopal, and papal privileges was carefully tweaked to assure a genuine appearance and to use key words like *libertas*. While inherently forged to a modern methodological eye, the craftsmanship of the monks of Saint-Denis was good enough for a pope eager to assert his authority, and so their arguments carried the day.

In the case of Christ Church, Canterbury, the story began in the conversion era but not with an explicit foundation narrative. Indeed, the foundation story was already known: Bede’s history of the mission to England had, by the eleventh century, become so widely accepted that it was unnecessary (and maybe unwise) to repeat it directly. Instead, the story began with a related foundational text: the letter of Pope Boniface to King Æthelberht dated 615. The mission of Augustine to Canterbury was a *fait accompli* in this text. Of course, as at Saint-Denis, the role of founding royal patron (Æthelberht) was important. Like Saint Peter’s, asserting a monastic origin was key. The use of the term *monasterium* and explicit references to regular monks (rather than clerics, and especially not canons) was a special emphasis inherited from tenth-century English Benedictine reform. A key message was sent by this letter: the special favor bestowed by early popes and kings – a prelude to numerous royal and papal confirmations, appropriately doctored in later parts of the story. As at Saint Peter’s, local rivals (the monks of Saint Augustine’s) were effaced in the story.

The use of foundational texts and traditions in these three cases demonstrates that omitting unwanted details was potentially just as important as including others. Forgetting could be as powerful as remembering.² But it was not just forgetting or remembering as rewriting and forgery were also used by the story composers. Present concerns were written backwards into the ancient past to assert a continuity which had not existed. Overall, what stands out is the very careful crafting of all foundational texts and traditions. In these choices, one can often perceive the motives of the story’s creators quite directly, because they framed the later parts (and especially the desired endings) of each story. They also helped build communal

² Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 23–9, 81–114. Compare Morelle, “Histoire et archive vers l’an mil,” 119–41.

identity. Such monastic self-fashioning was integrally linked to their sense of the past and, thus, to historical writing.

RECYCLING AND ECONOMY OF EFFORT

Some of the most critical choices made by monastic story tellers involved what to do with pre-existing texts, especially charters found in the monastery's archives. Frequently, medieval archival practices are hidden from modern historians by poor rates of document survival. If one were seeking a factual narrative of events at these houses, this survival bias would be a major problem. But if one focuses on the process of selection instead, then one can see patterns in the ongoing preservation, copying, and recycling of archives. Survivals of unaltered (or less altered) texts allow glimpses of fabricators' choices.

One tactic of monastic story tellers and forgers was fashioning chains of related charters. Highlighting (or forging) links between documents was a means of promoting a desired story. Potential chains pre-existed the stories of Saint Peter's, Saint-Denis, and Christ Church, Canterbury. Some began in the "archives," where charters were stored in coffer, cubbyholes, or even just in bundles tied together. Such storage grouped charters, inherently ordering them. This process is difficult to recover; however, sometimes traces of organizational schemes remain in dorsal notices on single sheet charters. For example, at Saint Peter's and Christ Church many of the surviving charters (both genuine and modified) bear labels applied before or during the composition of their cartularies. One imagines (but cannot prove) that papal privileges were kept together at Saint-Denis, offering models for pseudo-originals and the dossier. Stories could be influenced by previous bundles, groupings, or even small booklets. At Saint Peter's, a tenth-century booklet (the *Liber traditionum antiquus*) was copied with modifications into the later cartulary. In other words, the order of a story sometimes just reflected previous physical storage or pre-existing texts. But archival storage was not strictly determinative. Storage groupings were flexible, and so composers could, if they wished, physically rearrange their sources before copying, improving, or just removing them from the group.

Forgeries and inventions often supplied missing links in documentary chains. For example, at Saint-Denis, the eleventh-century monks had many genuine early Merovingian royal charters. But they fabricated a purpose-built privilege of Bishop Landry to fit between their charters of Dagobert and Clovis II. A perceived gap was thus filled, and so a new tale could be told. This invented Landry privilege provided the key link to later chains of royal and papal confirmations. The monks of Saint Peter's employed a similar approach: using a fabricated letter of Bishop Transmar

of Noyon to introduce their comital charters and so frame the meaning of Count Arnulf's reforms. Cartularists at Canterbury took advantage of code-switching from Old English to Latin to improve many charters to make monastic claims to lands. When this was not sufficient, they just fabricated Latin entries and attributed them to known benefactors, such as Queen Ælfifu (Emma).

