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Archbishop of Canterbury

In 960, as soon as the winter was over, 'Dunstan went, by the long-drawn-out journeyings to which archbishops were accustomed, to the city of Rome, and arrived there finally by a propitious route'.[1] The scale of such a journey is recorded in the itinerary of one of Dunstan's successors, Sigeric, who travelled to Rome in 990. It describes a route through Italy, over the Alps and across the middle of France, of eighty stations from Rome to the English Channel near Witsand.[2] Dunstan stayed at the monastery of St Bertin's near St Omer, as did his later successors,[3] and so long a journey depended upon monastic and episcopal hospitality for its success. There is a delightful story in the first life which illustrates well the strength of these connections and the haphazard nature of such a journey. After many days of travelling, the supplies were running low, and Dunstan's steward chided him for the lavish way he had given so much away in alms. As Dunstan went off to say vespers, having tried to reassure his harrassed companion, the steward retorted: 'Just you go off and adore this Christ of yours who pays no attention to our needs!' The story concludes:

> Now there were in that same town, where the man of God was staying with his companions, messengers from a certain venerable abbot, who for three days had been waiting the arrival of the blessed bishop. Just as Dunstan was beginning to sing the office of Vespers, they arrived to greet the bishop and his faithful company with rich provisions of gifts and other delicacies from all the places around about, as a gift by the kindly prayer of that abbot and his brethren. Dunstan gratefully accepted their gifts of alms, and returned greeting to the gracious abbot and to the devoted community of brethren living under vows with him.[4]

From the beginning of the Roman mission to England, the successors of St Augustine had received the *pallium* directly from the pope himself, and by the tenth century it had become the regular custom of the new primate to make the dangerous journey to Rome to receive this badge of metropolitan authority. The *pallium* itself is a band of white wool worn by the pope; it was conferred upon the archbishops of Canterbury *in partem sollicitudinis,* and was the symbol of their direct relationship with the apostolic see itself.[5] In the Sherborne Pontifical, a liturgical

book intimately associated with Dunstan's primacy at Canterbury, there is a detailed account of how the archbishop received the *pallium* from the altar of St Peter, having first accepted a written privilege from the pope himself. The text of this privilege is preserved also in the Sherborne Pontifical, and it enjoins Dunstan to be a faithful bishop and specifies the occasions upon which the *pallium* might be worn by him.[6] These include the feasts of Our Lord and of the Apostles, as well as the occasions when the primatial authority was exercised in the consecration of bishops. The personal nature of the privilege is reflected in the provision that Dunstan might wear the *pallium* on his birthday. It is also significant that the Feast of the Assumption of Mary (15 August) is singled out by the pope as another suitable occasion. Dunstan remained throughout his life singularly devoted to Mary in a century which saw the steady increase in the formal prominence accorded to the Virgin by the western Church.[7]

The pope from whom Dunstan received his *pallium* and privilege was John XII, who had reigned since 955. The papacy stood on the verge of an acute crisis, caught between the pressing threats of Berengar, king of Italy, and the rising pretensions of the German ruler, Otto the Great. Less than two years after Dunstan's visit, John XII invoked the aid of Otto, creating him emperor in February 962, during which ceremony the pope handed him an ornate copy of the infamous 'Donation of Constantine'. This marriage of convenience soon collapsed amidst acrimonious wrangling and in the autumn of 963, after a revolt in Rome, John was deposed and replaced by a layman, Leo VIII, at the direct instigation of the emperor, who insisted that thereafter future popes should swear fealty to him. John, however, engineered his return as soon as the emperor had left, and deposed Leo and his entourage most cruelly. John was murdered in 964 and was succeeded by Benedict V, whom the emperor duly deposed, replacing him with the hapless Leo! Leo in turn died, in 965, and Benedict returned to reign briefly again. The emperor once more intervened and appointed John XIII, and in 967, at Christmas, Otto's son was crowned by the pope as co-emperor. But this imperial ascendancy was more apparent than real, and for forty years the papacy languished under the corrupt sway of the Roman Crescenti family. John XIII survived until 972, but his successor, Benedict VI, was murdered in 974. His heir, Benedict VII, reigned until 983; the next pope, John XIV, was murdered and replaced briefly by Boniface VII (who had made a brief appearance as pope in 974). He too was murdered, whereupon John XV reigned until 996, when he summoned the new young emperor, Otto III, to his aid, with momentous consequences for the history of the papacy and Europe.[8]

