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Is there any Evidence for the Liturgy of Parish Churches in Late Anglo-Saxon England?
The Red Book of Darley and the Status of Old English

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O rustic priest, I suppose you do not know what an atom is.¹

In the mid eleventh century, a substantial proportion of the population of England would have had access to a local church. Such institutions varied greatly, encompassing both the faded glory of a once great mother church which retained a small community of clerks, and the small chapel newly built by a local lord and served by a single priest.² If the estimates of the number of churches built (or rebuilt) in the later tenth and eleventh centuries are anything like accurate, there must have been a lot of liturgy going on.³ What, for example, did the priest of the tiny single-cell church constructed in the tenth century immediately outside the manorial enclosure at Raunds, Northamptonshire actually do?⁴

The written and architectural sources suggest there was a demand for priests in the eleventh century and that those who supported them, whether local lords or local people, would have expected something for their money. How did these priests learn their job? Did they have any kind of education and, if not, how did they cope with the Latin of the liturgy? Presumably most of them learnt by experience, as liturgy has long been taught, and the evidence for inheritance of churches

¹ P.S. Baker and M. Lapidge, ed., Byrhtferth’s Enchiridion, EETS ss 15 (1995), II.3.69–70, pp. 110–11 (‘Ic wene le uplendisca preost, þæt þu nyte hwæt beo a<tom>os’). I am indebted to Mark Atherton, Robert Hudson, Sarah Larratt Keefer and Malcolm Parkes for their advice, and to Gill Cannell of the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge for her help with consulting manuscripts. John Blair, Sarah Hamilton, Andy Hudson, Christopher A. Jones and Francesca Tinti kindly commented on drafts. I am especially indebted to Victoria Thompson for her assistance with Old English. Any errors which remain are my own responsibility.

⁴ A. Boddington, Raunds Farnells. The Anglo-Saxon Church and Churchyard, English Heritage Archaeological Report 7 (London, 1996). The dates of the phases have been revised, for which see the forthcoming report on the manor-house.
by the children of priests suggests how this could happen.\(^5\) We will probably never know much about the rites they presided over. Even if a priest could afford to own liturgical books they are unlikely to have survived. Some may have taken the form of *libelli*: small, probably unbound, collections of rites, especially those for use in the field.\(^6\) In any case, liturgical manuscripts were frequently discarded or dismembered as soon as they became outdated. The ones that do survive tend to be those few which were richly illustrated, or sufficiently grand to have been sent abroad as gifts.\(^7\) It is also conceivable that local priests acquired old, second-hand books which were not designed for parish churches, and therefore difficult for them to use and for us to identify. It should not be surprising that virtually nothing survives today which is likely to have belonged to a local priest.\(^8\) The purpose of this article is to investigate, by means of a case study, what evidence does survive, and briefly to address a larger question, that of the language of liturgical manuscripts and of the liturgy.

### THE LITURGICAL DUTIES OF A PARISH PRIEST

In theory, a local priest in the late tenth and eleventh centuries was a busy man. His liturgical duties involved mass, the daily office, and occasional offices such as baptism, penance, confession, blessing marriages, visiting the sick, attending the dying, burial, perhaps ordeals, and the preparation of holy water.\(^9\) Ælfric expected him to give sermons on Sundays,\(^10\) and he may have been asked to officiate over ceremonies like the *acerbot charm* for a good harvest.\(^11\)

\(^5\) Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 361, 493; and see J. Barrow in this volume.


\(^8\) On this topic see also Jonathan Wilcox’s article in this volume.

\(^9\) For the daily office see J. Hill, ‘Monastic reform and the secular church: Ælfric’s pastoral letters in context’, in *England in the Eleventh Century*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford, 1992), pp. 103–17, at pp. 106–7, 109 n. 15; the Northumbrian Priests’ Law, c. 36 (*Councils and Synods*, i, p. 459), and J.E. Cross and A. Hamer, ed., *Wulfstan’s Canon Law Collection* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 114 (Recension B, c. 2). For other duties see, for example: ‘Ælfric’s Pastoral Letter for Wulfsige’, cc. 26–8, 84–92 (*Councils and Synods*, i, pp. 201, 213–15; B. Fehr, ed., *Die Hirtenbriefe Ælfrics in altenglischer und lateinischer Fassung*, Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Prosa 9 (Hamburg, 1914) Brief I, pp. 7–8, 19–21 (hereafter cited as Fehr with Brief number)); Ælfric’s First Latin Letter for Wulfstan (Fehr, Brief 2, pp. 36–7) and Ælfric’s Second Latin Letter for Wulfstan, cc. 9–18 (Fehr, Brief 3, pp. 59–60). For burial see also Blair, *Church in Anglo-Saxon Society*, pp. 463–71. In addition to the holy water required in, for example, baptism, Ælfric also thought it should be sprinkled in church every Sunday: Ælfric’s Second Latin Letter for Wulfstan, c. 28 (Fehr, Brief 3, p. 61). For penance see Sarah Hamilton’s article in this volume.