Of course, composing stories involved various kinds of drafting. Copying charters into blank sheets of other books, as happened at Christ Church, created alternate versions that could later be absorbed into larger stories. Indeed, such versions, especially when written into an altar book, had the potential to be performed and so could be lodged in communal memory. They could be read aloud on feast days, anniversaries, or even during meals, whereas the archives from which they derived were usually only consulted by high-ranking members of the house. Indeed, separation between commonly known and less accessible texts probably existed at all three houses. Performance texts might be purely internal to the community, though could potentially involve larger audiences, including visitors or even the world outside. The *Liber Traditionum* of Saint Peter's clearly included instructions for its anticipated readers and listeners; the dossier of Saint-Denis was made for presentation to the papal curia; and the Christ Church cartulary was tied to liturgical practices. It is possible, therefore, that composers could try out drafts and then modify them based on their reception. Such re-presentation of archives could have substantial influence, as discussed in chapter six.

There was an economy of effort in the recycling of pre-existing texts, for reasons both pragmatic and persuasive. In practical terms, writing was an expensive and laborious activity in the eleventh century and crafting stories often required specialists. So, they made the most of archives. Copying was easier than creating. Also, it was important to retain accepted traditions or older phrasing in order to be persuasive. For both story-writing and fabrication, making minimal (though significant) alterations was usually the most effective tactic. Examples of such small changes abound. At Christ Church, the pluralizing of royal writs ("you" plural/the archbishop and chapter, instead of "you" singular/the archbishop alone) transformed personal privileges into communal grants. These were single word changes in otherwise accurately copied texts. Another economical alteration was inserting the word *monasterium* instead of a more generic word for church, such as *ecclesia* or *basilica*, in order to insist on monastic origins. This substitution happened frequently in the stories of Saint Peter's, Saint-Denis, and Christ Church, none of which began as monasteries. Indeed, inserting key words retroactively (*libertas* would be another) was a limited – but frequent and highly significant – interpolation. Most of the time, invention was only

deployed when copying pre-existing texts was insufficient to achieve the desired results. Indeed, one might say that this was what “faithful” (not to say accurate) copying meant for monastic story writers.

REWRITING THE NOT-SO-DISTANT PAST

At each house, monks sought to situate their “story” within known chronologies. These included the history of their local area – understood variously as a town, a region, or even a kingdom – or the history of the Church (diocese, province, or overall). These temporal contexts were important because they provided a bridge to even more sweeping chronologies: the grand narrative of the redemption of humankind or the “ages” of man found in universal histories. Any monastic “story” wanted to be in touch with larger schemes. Yet as tales were told or stories were written, contact with such chronoscapes was often very brief. Of course, there was intense focus on the foundation story, since these beginnings often situated the house “story” within grander narratives. The foundation provided key reference points, such as when the saint founded the house (notably if it was before rivals); whence he came (especially a missionary bishop from venerable apostolic succession or from Rome); how he did so (preferably as independently as possible); and who had been the greatest early patron (ideally a king or lord with unquestioned authority easily linked to current rulers). Referencing such distant pasts placed the “story” within established historical frameworks and suggested it should be accepted. For instance, a desire to conform to such chronoscapes led Abbot Wichard of Saint Peter’s to rewrite every dating formula in the *Liber traditionum* in the *anno domini* scheme. However, once the necessary reference points were invoked (and, thus, claims to antiquity or priority made), the stories often bypassed many years and focused on nearer times: the not-so-distant past.

Elaborating the not-so-distant past usually consumed the bulk of writers’ and forgers’ attention. At Anglo-Norman Christ Church, this meant before the Norman Conquest and especially the time of Archbishop Æthelnoth (1020–1038). At Saint Peter’s in the 1030s, it was the reforms of Arnulf and Gérard of Brogne, from 941–980. In contrast, at Saint-Denis in 1061–1065, recent times were a focus, especially the confirmation of Leo IX in 1049, a forgery dangerously proximate to the time of writing, although the principal actors (abbot, pope, king, and bishop) had all changed in the intervening years. There were two reasons why the not-so-distant past was emphasized over the ancient. First, one must consider a common motive for composing a monastic story: contemporary disputes. Current disputes could be best addressed by rewriting the not-so-distant past, since the ancient past might be deemed irrelevant and doing so for the immediate past was problematic.