Despite this sordid and complex history, the papacy continued to exercise an influence upon European, and therefore English, affairs far out of proportion to the real power and personalities of the popes. Remarkably, the machinery of the papacy continued to operate, and rulers sought papal approval and privileges for their religious foundations. Rome remained the 'eternal city' and pilgrims flocked to the tombs of Peter and Paul and the other venerable saints and martyrs buried there. The very weakness and corruption of the Roman Church laid it open to Frankish and German ecclesiastical influence and liturgical usage, to the extent that it has been claimed that 'it was the Franko-German church which, at this critical epoch, saved the Roman liturgy for Rome and the western world'.[9] The symbol of this development was the fact that during the sixty years after 962, five German kings were crowned as emperors of the Romans at St Peter's Basilica. This elaborate and impressive ceremonial not only elevated the

German emperors, it emphasised the crucial and indispensable role of the pope, or more precisely of the institution of the papacy, without which there could be no emperor in the west.[10]

Dunstan too came to Rome as a pilgrim: 'he made offerings at the shrines of the saints, and ministered to Christ's poor, and so he returned in peace from his journeyings to his native-land'.[11] Again, the record of Sigeric's itinerary in 990 affords details of the likely objects of Dunstan's devotions: St Mary's of the *scola Anglorum,*[12] the churches of St Valentine, St Agnes and St Laurence outside the walls; St Sebastian, St Anastasius, St Paul, and St Mary *scolam Graecam,* St Cecilia, St Mary across the Tiber and St Pancras. These saints and martyrs, many of whom were commemorated in the English kalendars, epitomised the awesome tradition of the Roman Church to which English Christians showed peculiar devotion.[13] The Blickling Homilies, collated during Dunstan's primacy, reflect this clearly.[14] In the chronicle, the pilgrimage of Aethelmod the priest to Rome is recorded in 962; Bishop Cyneweard of Wells, formerly abbot of Milton, may well have made a similar journey at the end of his life in 975.[15] Oswald, on his appointment as archbishop of York in 972, travelled as Edgar's emissary to Rome, carrying large gifts and disbursing generous alms.[16] Among the miracle stories narrated by Aelfric in his 'Life of St Swithun' is the tale of how a certain rich English thegn went blind, travelled to Rome seeking a cure but was disappointed there and remained blind for four more years until Swithun came to his rescue.[17] Dunstan's own dreams, recorded by both the first biographer and by Adelard, testify to the deep impression which Rome made on his mind and spirit, an impression which abided throughout his life.[18]

During his primacy, Dunstan maintained the traditional pattern of links with Rome, and these appear to have been both financial and judicial; the restoration of the monasteries also occasioned appeals for papal authority and protection. Edgar's second code of law, issued at Andover shortly after Dunstan's return from Rome, places the traditional methods of raising financial support for the Church on an organised footing. Having prescribed the tithe, it enjoins the payment of Peter's pence, with the following penalties for delay: 'He who has not rendered it by the appointed day is to take it to Rome, and 30 pence in addition, and then to bring back a document showing that he has handed over that amount there. When he comes home, he is to pay 120 shillings to the king.'[19] So stern a penalty probably reflects the difficulty encountered in raising such church taxes; nonetheless it stands as a measure of royal and episcopal commitment to this ancient financial obligation to the apostolic see. Evidence of judicial appeals is sketchy, but Adelard recounts the fascinating story of how Dunstan:

> rebuked a certain noble-man often for his illicit marriage; but because he could not correct him he finally cut him off with the sword of the gospel of Christ [i.e. excommunication]. So the noble-man went off to Rome and prevailed upon the prince of the apostles to write on his behalf to Dunstan. Dunstan, true to his name ['stone' or 'rugged'], as an unmoveable mountain, or as a stone fixed into the Corner-stone, could not be moved. Instead he persisted firm in his mind and superior in judgement to the mind of the apostle [i.e. pope], saying to his 'legate', 'Know that only the authority of my Lord will move me, not the threat of punishment!'[20]