\(^10\) ‘Ælfric’s Pastoral Letter for Wulfsige’, c. 61 (*Councils and Synods*, i, p. 208; Fehr, Brief I, p. 14); Ælfric’s First Latin Letter for Wulfstan, c. 159 (Fehr, Brief 2, p. 53); see also Cross and Hamer, ed., *Wulfstan’s Canon Law Collection*, p. 115 (Recension B, c. 4).

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A local priest may also have needed to know how to perform more complex rites at such major feasts as Candlemas, Palm Sunday and Rogation tide. Where such rites were performed depended on local circumstances. When allegiances to mother churches remained strong, or when there were major monasteries and houses of secular clerks nearby, the laity (with their priest) may have visited them on such feasts. The evidence for this comes largely from the recognition processions which are mentioned in twelfth-century sources and reflect earlier traditions. Recognition processions were most often held at the dedication feast, Candlemas, the Ascension, Palm Sunday and Pentecost. Two texts associated with Wulfstan’s ‘commonplace book’ may represent an attempt by Ælfric to provide guidelines for the celebration of such feasts by secular clergy. Though the sources on which these texts were based (including the Regularis Concordia) were adapted and often simplified, they are still liturgically complex, involving stational processions between churches and the presence of a choir, deacon, and other attendants. Mother churches and others which retained a community of clergy could have used them, but a lone priest would have had difficulty.

Whether the local priest of the church at Raunds was sufficiently conscientious, and capable of performing such duties, is another matter. Of all these services, the ones most frequently mentioned are mass, the visitation of the sick, and baptism. It is difficult to believe that every local priest celebrated the daily offices, especially those who had small estates to run. However, the profile that emerges from Ælfric’s Pastoral Letters of avaricious, lazy, and drunken priests must be balanced by the desire of those who supported them to receive something for their money. Patrons and tithe-payers must at least have expected to attend mass now and then, to have their children baptised and their dead buried. Ælfric, following Isidore and Amalarius, repeatedly states that ‘a priest who remains without a deacon has the name but has not the services’. Did such priests have deacons and altar servers and, if so, who were they? Did they have choirs? To what extent were they expected to perform almost all, if not all, of the liturgy on their own? The answers to such questions must vary considerably depending on the wealth and antiquity of each church, but Ælfric’s exhortations suggest that some priests did not have deacons and needed to know how to perform all the

16 See, for example, Ælfric’s First Latin Letter for Wulfstan, cc. 161–8 (Fehr, Brief 2, pp. 53–4).
17 ‘Sacerd, þe bið wunigende butan diacone, se hafað þone naman 7 nafto þa þenunga’: Ælfric’s Pastoral Letter for Wulfsige’, c. 39 (Councils and Synods, i, p. 204; Fehr, Brief I, p. 10); Ælfric’s First Latin Letter for Wulfstan, c. 123 (Fehr, Brief 2, p. 50).
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parts of the liturgy which in larger communities were the responsibility of many different people.  

Richard Gameson has noted that one of the surviving book-lists records the possessions of a parish church, albeit one in the ownership of the archbishops of York. This mid eleventh-century list records that Sherburn in Elmet (North Yorkshire) had several books for the mass (the priest’s sacramentary, a gradual for the sung parts, two gospel books, and two epistolaries for the biblical lections) and for the office (a psalter, antiphonary, and hymnal). This list is comparable with, though not identical to, the prescriptive lists of books which Ælfric in his Pastoral Letters and Wulfstan in the so-called Canons of Edgar expected all priests to own. The Sherburn in Elmet list does not mention a manual or penitential, though the occasional offices could have been found in the sacramentary. Although a kalendar would have been useful, it is improbable that any parish priest would have needed to calculate the date of Easter or the other movable feasts. Byrhtferth thought he needed to teach priests enough computus to pass examination by their bishop for ordination, but it is more likely that most would have known when to celebrate simply from local knowledge of what neighbouring churches were doing. As far as the books themselves were concerned, this was a period of significant development. Missals (containing everything for the mass, rather than only what was needed by the celebrant), breviaries (containing everything needed for the daily office), and manuals (containing the occasional offices) were only beginning to appear during the eleventh century. However, the lone clergymen of local churches would have found them highly desirable.