This was especially true for land claims. The despoliation of monastic lands by local lords was a frequent complaint of monks, from at least the tenth century if not earlier.³ But a nearby rival house (Saint-Bavo's at Ghent or Saint-Augustine's at Canterbury) might be an even greater spur to action. But local rulers or rivals were active players who knew the lay of the land. Furthermore, ecclesiastical rivals were usually equipped with their own texts and traditions which allowed them to produce counter-stories, which could sway authorities.

The second reason for emphasizing the not-so-distant past was pragmatic: the limits of archives and memory. There were usually more sources available – both textual and oral traditions – for recent generations than from ancient times. One duty of the monastic profession was to remember the departed and pray for them. Charged with memorializing the dead, monks were entrusted with keeping the past in ways that few others were.⁴ Monasteries had practices designed to facilitate remembrance of times past and were continuous and, ideally, perpetual institutions. Therefore, the collective memory of the house could exceed that of others. Exploiting this memory gap was an effective tactic for monastic storytellers, unless or until a rival group could demonstrate comparable memorial skill. Monastic archives usually (though not always) also had more documents from the not-so-distant past. Exceptions included pre-existing groupings, assembled and deliberately preserved rather than filed and forgotten. Another reason for an imbalance of materials from past eras might be a disaster, such as the fire which damaged Canterbury in 1067, although clearly both precious texts (gospels containing ancient privileges) and even numerous charters were preserved. Modern historians have rightly been skeptical about monastic claims about disasters, since such protestations justified selective reuse of sources that occurred anyway. For example, in 1061 the monks of Saint-Denis had some charters from 893 to 1049 in their archives, but the dossier's story skipped over these years.⁵ Likewise, the story of Saint

³ Monastic complaints and their meaning was central to the "Feudal Revolution" debate: Thomas N. Bisson, "The 'Feudal Revolution'" *Past and Present*, no. 142 (1994): 6–42 with responses by Timothy Reuter, Chris Wickham, Dominique Barthélemy, Stephen White and Bisson's reply in no. 152 (1996): 196–223 and no. 155 (1997): 177–225.

⁴ Women were crucial to memorializing ancestors, Elisabeth Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in the Middle Ages, 900–1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 65–92.

⁵ Saint-Denis benefitted from 17 charters between 893 and 1000 according to Sonzogno, *Le chartier de l'abbaye de Saint-Denis*, 9–210 and at least 4 others from 1000 to 1049 according to *Télma*.

Peter's bridged the years between the death of Charles the Bald (877) and Arnulf's reforms (941) with a single entry.

The not-so-distant past, especially just beyond ordinary memory, was fertile ground for both forgers and historians. For forgers, the advantage of this semi-distant era was that no one survived who could contradict their inventions with personal testimony. Indeed, it was a bold, even foolhardy, forger who dared to alter texts or objects which lay within the realm of living memory. Likewise, for medieval historical writers, events in the not-so-distant past could be interpreted more safely than recent events, whose significance could still be transformed by living protagonists. Furthermore, forgers and historians could reshape the near past more easily than the ancient past. The ancient past was less pliable because of the need to connect to known grand narratives, such the history of the Church or the kingdom, to establish priority and authority. The more smoothly this integration occurred, the greater the credibility of any narrative or document – forged or genuine. The middle period between ancient and recent – the gap between ordinary memory/archives and monastic memory/archives – was when forgers and historians preferred to operate. This difference could be substantial, but even when other people's memories/archives became better (as we will see in part III), even small gaps could be exploited. The not-so-distant past was the most pliable, and by rewriting it monks crafted improved relationships with donors, authorities, and even rivals in the present and future.

FORGING COMMUNITIES

Were there connections between monastic forgers? Presumably, forgers' ideas might travel alongside other texts as they moved from one house to another. They might also be shared through exchanges of personnel. Of course, such links are difficult to trace, but not impossible, especially for large houses with very active *scriptoria* or schools. Indeed, the three monasteries analyzed above had such connections, which suggest forgers could share information.