When Edgar came to authorise the expulsion of the 'canons' from the Old Minster at Winchester in 964 (in order to introduce monks)[21] at the behest of the

new bishop, Ethelwold, he could claim direct papal approval for his policy in the form of a remarkable and probably unique document, which was later preserved by Archbishop Parker.[22] Such a direct appeal must have been channelled through Dunstan, the archbishop of Canterbury, and may well have been initiated by him in order to resolve a peculiarly difficult political challenge to the royal policy towards the monasteries.[23] What is striking about this document is that its language resembles closely the prologue to the *'Regularis concordia'* in which the influence of Dunstan is clear and explicit. It may well be that the papal decree, which endorsed and facilitated the royal action at Winchester, was actually drafted by Dunstan before being sent to Rome.[24] Glastonbury also claimed a privilege, probably from John XII (and if so, obtained perhaps by Dunstan as a result of his visit in 960), in which the pope received 'that place into the bosom of the Roman church and the protection of the blessed apostles'. This decree was duly ratified by Edgar, the Glastonbury monks claimed, at London in the twelfth year of his reign.[25] Such papal acts of protection and exemption for monasteries grew apace during the latter half of the tenth century,[26] and were not without precedent in England. What such papal involvement might mean, and the nature of the spiritual power it was believed the pope could wield on behalf of a threatened house, can be seen in an unusual letter, probably from John XV (after 985) to the ealdorman Aelfric (either of Mercia or of Hampshire).[27] Here the pope rebukes the nobleman who has abused his relationship as a near neighbour of Glastonbury, having seized estates and villages belonging to it. Threatening excommunication unless Aelfric desists, the pope admonishes 'your love to cease pillaging that place, for fear of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and out of respect for us'. Shortly after the death of Dunstan in 988, there is another letter from the same pope, John XV, confirming a peace treaty between Ethelred of England and Richard of Normandy which had been brought about by papal mediation; this is an interesting if rare example of the diplomatic role of the papacy at this time.[28]

No clearer picture can be drawn of relationships between Rome and England given the paucity of remaining material. But it is beyond doubt that the archbishop of Canterbury was the principal channel for all such communications, and he in a very real way represented the patriarch of the western Church to the English, and indeed to much of north-western Europe at this time. During Dunstan's primacy, the weakness of the papacy and the strength and prestige of Edgar bolstered this prominence, and added influence and some real power to an office already surrounded with an aura of antiquity and sanctity.[29] Dunstan inherited bishops who had been appointed by Oda, many of whom continued to serve during the first half of his primacy. There can be little doubt that Dunstan was regarded by many as the natural successor to Oda, and Osbern recounts the strange but moving story of how on the day that Dunstan came to celebrate the mass in the cathedral at Canterbury for the first time, the Holy Spirit hovered over him in the form of a dove throughout the consecration:

> When the Mass was ended, it rested on the memorial to blessed Oda which had been constructed in the form of a pyramid to the south side of the altar. From that day, Dunstan the archbishop always reverenced the merits of that man of God, and he never passed by without bending the knee and calling him a good man, saying: 'Here lies Oda the Good.'[30]

The appointment of Dunstan to Canterbury thus secured a great measure of continuity, and there is a very real sense in which Dunstan's achievements rested upon the foundations laid by Oda and his bishops.

Foremost among these bishops was Oskytel, who remained archbishop of York until 971 and was the keystone to royal and ecclesiastical policy in the north, East Anglia and the eastern Danelaw. Dunstan enjoyed the support of his own kinsman, Kinsige of Lichfield, for the crucial opening years of the new reign until 963/4. The sees of Crediton, Elmham, Chester-le-Street, Hereford, Dorchester with Lindsey and Ramsbury were served also by men whom Oda had appointed and who remained as bishops into the 970s.[31] A more difficult inheritance, perhaps, was the legacy of Edwy: the handful of bishops, mainly kinsmen of the king, whom the late king had appointed – Byrhthelm of Wells; another Byrhthelm, of Selsey; yet a third Byrhthelm, who succeeded Elfsige at Winchester; also Aelfweald, who went to Sherborne and remained there until 978. All these were Wessex sees, closely associated with the areas and families which had lent their support to the regime of Edwy. Opposition to the appointment of Dunstan, and to the policies of reform and monasticism for which he stood, certainly persisted at Winchester, and perhaps elsewhere in Wessex too.[32]

Nonetheless, the archbishop of Canterbury enjoyed a unique ascendancy over the Church in England, and over the appointment of its bishops. These appointments were always made in conjunction with the wishes of the king, and it would appear that Dunstan exercised a decisive influence over the young king, Edgar. In a letter written much later by Dunstan to Ethelred concerning the state of the Cornish see, the way in which this collaboration operated can be glimpsed: 'When King Edgar ordered me to consecrate Wulfsige [before 963], he and all our bishops said that they did not know who might own the estates [in dispute] with greater right than the bishop of the diocese, when he was thoroughly loyal and preached God's faith rightly and loved his lord.'[33]

Dunstan's first move was to appoint bishops to the two sees which he had held in plurality during the division of the kingdom, London and Worcester. To London he appointed Aelfstan, who was to serve for over thirty years until 995/6 and who exercised a decisive political influence during the troubled years of Ethelred's reign. To Worcester Dunstan sent his young friend, Oda's nephew, Oswald, recently returned from Fleury.