THE RED BOOK OF DARLEY

Though the surviving sacramentaries (and to some extent books for the office) may hint at how the clergy of proto-parish churches celebrated mass and office,
there is nothing to suggest that any were definitely designed for that purpose. The one book that has most claim to be considered in this context is the Red Book of Darley (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 422). The manuscript is small (c. 194 x 129 mm) but thick and it would readily fit in a book-satchel or roomy ecclesiastical pocket. As it now stands, it comprises two parts, the first (pp. 1–26) is a mid tenth-century copy of the Old English dialogues of Solomon and Saturn; the second part, with which we are concerned, is pp. 27–570, to which a quire was added in the twelfth century (pp. 571–86). The second part was elegantly written and includes some illustrations at the beginning of the Canon of the Mass. It was almost certainly produced c. 1061 because it includes paschal tables for the years 1061–98, which accords with the palaeographical evidence. It is more difficult to judge where Darley was made. The strongest candidates are Sherborne (or its diocese) and the New Minster, Winchester. The Sherborne attribution rests on the presence in its kalendar of Bishop Wulfsige III, who was only otherwise celebrated at Westminster. Amongst the evidence that suggests the manuscript was based on material from the New Minster, perhaps written there for use at Sherborne, is the presence of Grimbold in one of the two litanies, who is the only saint whose name is capitalised. In the twelfth century, various additions were made, including the last quire (which contains various lections), and a mass for St Helen which was inserted after the computistical material. One of the scribes of the added quire was also responsible for some of the additional material in the original part of the manuscript. At least by the twelfth century, the liturgical manuscript was bound together with the Solomon and Saturn dialogues because the same scribe who wrote the mass for St Helen in the second part of the manuscript also added a Latin form of excommunication in the first part.

23 For some other possible candidates: Gameson, Role of Art, p. 243 and note his suggestion that ‘books written and decorated in reformed monastic scriptoria may have been distributed to local churches throughout the south of England’.


26 For the illustrations, in addition to the catalogues, see Gameson, *Role of Art*, pp. 232–3; B.C. Raw, *Anglo-Saxon Crucifixion Iconography and the Art of the Monastic Revival* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 89, 151–5 (as ‘Sherborne Missal’).


30 Ibid., i, p. 646.

sixteenth century, the manuscript was at Darley Dale, Derbyshire, as recorded by
an inscription at the end of the book, and was probably owned by a local family. Instruingly, a second inscription records a tradition that oaths had been sworn
upon it. Since the church of Darley is dedicated to St Helen, Christopher Hohler
suggested that the book had been there since the twelfth century, which would
explain why the mass for St Helen was added at that time. The church itself was
an Anglo-Saxon foundation; it is recorded in Domesday and has several frag-
ments of pre-Conquest sculpture. It was in the gift of the king in 1086 and seems
to have been granted to Lincoln Cathedral before 1105. Judgements about the
history of the manuscript from when it was produced until the twelfth century
depend to a large extent on where the additional quire and the mass for St Helen
were added. If Budny is right to suggest that the manuscript was ‘refurbished’ at a
‘non-provincial centre’, it is unlikely to have reached St Helen’s, Darley Dale
before the twelfth century. Finally, it is worth saying that the book shows signs
of having been heavily used.

The main liturgical section of the manuscript contains so much and such varied
material that it is only possible to gain an idea of its contents from a summary
rather than by trying to classify it as a type of book. In outline, the original part
of the manuscript contains: computistical material including a kalendar and Easter
tables (pp. 27–49); the Canon of the Mass (pp. 51–63); various masses – mostly
votives and for the common of saints (pp. 63–268) including masses for St Olaf
and St Nicholas, and for the ember Saturday in Whitweek; the orationes pro
peccatis and orationes matutinales (pp. 268–76); rites for blessing a marriage
(pp. 276–84), for blessing the candles at Candlemas (pp. 285–8), miscellaneous
blessings, mostly of things (pp. 288–309); pages which appear to have been origi-
nally left blank (pp. 310–18); ordeals by water, fire, and bread and cheese (pp.
319–44); blessing of holy water (pp. 344–66); rites for baptism (pp. 367–93),
blessing holy water (pp. 393–9), visiting the sick (pp. 399–429), burial (pp.