By the early eleventh century, the monastery of Saint Peter's had numerous links to other houses in England, Normandy, and the Empire. Steven Vanderputten argues for a sustained period of "international outreach" in the late tenth century by Flemish monasteries.⁶ He traces the connections of Saint-Peter's, Saint-Vaast, and Saint-Bertin to Canterbury through letters written in the 980s and 990s to three successive archbishops. Indeed, monks from Ghent had some impact on tenth-century Benedictine

⁶ Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process*, 65–73.

reform in England, participating in debates about the *Regularis concordia*, the customary developed for English monasteries.⁷ Saint-Peter's "outreach" also included contact with Norman monasteries, resulting in sharing of texts. As explained in chapter two, some of the saints' lives used as the basis for the foundation "story" of Saint-Peter's in the *Liber traditionum* were appropriated from Saint Wandrille in Normandy, following the Norman relics transferred to Ghent by Count Arnulf in the 940s. Since Saint-Peter's was located on the borders of two kingdoms, there were also close contacts with ecclesiastical institutions in the Empire. By the late tenth century, Saint-Peter's was an important monastic school, known for studies of the classics, and traded manuscripts with the cathedral school at Reims to make copies for each other's libraries.⁸

Such personal and regional monastic connections, often stressed by traditional histories of reform, show how texts and ideas could move from place to place. Given such connections, it is not difficult to imagine that ideas (or methods) of fabricators could have been shared along the same lines. Wichard himself developed a distinctive script and promoted the novel *anno domini* dating system, which became widely adopted. Surely as prior and then abbot, Wichard trained others, while supervising the reshaping of the abbey's past. Of course, the most obvious transfers involved at Saint-Peter's were the massive appropriation of texts from their cross-town rival, Saint Bavo's. Beginning from the very moment of Saint-Bavo's refoundation in 946, competition stimulated extensive creative rewriting, using both archives, a process that continued into Wichard's time and beyond. Although this was an intensely local contest, it also exemplifies one of the most common causes of creative rewriting: monastic rivalry. This case demonstrates that forging communities need not have been cooperative, rather they could be hostile, using textual micro-aggressions to promote one rival above another through rewriting their common past.

Saint-Denis was also widely connected by the mid-eleventh century. Saint-Denis had holdings in the Vexin, the borderlands between the dukes of Normandy and the kings of France, and so had extensive dealings with both princes.⁹ The abbey also had pre-Conquest holdings in England (Taynton, Deerhurst) and could forge charters about them. Furthermore, the cult of Saint Denis had spread to several houses in southeastern England.¹⁰ These

⁷ Vanderputten, "Canterbury and Flanders in the Late Tenth Century," 222.

⁸ Vanderputten, *Monastic Reform as Process*, 58.

⁹ Grosse, *Saint-Denis Zwischen Adel und König*, 78–83.

¹⁰ David Bates, "The Abbey and the Conquest: An Unusual Case?" in *Bury St. Edmunds and the Conquest*, ed. Tom Licence (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), 5–21, esp. 5–6, 9, noted the extensive ties of Saint-Denis across pre- and post-Conquest England.

overseas interests meant Saint-Denis had as many royal charters from English kings as it did from the Capetians in the eleventh century.¹¹ Moreover, in the 1060s there was a direct link of personnel: Baldwin, a monk of Saint-Denis, became physician of Edward the Confessor, who made him abbot of Bury St. Edmunds in 1065, a position he retained until his death in 1097.¹² Born near Chartres, Baldwin had learned medicine and travelled to England in the 1050s where he entered royal service, before returning to Saint-Denis and becoming the prior of Lebraha in Alsace. In 1061, the monks obtained a genuine Nicholas II confirmation for the priory using fabricated Carolingian documents, as explained in chapter three. As prior, Baldwin had to deal with a struggle against the lay advocate and so may have participated in the delegations sent to Rome in 1061 and 1065. In any event, he would have been familiar with the tactics employed.¹³