> Dunstan asked the powerful king, Edgar, to give Oswald the apostolic see which was vacant at Worcester, which he duly acquired from the king by this request. Oswald was commended to the earthly monarch by the bishops of that region . . . and was later elected and honourably consecrated by the bishops as one fitted for the care of such an office.[34]

This was probably in 961, and in the light of subsequent developments was a highly significant move, for Oswald was a practising monk and one of his first actions as a bishop was to found a small monastery at Westbury.[35]

In 963, Byrhthelm of Winchester died, and the most powerful see in the kingdom after Canterbury itself lay vacant. 'In that year Abbot Ethelwold succeeded to the bishopric of Winchester, and he was consecrated on the eve of St Andrew's day. That day was a Sunday.'[36] This was a decisive political move by Dunstan and the young king. At the heart of the Wessex religious establishment was placed the man who, after Dunstan himself, most represented the monastic reform movement in the Church, and did so in a vigorous and uncompromising way. Moreover, Ethelwold enjoyed an influence over Edgar comparable only with that of the archbishop himself.[37] With the sees of Canterbury and York, London, Worcester and Winchester in the hands of such men, and with the active zeal and support of the king himself, the reform of the

Church could proceed. In 964, Dunstan completed his circle by appointing Aelfstan, who was a close friend of Ethelwold and of the archbishop, to Rochester.[38]

> For the reformers were aiming at something more than a revival of strict monastic observance. They were endeavouring, partly by personal influence and partly through the medium of their cathedral churches, which became centres of learning, to rouse the enthusiasm of the laity and to raise the standards of the secular clergy.[39]

Dunstan's first biographer rightly observed the manner in which men were drawn from Glastonbury to become 'deans, abbots, bishops, even archbishops, as well as foremost in other orders of clergy',[40] and Adelard actually avers that 'Dunstan would not permit any but outstanding abbots or religious monks to serve in the hierarchy of the church'.[41] This last observation is not strictly true: the see of London was never occupied by a monk in Dunstan's time, and Dunstan made non-monastic appointments to Lichfield in 963 (Winsige), and to Selsey in 967 (Ealdhelm). The mission sees of Chester-le-Street, Elmham and Cornwall could hardly support a monastic appointment or establishment at this time, and so they were served by non-monastic bishops.[42] Nonetheless, during Dunstan's time, *77* per cent of the episcopal appointments were of monastic clergy, and this tendency persisted long after Dunstan's death. Just over half these appointments were drawn from the circle of men associated with Dunstan himself at Glastonbury; the remainder came from the circle of Ethelwold at Abingdon and Winchester, a few being proteges of Oswald, who became archbishop of York in 972.[43] This was a bold and sustained policy, and one of its immediate consequences was that some cathedral communities began gradually to assume a monastic character, in part at least. The directions and intentions which Dunstan laid down for these monastic bishops in the *'Regubris concordia'* were clear:

> Where monks live the monastic life in a bishop's see, the election of the bishop shall be carried out in the same way as that of an abbot, if, by the Lord's grace, a monk of sufficient worth be found in that place. . . . As for him who is chosen to be bishop, he shall live with his monks, unceasingly and with exceeding diligence and care, keeping to the monastic life in everything, as would the abbot of a monastery.

All this was to be discharged 'with the consent and advice of the King and according to the teaching of the Holy Rule'.[44] After Dunstan's death in 988, although the pre-eminence of the monks among the bishops was never quite the same, a clear tradition remained. Almost all the monks appointed to sees in the years up to the conquest were drawn from the Dunstan circle; and from 988 until 1038 the six archbishops of Canterbury were monks from Glastonbury, in a real way, therefore, the spiritual heirs of Dunstan himself.