33 Both inscriptions are printed in James, Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi
College, ii, p. 315 and Budny, Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, i, p. 646.
34 The church at Darley was dedicated to Helen by at least the mid sixteenth century: D.G. Edwards, ed.,
Dedications of England’s Patron Saints, 3 vols (London, 1899); iii, p. 102 classifies the dedication as
pre-sixteenth century, however the 1558 will is the earliest record I have found in a preliminary search.
35 J.C. Cox, ‘The church of St Helen’s, Darley Dale’, Journal of the Derbyshire Archaeological and
Natural History Society 27 (1905), pp. 11–40.
36 D.E. Greenway, Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicaen, iii, Lincoln (London, 1977), p. 6 (with
references).
37 The dialogues of Solomon and Saturn would not have been an inappropriate companion to what was
already a compendious manuscript. They would have provided their owner with a poetic dialogue on the
power of the Pater Noster, a prose section on the fight between the devil and the Pater Noster and a more
traditional question-and-answer piece concerning time, nature, good and evil. In a liturgical context
such as this, one could envision it fortifying the priest with knowledge, even providing him with ready
answers to difficult questions. The text is printed in E. van K. Dobbie, ed., The Anglo-Saxon Minor
Poems, Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records 6 (1942), pp. 31–48; for recent discussion see P.P. O’Neill, ‘On
139–68.
429–45) and burial masses (pp. 445–70); the office of the dead (470–90); offices of matins, first and second vespers, and lauds for the common of apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins (pp. 507–53); offices for the Triduum and Easter Sunday (pp. 555–70 and 491–506: the last quire is now displaced).

The Red Book of Darley seems to contain almost everything that the putative parish priest required. It has some computus, most importantly a kalendar and Easter tables. However, its owner would have needed a sacramentary for the Temporal and Sanctoral. It is possible that whoever commissioned this book already had a sacramentary, though without commons, votives or blessings. Perhaps it was intended as a compendium of services which could be drawn upon and adapted as need arose. It is notable that some of the masses it contains include all their various constituent parts as would be found in a missal. It is not clear why some masses are treated in this way and not others. That at least some of this material was intended as an addition to what was already available is suggested by the presence of masses for Olaf and Nicholas. The cult of the latter saint was growing in popularity in the eleventh century, while the mass for Olaf seems to be the first known mass for this saint. This is a peculiarly inconsistent book, as, for example, the lections for each mass are sometimes given in full, sometimes only the gospel reading is complete and the epistle given as incipit, and at other times it is the epistle which is given in full and the gospel as incipit. The material for the office is even more difficult to understand. Like many of the masses, it includes everything necessary for a particular feast (except the ferial elements), but only for a limited number of occasions. The offices were certainly copied from monastic material, though this does not necessarily mean that it was intended to be used by a monk. Hohler resorted to suggesting that they were added later as ‘a virtuous occupation’. Perhaps the best that can be said about the book as a whole is that it shows a desire for completeness, for being able to perform these services on one’s own if necessary, and possibly for having copied out as much information as was available from the sources to hand.

One particular element of the manuscript explains why it deserves such extended discussion here. Darley’s material for the occasional offices is the most substantial that survives in any pre-Conquest book. The occasional offices, rites such as baptism and burial which would later end up collected in a manual, were the very heart of the work of a parish priest. Rites of this kind do survive from the

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38 An idea of the relevant proportions can be gained from Budny, Manuscript Art at Corpus Christi College, i, pp. 651–2.
39 Hohler, ‘Red Book of Darley’, pp. 39–41; R.W. Pfaff, ‘Massbooks’, in The Liturgical Books of Anglo-Saxon England, ed. R.W. Pfaff, Old English Newsletter Subsidia 23 (Kalamazoo, MI, 1995), pp. 7–34, at pp. 23–4. One explanation for their odd position here is that they had been added into the part of the sacramentary from which the scribe was copying, for example as marginalia.
40 One cannot therefore assume that the priest had a separate gospel book but not an epistolary as Pfaff, ‘Massbooks’, p. 24.
42 Ibid., p. 56.
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pre-Conquest period, but often in manuscripts designed for different purposes, like pontificals and benedictionals. Some idea of the range of evidence can be gained from Sarah Keefer’s brief survey. Darley has the most complete and coherent collection that has survived. With this in one’s satchel one would be able to perform all of the occasional offices required by a priest, except for penance and confession. This is what led Christopher Hohler to characterise it as ‘the book a good, pastorally minded, monk priest is going to take with him round the villages’.