There can be little doubt that Baldwin brought his experience at Saint-Denis to bear in England. As abbot, he took a case for his monastery's freedom from its diocesan bishop directly to the pope in 1070–1 and also encouraged his brothers to rewrite charters of earlier kings as preparation for requesting a confirmation from William the Conqueror in 1081. These two related moves, obtaining a papal bull and then a royal confirmation, as David Bates pointed out, were “both of them stratagems that he had surely learnt at Saint-Denis.”¹⁴ They had clear precedents in the tactics which had worked for the monks of Saint-Denis in 1065 and 1068, and there were even close textual parallels in the phrasing and ordering of the documents.¹⁵ Thus, the charters and texts from Saint-Denis exerted considerable influence over post-Conquest Bury St. Edmunds through Baldwin.¹⁶ Perhaps it is no accident that one finds a Bury scribe in a medical manuscript (brought by Baldwin to England) writing a continental Carolingian miniscule with tall loops and ascenders, similar to those found in single sheet documents, especially mid-eleventh-century papal bulls.¹⁷ This manuscript was not intended for broad circulation and perhaps the scribe was practicing script doctoring in a safe place. Suspiciously, one of

¹¹ Waldman, “Charters and Influences from Saint-Denis,” 23.

¹² Antonia Gransden “Baldwin, Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds,” *ANS* 4 (1981): 65–76, 187–95; Tom Licence, “History and Hagiography in the Late Eleventh Century: The Life and Work of Hermann the Archdeacon, Monk of Bury St. Edmunds” *English Historical Review* 124 (2009): 516–44.

¹³ Tom Licence, “The Cult of St. Edmund” in *Bury St. Edmunds and the Conquest*, ed. Licence, 107.

¹⁴ Bates, “The Abbey and the Conquest,” 16.

¹⁵ Bates, “The Abbey and the Conquest,” 17–8.

¹⁶ Waldman, “Charters and Influences,” 22–30.

¹⁷ BL Sloane 1621,17v. “Scribe A” examined by Michael Gullick, “An Eleventh-Century Bury Medical Manuscript,” in *Bury St. Edmunds and the Conquest*, ed. Licence,

the pre-Bury continental contributions to this manuscript was written by the same hand found in the 1059 charter of Edward the Confessor granting land at Taynton. It featured a long first-person note after the subscriptions saying that Baldwin received the charter and gift on behalf of Saint-Denis.¹⁸ This connection has led some scholars to attribute this hand to Baldwin himself; but even if he did not write it, he was clearly the composer.¹⁹

Saint-Denis also had close connections with the monastery of Saint-Vaast in Flanders, and here one can trace the movement of a key person. Thomas Waldman highlighted the arrival of an expert scribe, Albertus, probably a monk and head of the Saint-Vaast scriptorium at Saint-Denis around 1060. Albertus' (and Saint-Vaast's) style clearly influenced the making of the important sacramentary written at Saint-Denis (BnF ms. lat 9436), which contained many elaborate illuminations and initials, and was covered in jewels and ivory figures. Although this manuscript followed liturgical uses at Saint-Denis (including the new feast of the Detection of Saint Denis), it also included the feast of Saint-Vaast. Furthermore, Albertus may have trained scribes at Saint-Denis. In particular, Waldman noted that the hand which wrote the sacramentary also wrote the rubrics in the dossier of Saint-Denis (BnF NAL 326), the text of which had been written by three other scribes.²⁰ This example shows that expert scribes might travel as tutors and that fabricators could transfer their methods or ideas along with the ability to write particular scripts. Like Saint-Denis, the monks of Saint-Vaast had also forged a group of charters to assert their exemption from episcopal control. Furthermore, one of Saint-Vaast's key forgeries, an alleged tenth-century charter of Bishop Vindicianus, contained a similar anathema clause (naming Dathan, Abiron, and Judas), to that found in the Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror charters, almost certainly beneficiary-redacted by Saint-Denis' scribes for their English estates.²¹ Waldman suggested that this clause derived from Saint-Vaast, before being spread to

190–211, esp. 193–7 and plate 10.2 which reproduces this folio. My thanks to Tom Licence for this suggestion.

¹⁸ BL Sloane 1621, f. 44r–45r, fac. in Gullick, "An Eleventh-Century Bury Medical Manuscript," 201–2, plates 10.4 and 10.5.

¹⁹ Gullick, "An Eleventh-Century Bury Medical Manuscript," 207–11 designated this hand **h**. The charter is AN K 19, no. 6 (S 1105).

²⁰ Waldman, "Charters and Influences," 27–28. See also Richard Gameson, "Signed Manuscripts from Early Romanesque Flanders," in *Pen in Hand: Medieval Scribal Portraits, Colophons, and Tools*, ed. Michael Gullick (Walkern: Red Gull, 2006), 32–73.