There are several glimpses of the close-knit character of Dunstan's circle of monastic clergy and bishops. Both the early biographies of Dunstan sprang out of this milieu, and although both writers were foreigners, it was to the memory of this circle of Dunstan's friends that they appealed.[45] The close friendship that existed between Dunstan, Oswald and Ethelwold was clearly of crucial importance to the whole reform of the Church. Both men owed much to Dunstan, both personally and in terms of their appointments, and Dunstan retained his hold over even as strong a character as Ethelwold to the end. There is a story, for example, in the 'Life of Ethelwold' of how Dunstan alone could persuade and order Ethelwold to mitigate the severity of his fasting.[46] According

to Adelard, it was Aelfgar, Dunstan's chaplain (not a monk), later bishop of Elmham, who had the vision of the heavenly summons to Dunstan immediately prior to his death.[47] Adelard also relates how Dunstan learnt in a vision of St Andrew that he was to appoint his old friend, Alphege, abbot of Bath, to be bishop of Winchester in succession to Ethelwold, who died in 984.*[8]

The two early lives of Ethelwold also illuminate the spirit of monastic cameraderie which pervaded among these bishops. There is an alarming story of the extremes to which Ethelwold's idea of monastic obedience could run when he commanded one of his monks, Aelfstan, while at Abingdon, to plunge his hand into a cauldron of boiling water; this he did, and the hand survived unharmed as a sign of his virtue. Aelfstan moved on to Old Minster, Winchester, and in due course became bishop of Ramsbury in 970.*[9] Another important member of Ethelwold's circle of friends was Aethelgar, who became abbot of the New Minster and, in 980, bishop of Selsey; it was he who succeeded Dunstan as archbishop of Canterbury in 988.[50] In 992, Ealdwulf, whom Ethelwold had made abbot of the renewed monastery of Peterborough, became archbishop of York in succession to Oswald.[51] Aescwig, who became bishop of Dorchester in 979, was a close friend of Oswald's also;[52] originally a monk from Old Minster, he was warlike in more than a spiritual sense, for in 992 he took a hand in leading an abortive naval operation against the Danes.[53] A charming letter from Elfweard, abbot of Glastonbury, to his erstwhile pupil Sigeric, now (in 990) the new archbishop of Canterbury but formerly Dunstan's choice as abbot of St Augustine's, Canterbury, reveals how this tradition of common dedication, learning and discipline continued to hold fast into the next generation of bishops.[54]

In 980, at the rededication of the newly-enlarged Old Minster, Wulstan in his 'Life of Ethelwold' paints a dramatic picture of the monastic bishops in action; there were nine of them: Dunstan and Ethelwold, Aelfstan of Rochester, Aethelgar of Selsey, Aelfstan of Ramsbury, Aescwig of Dorchester, Alphege of Lichfield, Aethelsige of Sherborne and Athulf of Hereford.[55] With the exception of Aethelgar (who had until recently been abbot of the adjacent New Minster), all these are listed in the Hyde *'Liber vitae'* as episcopal brethren of the Old Minster whom the community remembered in their prayers.[56]

The importance of so cohesive an episcopate cannot be underestimated, and it was Dunstan's achievement to create and to lead this team of bishops, many of whom were united by a common discipline and vision. Dunstan himself was archbishop of Canterbury for twenty-eight years. Dunstan presided in a highly traditional manner, so much so as at times to seem almost invisible, especially in the reform and renewal of the monasteries; constancy, determination, and diplomacy, qualities without which no such major reform could have prospered, proved to be the hallmarks of his primacy. The strength of his own position, and that of his leading fellow bishops, notably Oswald and Ethelwold, made possible the profound changes in custom and land tenure which had to occur throughout the shires as churches and monasteries were endowed. It was Dunstan's particular political task as primate to carry the king, Edgar, with him, and to commend the Church's policies to the leading lay nobility. In the enforcement of justice in the shire courts, the integrity of the local bishop was indispensable, and it was in a judicial capacity also that Dunstan and his fellow bishops made their presence felt, not only by the exercise of ecclesiastical penalties. Further afield, the steady expansion of the Church in the north, and the consolidation of its position in East Anglia and eastern

Danelaw, required the strong co-operation of leading magnates, the king and the bishops, led by Dunstan, Oskytel and, in due time, Oswald. Likewise, the partnership between king and archbishop lay behind the extension of the influence of Canterbury into Wales and the other tributary kingdoms, and overseas by way of the missions to Scandinavia. The great renewal of monastic life was the crown to this whole movement of church reform and influence within political and national life. Such was the relationship between Edgar and Dunstan that, despite inevitable differences and some difficulties, Church and kingdom were remarkably at one in policy and operation, a unity symbolised in the prominence accorded to Edgar's coronation in 973, but whose fragility was highlighted by events immediately after his death.