THE RITE FOR BAPTISM IN THE RED BOOK OF DARLEY

It is difficult to assess for what purpose Darley was originally designed. It could have been made for someone studying at Sherborne (or the New Minster, Winchester) who was about to become the priest of a local church or household. It could also have been made for a monk who was intending to minister to the locale. One cannot be certain that it was intended to be used by a parish priest, but it is the best evidence we have for the liturgy of pastoral care in late Anglo-Saxon England. Few of its rites have been examined closely, so it is worth looking at one of the most important of them as a case study.

There is surprisingly little evidence for the liturgy of baptism in Anglo-Saxon England, presumably because these rites were most commonly located in the sorts of books (such as manuals) which have not survived. By the tenth and eleventh century infant baptism was the norm, but the rites that were used had developed from those intended for a period of instruction for adults. The result was a sometimes clumsy conglomeration of actions that had taken place over a long period.


45 Hohler, ‘Red Book of Darley’, p. 44.

period of time. Even at this late date, the rites themselves were often located in the Temporal as part of the Easter Vigil. This is the case with the late tenth-century Winchcombe Sacramentary, the early eleventh-century sacramentary of Robert of Jumièges, and the parts of the Romano-Germanic Pontifical in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 163.47 However, in the early tenth-century Leofric Missal the baptismal ordo forms a separate rite towards the end of the book and it is also an independent service in Darley.48

The basic structure of Darley’s rite is that of the Supplemented Hadrianum (the additions to the Gregorian Sacramentary made by Benedict of Aniane in the early ninth century),49 but a number of features are worth noting.

- The rite begins with the priest blowing on the child three times and saying, ‘Exi ab eo spiritus inmunde et da locum spiritui sancto paraclito in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti’, and then signing him on the forehead and breast. This form of opening seems to be most common among manuscripts from north-eastern France. The exorcism found in Darley is rare in this position, though it is paralleled in the Sacramentary of Echternach (Echternach, ‘895–8).50

- After the normal preparatory prayers, the recitation of the Pater Noster and Creed by the priest, and a Gospel lection, the priest takes the child’s right hand and makes the sign of the cross in its palm, saying ‘Accipe signaculum domini nostri ihesu [ch]risti in manu tua dextera ut te singnes [signes] et de aduersa parte repelles et in fide catholica permaneas et uiuas cum domino semper in secula seculorum’. This is extremely unusual and appears to be a remnant of the old tradition of the traditio symboli. There are a few other examples; it is also found in the Winchcombe Sacramentary (without rubric and with a slightly different version of the formula) and in an early eleventh-century manuscript from Jumièges.51 Remarkably, it also occurs at


50 Y. Hen, ed., The Sacramentary of Echternach (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. lat. 9433), Henry Bradshaw Society 110 (London, 1997), p. 183. Martène also prints some examples from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries: E. Martène, ed., De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus, second edn., 3 vols (Antwerp, 1736–8), i.1.7, ordo 1; i.1.8, ordines 18, 20 and for the identification of these manuscripts: A.G. Martimort, La documentation liturgique de Dom Edmond Martène: études codicologiques, Studi e Testi 279 (Vatican City, 1978), nos 376, 424, 426. A larger number of manuscripts have a different (or variant) exorcistic prayer, for example, Paris, BN lat. 2291 (one of the Sacramentaries from Saint-Amand, written there for Gozlinus, bishop of Paris 884–6); a sacramentary for St Maurice, Tours (s. ix) now in two manuscripts, Tours 184 and Paris, BN, lat. 9430: Deshusses, ed., Sacramentaire grégorien, iii, pp. 104, 108–9 and examples printed by Martène include: De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus, i.1.7 ordines 5, 6, 8; i.1.18 ordines 14, 16 (Martimort, La documentation liturgique, nos 371, 372, 374, 420, 422).