²¹ There are two texts of Vindicianus' act, one copied by Guimann in the twelfth century, Eugene Van Drival, *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Vaast d'Arras rédigé au XIIe siècle par Guimann* (Arras: A. Courtin, 1875), 18–22, and another from the eleventh century, BM Douai ms. 753, in *Chronicon Vedastinum*, MGH SS 13: 697–98.

Saint-Denis, Normandy, and England.²² This example shows that phrasing, techniques, and tactics could be shared by monastic scribes involved in fabrication across a fairly wide geography.

By the later eleventh century, Christ Church, Canterbury also had connections to potential forging communities. As at Saint-Peter's, Christ Church had a fierce cross-town rival in the monks of Saint Augustine's, Canterbury, and there were numerous borrowings which informed fabrication. Like Saint-Peter's (for the people of Flanders) and Saint-Denis (for the Franks), Christ Church had pretensions to being the first missionary monastery for the English. It also had extensive cross-channel connections. Christ Church became an important *scriptorium* and school as Lanfranc sought to reform English monasticism. Having been restocked with texts and people drawn from the great Norman monastic school at Bec, the development of Christ Church's *scriptorium* shows strong influences from Normandy.²³ Nonetheless, a house script was deliberately developed, imparting a distinctive look to Anglo-Norman Canterbury books (and those written by Christ Church scribes who went to other houses).²⁴ Christ Church also distributed texts and monks to other English houses following Lanfranc's vision of monastic chapters, especially Rochester after 1077 through his Norman compatriot, Bishop Gundulf.²⁵

Clearly, monasteries could exchange people, texts, and techniques. Some monks became specialists who dealt with issues such as monastic freedom, obtaining confirmations, or renovating saints' lives. A famous example of a travelling monastic specialist was Goscelin of Saint-Bertin, a monk from Flanders imported to England to compose saints' lives, especially English saints whose cults monks wished to rejuvenate for new purposes. Another would be Herman the Archdeacon, probably of German-speaking origin, who worked with Abbot Baldwin of Bury St. Edmunds and Queen Edith to foster the cult of Edward the Confessor, following lines suggested by Saint-Denis' treatment of Dagobert.²⁶

²² Waldman, "Charters and Influences," 30.

²³ Gameson, "English Manuscript Art and Canterbury, 97–101. For personnel from Bec, Sally Vaughn "Students from Bec in England" in *Saint Anselm of Canterbury and His Legacy*, ed. Giles E. M. Gasper and Ian Logan (Toronto: PIMS, 2012), 73–91.

²⁴ Webber, "Script and Manuscript Production at Christ Church," esp. 152–5 for use at Rochester and Saint Augustine's.

²⁵ Martin Brett, "The Church of Rochester, 604–1185," in *Faith and Fabric: A History of Rochester Cathedral, 604–1994*, ed. Nigel Yates (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1996), 1–27 and "Gundulf and the Cathedral Communities of Canterbury and Rochester" in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest*, eds. Eales and Sharpe, 15–26.

²⁶ Tom Licence, "New Light on Herman the Archdeacon," in *Bury St. Edmunds and the Norman Conquest*, ed. Licence, 94–103, esp. 102–3 for analogy to Dagobert.

Of course, Saint-Peter's, Saint-Denis, and Christ Church were large monasteries that were relatively successful in asserting their position through writing prowess. Thus, their "communities" of forgers might be expected to be larger than most. In future, methods of "communication" or "networking" should trace lines of affiliation between centers of forgery.²⁷ However, one should not insist on connections without clear evidence. Perhaps similar challenges just led monks to adopt similar solutions in different places. Indeed, one must remain cautious about communities of forgers. For many years, scholars of "reform" overestimated the influence of leading figures or reform "movements" without always connecting the manuscript dots.²⁸ This is a cautionary tale for those tempted to envision widespread networks of forgers. To prove such links beyond inference, scholars must undertake the painstaking comparative work of diplomatics, paleography, and codicology to demonstrate direct connections. Such work is best done in a collaborative fashion and may exceed what a single scholar might achieve. Still, there are signs of communities of forgers, but how extensive they were remains elusive.