Much of Dunstan's time as archbishop was spent in his own diocese of Canterbury, which he may have administered with the assistance of a suffragan at St Martin's in the see city.[57] He perambulated the various manors held by the archbishop elsewhere in Kent and southern England, using them also as bases for his occasional visitations to the religious houses with which he was particularly involved or for attending court. The archbishop of Canterbury was the leading magnate in Kent, giving judgement at the south door of the cathedral in causes which could not be tried or resolved elsewhere. The cathedral of Christ Church was an imposing and venerable symbol of the archbishop's office: the eastern end was in the form of an apse containing the altar to Christ and the tomb of Oda, and behind that was the shrine of Wilfrid. From this altar the new primate received again his *pallium* and processed westwards to the altar of Our Lady in the western apse, behind which stood the *cathedra* on which he sat. In this position he would celebrate the mass, facing east, with the people also facing east, their backs towards him.[58]

The community of Christ Church was an ancient body; its members were the custodians of the precious relics and archives of the cathedral which were kept in the baptistery off the eastern end of the building, and of the tombs of the archbishops. They were probably a body of clergy living under some kind of canonical rule, though they were hardly monastic in the strictest sense.[59] Under Oda and the foreign scholar, Frithegod, learning had revived to some extent, centred on the ancient library where Dunstan himself spent many hours correcting manuscripts at first light.[60] Dunstan undoubtedly introduced some monks into the community, but there is no reason to suppose that Christ Church did not remain a mixed community of clerks and monks throughout his episcopate, as perhaps Glastonbury had been, though in rather different circumstances. Dunstan's own chaplain, Aelfgar, later bishop of Elmham, is described as a 'cleric',[61] and that was at the very end of Dunstan's life; it was to his 'monks and clergy' that he taught the music of the anthem that had occurred to him in a heavenly dream.[62] It was only under Archbishop Aelfric in 997 that Christ Church became fully monastic. Under Dunstan it became the archbishop's *ownfamilia* of clergy and monks devoted to him, where foreigners and strangers might come and feel immediately at home.[63] But with his monks he maintained a fully monastic way of life, observing the Benedictine offices in full in choir,[64] and keeping, for example, the summer siesta, prescribed in the *'Regulahs concordia'* and the rule, to the end of his life.[65]

Dunstan safeguarded the material interests of the community also. His friendship with Eadgifu, the old queen mother, secured two properties in Kent for Christ Church, perhaps in thanksgiving for the restoration of her property by Edgar.[66] The generosity of thegns and other nobility remained important for the

prosperity of the cathedral community. The most striking example of this is the bequest sometime after 973 of the manor at Meopham in Kent, together with a lavish gift of gold and two silver cups, by the thegn, Byrhtric, and his wife, Aelfswith.[67] There is some evidence too that Dunstan continued Oda's work of rebuilding the cathedral and its community buildings, possibly reordering the crypt in anticipation of his own burial there.[68] The library and scriptorium were also prime concerns of Dunstan, and its likely composition was highly traditional. The fire of 1067 destroyed much, but at least thirty-seven volumes remain from the pre-conquest library; from the time of Dunstan only splendid gospel books, Frithegod's poetical 'Life of Wilfred' and Dunstan's own Sherborne Pontifical and Bosworth Psalter;[69] otherwise many of the traditional monastic texts were similar to those alluded to in Bede or listed by Alcuin as being in the library at York.[70] Although some of these books were probably written after the sack of Canterbury by the Danes in 1011, by which time Christ Church had been monastic for two decades, there is evidence that some were written as early as about 990, possibly during Sigeric's primacy. The impetus for the formation of such a monastic library and scriptorium was almost certainly Dunstan's: 'He would correct erroneous books & erase false writings as soon as he could study them by the first light of dawn.'[71] Within a decade of his death, he was regarded by the community as 'foremost of all the saints who rest at Christ Church'.[72]

The other monastic community at Canterbury in which Dunstan maintained a keen interest was St Augustine's, the ancient foundation which lay just to the east of the cathedral, outside the city walls, where some form of regular monastic life may well have persisted into the tenth century.[73] Its abbots remain shadowy figures: Eadhelm, a likely contemporary of Dunstan while still abbot of Glastonbury; Aelfric, who was abbot when Dunstan became primate and remained until 971; Aethelnoth, about whom nothing is known; and finally Sigeric, Dunstan's pupil from Glastonbury, who was abbot from around 980 until becoming bishop of Ramsbury in 985. He was succeeded by Wulfric, who sent the first life of Dunstan to Abbo of Fleury to be turned into verse just before Abbo's death in 1004.[74]