51 Davril, ed., Winchcombe Sacramentary, p. 89 (no. 425); Rouen, Bibliothèque municipale Y 127, printed in Martène, ed., De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus, i.1.18 ordo 13 (Martimort, La documentation liturgique, no. 419).
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the end of the rite in the late eighth-century Irish Stowe Missal and in the early printed versions of the Sarum manual.52

• The blessing of the font. There is nothing unusual about this in Darley except for its position in the rite. Normally the priest says the prayer *Nec te latet*, the candidate renounces the devil and is anointed with oil, they process to the font for the blessing, and then follows the affirmation of belief in the Trinity. However, Darley places the blessing earlier, immediately after the prayer *Nec te latet*. In this respect, it most resembles the somewhat muddled *ordo* in the Leofric Missal.53

• The distribution of the water. A common rubric from the eighth and ninth centuries onwards states that after the water has been blessed, it should be sprinkled over the people assembled around the font and that those who so desire may carry it home with them and sprinkle it wherever they wish. Darley’s version reads: ‘Hate her se preost helian þæt cild wið þæt halig wæter 7 spreng e se preost hine sylfne 7 þa men þe him onbutan standað. 7 nine man of ðam watere on anum fæte ham mid þam cilde 7 spreng þa hus 7 loc hwæt man wylle’.54 What is clearly specified here is that it is the child who should be asperged and that the water should be sprinkled in its home. This simply seems to be a more specific version of an old rubric originally designed for use when many candidates were baptised at the same time.55

• Before the renunciation of the devil (or whilst it is happening), it is usual for the priest to anoint the child with the oil of exorcism by making the sign of the cross from his head and across his shoulders. This is missing from Darley, perhaps because this part of the rite (or a form of it) has been displaced to the beginning. It is notable that Ælfric specifically says, keeping closely to the normal rubrics, ‘Cum oleo sancto debitis signare infantes in pectore et inter scapulas, antequam mittantur in fontem

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53 For discussion of Leofric see Orchard, ed., *Leofric Missal*, i, pp. 116–17. One explanation for this would be that it results from an error some time in the distant past when the blessing of the font was integrated with the rite for baptism.

54 Corpus 422, p. 387, printed in R.I. Page, ‘Old English liturgical rubrics in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 422’, *Anglia* 96 (1978), pp. 149–58, at p. 153; ‘The priest at this point should command that the child be covered with the holy water and let the priest sprinkle himself and the people standing round. And let some of the water be taken in a vessel home with the child and sprinkle the house and wherever seems appropriate.’ (All translations from Old English are by Victoria Thompson unless otherwise noted.)

55 It is also worth noting that the water is distributed before the oil has been put into it rather than afterwards. The danger of being accidentally re-baptised in this way worried Ælfric (following Carolingian canonists) which is why he ordered it to be done in the order given in Darley: Ælfric’s Second Latin Letter for Wulfstan, c. 8 (Fehr, *Brief 3*, p. 59); Ælfric’s Second Old English Letter for Wulfstan, c. 8 (Fehr, *Brief III*, pp. 148–9). See also C.A. Jones, ‘Old English *fæt* and its compounds in the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary of baptism’, *Mediaeval Studies* 63 (2001), pp. 143–92, esp. pp. 173–9.
One wonders whether Darley here preserves a version of just the sort of rite that Ælfric was trying to correct.

- The only unusual feature of the baptism itself is that after the child has been raised up from the font, the priest reiterates the baptismal formula, *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti* whilst making a cross on his *hnecca* (the nape of the neck) rather than the top of his head.

- At the conclusion of the ceremony, a chrismal-cloth is laid on the child’s head and a lit candle is put into its hand whilst the priest says the prayer *Accipe lampadem*. The candle is interesting because it is a relatively late and rare feature, which did not become common until the twelfth century. The two earliest references known to me are Amalarius’ early ninth-century *Liber officialis*, and a late ninth-century sacramentary written at Saint-Amand for Saint-Denis. The practice was certainly popular in late Anglo-Saxon England: both candle and prayer appear in the Winchcombe Sacramentary and the Missal of Robert of Jumièges. Ælfric, following Amalarius, also mentions the candle in his Letter to the Monks of Eynsham. Another early example is the early eleventh-century manuscript from Jumièges, which we have already encountered because it also includes the signing of the right hand.

The final point that needs to be made seems more trivial than the others but is probably more significant. During the early Middle Ages, probably in eighth-century Frankish Gaul, the terms *patrinus* and *matrina* began to be used to denote godparents. *Ordo Romanus* XI uses these terms when the godparents are to bless the child but it also refers to them with the circumlocution *eos qui ipsos suscepturi sunt*. Such phrases were common before a specific vocabulary emerged, and remained in use after it had done so. From the rites I have been able to examine, the new vocabulary was only rarely used in early medieval ordines, and periphrastic formulae based on the role of the godparents in bringing the child up from the font (and in life?) were more common. Typically, the godparents are mentioned when they either give the child to a priest or receive it from him. More interesting is the rubric in the Supplemented Hadrianum which

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56 ‘You ought to sign the children on the breast and between the shoulder-blades with the holy oil before they are placed in the baptismal font’: Ælfric’s Second Latin Letter for Wulfstan, c. 5 (Fehr, Brief 3, p. 58).