TIMES OF TRANSITION

Another shared feature of the stories of Saint Peter's, Saint-Denis, and Christ Church was that they were composed during significant transitions in rule. Such transitions were determinative at Saint-Denis: in 1060–1 there was suddenly a new abbot, a royal minority, a new bishop of Paris, and a new pope. In particular, the ascent of Godfrey, a young and assertive bishop of Paris with strong connections to the regent, was a challenge for the house, which had drifted away from royal patronage (if not royal "protection") before 1060. The dossier of Saint-Denis was a shift towards the papacy and away from reliance on kings, as a means of claiming greater freedom from Bishop Godfrey. At Ghent, the *Liber Traditionum*'s story alleged control over important lands and affirmed the house's priority by appealing to multiple authorities, most significantly the counts of Flanders. But in the 1030s, as the story was being written, changes in rule were occurring. Prior Wichard became abbot in 1034. Then in 1035, the old Count, Baldwin IV, died and Baldwin V succeeded. So, Wichard changed his planned ending of the *Liber Traditionum* because of the count's death. The Norman Conquest significantly altered the value of the older archives of Christ Church, Canterbury

²⁷ Marco Mostert, *New Theories of Medieval Communication* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999) outlined such approaches and applied them in his "Forgery and Trust" in *Strategies of Writing*, ed. Schulte et al., 37–59.

²⁸ Vanderputten, *Reform as Process*, 3–8 critiqued traditional "representations of reform."

(especially the need for “booked” land). Although the first recension of its “story” was achieved around 1073–83, later events necessitated revisions: the Domesday survey of 1086, the death of Archbishop Lanfranc in 1089, and the vacancy until 1093. Such transitions offered both potential peril (a disruption of the *status quo*, including loss of lands and status) and opportunity (a chance to “restore” lands or status).

Transitions in rule, of course, occurred frequently and did not always lead to new and elaborate monastic stories. But even routine transitions affected forgers. Charters depended on their issuers’ authority. Indeed, fabricated charters sought to co-opt such authority. Thus, they offer elegant proof of the perceived efficacy of written documents even as they subverted the authority from which they claimed to derive. But unfortunately for monks, respect for old privileges (however venerable) was not the same as favor from contemporary rulers, who had the power to protect monastic lands and status or to undermine them. However much eleventh-century monks might have wanted grants to be perpetual, inviolate, or unalterable (concepts appearing constantly in all three stories), they almost never were. Such claims, even if not fabricated (though older privileges were often “corrected” in exactly these ways), were simply unenforceable without the consent, and ideally the cooperation, of current authorities. There was a large gap between a monastic, corporate mentality focused on eternity and the present concerns of superiors and lay rulers; a gap which all three monastic stories tried to paper over. Each story anticipated or concluded with a contemporary confirmation. The *Liber traditionum* of Saint Peter’s initially ended with a prayer but was almost immediately rewritten to include confirmations of the *traditiones* by the count and two kings in 1036 and 1038. The dossier of Saint-Denis was successful in obtaining a papal confirmation of monastic liberties in 1065, which was immediately added to the booklet, and a royal confirmation followed in 1068. Although the main story of the Christ Church cartulary seems to end in 1066, affirming control over lands and revenues after the Norman Conquest strongly shaped how the monks translated their older archives.

All three monastic stories also had coherence because they were composed in relatively short time frames. Although the dossier of Saint-Denis cannot be dated any more narrowly than 1061 to 1065 using strict textual criticism, the dossier itself was probably assembled only once it became clear that the case would be heard in Rome. Given its relatively modest size, it could easily have been produced in the months leading up to May 1065. Abbot Wichard’s initial draft of the *Liber traditionum* at Saint Peter’s seems likely to have been a product of his time as prior (1028–1034), and the uniformity of its presentation suggests it may have been written in a burst of activity, once materials had been selected. For the Anglo-Norman

cartulary of Christ Church, initial composition occurred around 1073–83, with revisions in the mid-1090s, fairly narrow spans.

Ultimately, these monastic stories had many purposes, especially pious ones, but they all also were written to seek validation (either literal or symbolic) from external authorities. In this way, they were continuing stories, at least until they lost their power to persuade and circumstances demanded they be rewritten or forgotten. Some were fragile and others were durable in their influence. While close study of the monastic stories of Saint Peter's, Saint-Denis, and Christ Church highlights their nuances, local character, and impermanence, their similarities suggest that there were broader trends in European forgery and historical writing, subjects to which I now turn.