Dunstan himself was in the habit of praying at St Augustine's, keeping the night vigils and reciting the psalter:

> While he was offering himself up there in holy prayers, he moved to the eastern church to pray to the Mother of God. He was approaching, singing the psalms, when suddenly, in a quite unexpected way, he heard unusual voices of sweet singing in the night, echoing in the church with subtle melodies. Peeping through a hole in the perforated screen, he saw that the church was completely filled with a shining light, and a crowd of virgins was going around in order singing as a choir this hymn of the poet Sedulius: 'Cantemus socii Domino, etc.'[75]

St Augustine's at that time was really a complex of three churches: the main one was dedicated to Peter, Paul and Augustine and contained the tombs of the first archbishops; to the east of this stood the church of the Virgin; and beyond that was the chapel of St Pancras. There is evidence of rebuilding and extension during the time of Dunstan, both of the church and of the monastic buildings, although the scale and the shape remain unclear.[76] There is a late tradition in William of Thome's Chronicle that in 978 Dunstan conducted a great service of rededication for the reformed and enlarged monastery and church.[77]

The advent of Dunstan's pupil, Sigeric, in 980 may have crowned this refurbishment

of St Augustine's. Certainly it was at this time that the library of the monastery was enriched by the work of its own scriptorium. Sigeric himself may have been the instigator of this development: he may also have been the instigator of the comparable but later developments at Christ Church when he was archbishop. T.A.M. Bishop writes of these manuscripts produced at St Augustine's:

> It is a group of manuscripts of comparable size [to the Christ Church group] whose epicentre seems to be earlier than the Christ Church group. The St Augustine's group includes specimens of excellent late square minuscule handwriting; it seems to be preceded by a kind of square minuscule that can be placed about the middle of the 10th century; and its Caroline minuscule seems to be allied, to be in not exactly immediate succession to a specimen of Caroline minuscule written at Glastonbury. If this excellent but clearly primitive specimen of English Caroline was written by St Dunstan, then the evidence of the manuscripts concurs with the charters in placing the introduction of this script about the middle of the 10th century.[78]

The precise dating of manuscripts is fraught with hazard, but this thread of continuity in style between Glastonbury and St Augustine's may be a precious indicator of Dunstan's impact upon the intellectual life of that house. Certainly it was at St Augustine's that the first historical interest in preserving the memory of Dunstan was kindled, andthisexpresseditself in the revisionand transmission of the first life of the saint.[79]

Kent was divided ecclesiastically into two dioceses, Canterbury and Rochester, and from the beginning Rochester had tended to fall under the penumbra of the archbishop of Canterbury, sometimes to the extent that it appeared to function as a suffragan see to the mother church. It was, of course, a venerable see, dating back to the mission of St Augustine himself; but on the whole it was an impoverished bishopric, and there is no evidence of organised monastic life there in the tenth century.[80] The close friendship between Aelfstan, the bishop of Rochester, and Dunstan has been remarked upon and is attested more than once.[81] Adelard is the first to attribute Dunstan's special care for Rochester, whose cathedral is dedicated to St Andrew, to his devotion to that saint who, he believed, had assisted him at various crises and turning points in his life: 'The sword proffered him by St Andrew [in the vision after he had refused a bishopric] contains the see of Rochester, in which although he never sat as bishop, he shewed care and concern."[82] The later historians duly elaborated this tradition in the interests of Canterbury. But the reason why Dunstan was remembered as a staunch defender of Rochester was more prosaic. In 986, during the upheavals of the early part of Ethelred's reign, the king fell out with the bishop of Rochester, distrained some land belonging to the see, and actually besieged the bishop in his cathedral city. Dunstan rebuked the young king for his rashness, but to no avail; he had to resort to other means, and finally bought Ethelred off. Later, the king restored the lands, lamenting the follies of his youth.[83]

In two remarkable documents,[84] Dunstan can be glimpsed restoring land to Rochester which for various reasons, good and bad, had passed out of the ancient patrimony of that church. The first was ratified before Edgar's witan in London towards the end of his reign; the other was ratified before Dunstan himself, as archbishop, at his manor at Wrotham in Kent, in the company of Aelfstan of London, the clergy of St Paul's Cathedral and Aelfstan of Rochester, together with the complete community of Christ Church, Canterbury, who had an interest in the case. The king's interest on this occasion was represented

by the priest, Wulfsige, who was the *scirman* (shire reeve). 'All Kent, east and west, was there', and the judgement of Dunstan in the favour of Rochester was solemnly and publicly acclaimed, and published throughout Sussex, Wessex, Middlesex and Essex. The occasion gives a clear picture of the way in which the archbishop of Canterbury presided over Kentish affairs as a justice and as the arbiter of the various ecclesiastical interests in both dioceses.