60 Rouen, BN, lat. Y 127; Martène, ed., *De antiquis Ecclesiae ritibus*, i.1.18, *ordo* 13.

precedes the Credo: ‘Benedicto fonte et eo tenente infantem a quo suscipiendus est, interroget sacerdos ita’. Forms of this rubric survived well into the Middle Ages and this is often the only indication that it is the godparents who answer for their child, even though they have already done so in the abrenuntio. But Darley is different: throughout the rite, the precise role of the godparents is specified; each response, each time they tell the priest the child’s name, each time they present or receive it, the rubrics make it clear what the godparents are to do, for example:

Ahsi her þæs cildes naman þonne secge se godfæder þæs cildes naman þonne cwæðe. Abrenuntias satane.
þa godfæderas. Abrenuntio.
þonne cwæðe se preost. Et omnibus operibus eius.
Donne cwæðe se godfæder. Abrenuntio.
Donne cwæðe se preost. Et omnibus pompis eius.
Donne andswarige se godfæder. Abrenuntio.

One could dismiss this as being simply an urge to over-rubricate, and such may be the case, but the result is to make the structure of the rite absolutely clear. In this respect, what Darley most resembles is the early printed manuals of the late Middle Ages. It is an eminently practical document.

Darley’s rite is just the sort that could have been used by a ‘pastorally minded monk priest’ or simply a priest. It has none of the ancient rubrics at the beginning which derive from the scrutinies (as preserved in Jumièges, for example); it always assumes the presence of one child; it runs together all the parts of the rite into one seamless action; and makes absolutely clear for the priest who should do what and when.

A full study of Darley’s other rites may tell us a great deal about parochial care in the mid eleventh century. The visitation of the sick, for example, is intriguing for several reasons, but what is of most interest here is its practicality for a parochial situation. The rites for the visitation and unction of the sick in the Lanalet Pontifical, Winchcombe Sacramentary and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 482 envisage the presence of a priest, deacon (or subdeacon) and other attendants. The Missal of Robert of Jumièges also assumes the presence of several officiants, and the possibility of a bishop being present. In contrast, in the Red Book of Darley there is no mention of anyone apart from the ministering priest.

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This is exactly the kind of rite, perhaps deliberately simplified, that would be expected in liturgy designed for local use. Darley’s *uisitatio infirmorum* also has some relationship to the long version of this rite in Laud Misc. 482 and shares with it some potentially idiosyncratic instructions about the demeanour of the priest, about ensuring that a layman makes some form of will, and about the placing of linen gloves on the dying man’s hands and linen socks on his feet.67

It also shares something else with Laud Misc. 482: language. The Red Book of Darley contains a substantial amount of Old English, written by the main scribes, including all the rubrics in the services for baptism and visiting the sick.

LITURGY AND THE VERNACULAR

Liturgical manuscripts provide some of the best evidence for the relative status of Latin and Old English, precisely because the language of the liturgy was Latin. When, therefore, we find the vernacular in liturgical books we are looking at the boundaries of acceptable usage. It has become increasingly clear that the vernacular was not considered a poor substitute for Latin in late Anglo-Saxon England.68 Even vernacular medical remedies and prognostics are at last recognised as having a place in the highest churches in the land.69 Yet one notion persists.70 From Bede to Jane Austen, clerics (and especially parish priests) have been mocked and pilloried for their ignorance. When therefore one finds the vernacular in liturgical books, it is usually interpreted as damning testimony of linguistic incompetence.71

David Dumville provides the best survey yet published for the history of the vernacular in pre-Conquest English liturgy.72 One finds occasional vernacular rubrics from the beginning of the tenth century, but it is not until the eleventh century that Old English starts appearing to any extent; by the middle of the century ‘the vernacular was nibbling at the margins of the liturgy and was poised to assume a more substantial role in liturgical books’.73 Dumville’s account does

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67 For discussion of these parts of the rite, particularly in Laud Misc. 482 see V. Thompson, *Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2004), ch. 3 and her article in this book.