It was, however, as a diocesan bishop that Dunstan was best remembered in Kent, and in his own diocese of Canterbury in particular.

> Thus having become archbishop of the English, Dunstan was filled with all spiritual gifts, and he who was superior to all other orders of the clergy began first to submit himself to the higher service of Christ. Not only did he administer the comforts of the true faith to others, but he also demonstrated the right path to heaven by his salutary preaching. . . . So Dunstan began to renew that which was cast down, to vindicate that which was neglected, to enrich holy places, to love the just, to recall the erring to the way, to build the churches of God, and so to live up to the name of a true pastor among all men.[85]

Two of the miracle stories associated with his work as archbishop of Canterbury, recounted in Eadmer's life, took place in connection with the dedication of new church buildings. On one occasion he called forth a spring of water at the inauguration of a new church built by a 'noble and religious man'; on the other, Dunstan himself realigned the new wooden church at Mayfield in Sussex.[86] These episodes were simply the memorable incidents in a whole programme of provision for the parochial ministry, according to Eadmer. In this way did the parochial system begin to supplement the older pattern of minster churches and their archaic 'mission' areas. This development relied on the support of the lay nobility, and more especially of the thegns, and was expressly provided for in the laws of Edgar prescribing the tithe.[87] Dunstan, for example, purchased land for the benefit of St Martin's in Canterbury and 'those who serve God there'.[88] It was his example as a diocesan bishop that gave his occasional visitations to other dioceses and monasteries their particular effectiveness.

The power of Dunstan's own example as a bishop, either in his own day or in the memory of those who came after him, cannot be overestimated. Like Oda before him, he was the living embodiment of the Anglo-Saxon 'good bishop': 'an unshakeable pillar of the Church, distinguished in deed and doctrine, of angelic countenance, bold in acts of mercy and words of prophetic judgement'.[89] 'Dunstan was a faithful bishop, oak-like in hope, and joined to Christ in Divine Love, and familiarity with true justice: he took care to pray to the Lord always.'[90] Perhaps Wulfstan of York, a bishop of the succeeding generation, had Dunstan in mind when he described the ideal bishop in his 'Institutes of polity':

> First to his prayers, & then to his book-work,
> Reading or writing, teaching or learning,
> And to see the canonical hours in their due time,
> And to all things that pertain to them;
> To wash the feet of the needy and to distribute alms,
> And to give instruction where it is needed.
>
> Also good craftsman's work is proper to him,
> And that men in his household should know such skills,

So that none shall remain too idle!
And also it is seemly that he teach God's Law,
Portion it to the folk,
Often and frequently at the courts.[91]

Certainly, to judge from the later miracle stories associated with Dunstan's tomb at Canterbury, he was remembered as a bishop who was approachable by all sorts and conditions of folk: the blind, both men and women; the crippled and handicapped; poor women; old and young; even visiting foreigners and schoolboys fearing a whipping! Perhaps his first biographer, who knew Dunstan in his closing years as archbishop of Canterbury, should have the last word:

> I think that I am able to elucidate what I have seen and heard myself . . . out of love for him. . . . He was always fervent in church affairs, & sweated at his labours; yet he was equally assiduous in spending the night in vigils, overcoming sweet sleep. . . . He could discern with a wise & astute judgement what was true and what was false between men, & could bring agreement & peace by his peaceful words to the troublesome and quarrelsome. He would aid widows and orphans, pilgrims and strangers, in their several needs with a pious assistance. He used to separate unsuitable and unjust marriages by a just sequestration, and so he strengthened by his timely word and the example of his life the complete three-fold order of human life: either by just censure and enquiry, or by supporting people with a quiet probity to the enrichment of the Church of God. He provided for the unskilled of both orders, both men and women, who came to him day and night, the salt of heaven, and so he established them in the teaching of health-giving wisdom.[92]