68 See for example, M. Gretsch, ‘Winchester vocabulary and standard Old English: the vernacular in late Anglo-Saxon England’, *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 83.1 (2001), pp. 41–87: ‘It is not that the Anglo-Saxons glossed, translated and composed in English because they were too lazy and too incompetent to apply themselves to a wide-ranging study of Latin texts. What made them do it was rather an astonishing confidence in the potential of the vernacular to be developed as a medium for scholarly and religious discourse on a par with Latin’ (p. 87). See also R. Stanton, *The Culture of Translation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, 2002).


70 Though David Dumville (*Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, p. 132) and even Christopher Hohler (‘Red Book of Darley’, pp. 42–4) have already pointed the way.


not quite bring out the range of occasions when Old English was used. What follows is an attempt to do so, albeit an incomplete and preliminary one.\(^\text{74}\) My concern here is not with 'para-liturgical' texts such as translations of the gospels or glosses to hymns and psalms, or with private devotions, but with texts for the formal public liturgy. This is a difficult distinction to make; how for example to interpret an Old English prayer added into a pontifical? Or the interlinear gloss added in the late tenth century to the Durham Collectar? Both are omitted here because of the uncertainties about whether they are evidence for material which was used in the public liturgy.\(^\text{75}\) This narrow categorisation is useful in so far as it facilitates the identification of material which appears in books most likely to have been intended for use in the liturgy.

Some manuscripts contain glosses to occasional words, for example *huslbox* above *eucharistialis vasculi* and *storcellan* above *thuribuli* in rubrics in the Anderson Pontifical.\(^\text{76}\) There are also headings to prayers or rites, distinct from the directions for how to perform them. These are erratic, usually comprising a small number of occasional headings in Old English (not as glosses), whilst the rest of the book retains its Latin rubrics: three of the many liturgical forms added into the margins of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 41 have Old English rubrics.\(^\text{77}\) Also of this kind is the single vernacular rubric among many Latin ones in the surviving part of Worcester, Cathedral Library F. 173.\(^\text{78}\) This suggests the same sort of 'casual bilingualism' noted by Susan Kelly in some leases.\(^\text{79}\) In one case, a Latin heading *[missa pro amico fideli aut] deuoto* has had, at a slightly later date, an Old English heading placed beside it, *messa for wegferendum*. Here it looks as though the scribe's Latin was very bad indeed.\(^\text{80}\) Occasionally, the Old English looks rather like an *aide-mémoire* or prompt (perhaps for an acolyte carrying the service book). For example, in the ordination rites in the Sidney Sussex Pontifical, a slightly later hand has added three notes in the margin referring to the symbols of office presented to a door-keeper, lector, and exorcist in the

\(^{74}\) For a full survey, we await the full-length study by Sarah Keefer and Karen Jolly provisionally entitled *Two Languages at Prayer: the Vernacular in the Liturgy of Anglo-Saxon England*.

\(^{75}\) Though Dumville thinks 'one is bound to suppose that this extraordinary glossing implies that the canons of Chester-le-Street were incapable of understanding their liturgical texts in the original language': Dumville, *Liturgy and the Ecclesiastical History*, p. 130.

\(^{76}\) London, British Library, Add. 57337, fols 15r–v: Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 575 (no. 416); Rasmussen, *Les Pontificaux du haut Moyen Âge*, pp. 180–1. (There are four examples of this in the manuscript.) For similar examples see Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 44, pp. 114, 138, 140 where four single words are glossed in a contemporary hand: Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 46 (no. 33).


\(^{78}\) Ibid., pp. 465–6 (no. 397).


\(^{80}\) Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 93, binding leaf: Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 390 (no. 330). The leaf comes from an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon sacramentary, and there is good reason to think both the text and the addition (which Ker thought to be by ‘a somewhat later hand’) were made at Worcester. See also: F.E. Warren, ‘Hatton MS. 93’, *The Academy* 34 (1888), p. 242.
form her da rede boc (‘here the reading book’).\textsuperscript{81} Such marginal prompts are also found, mostly in Latin, throughout the Anderson Pontifical. In the rite for ordaining an acolyte, the Latin marginal prompt is partially glossed in Old English.\textsuperscript{82} Anderson also has marginal vernacular prompts in the rite for dedicating a cemetery, some glossing Latin marginalia, others glossing rubrics in the rite itself.\textsuperscript{83}

More intriguing, especially in relation to Darley, are the much fuller Old English rubrics supplying the directions for how something should be performed. The early eleventh-century sacramentary known as the ‘Missal of Robert of Jumièges’ has a rite for the visitation of the sick in which all the rubrics (save only oratio, item, alia and the like) are in Old English and in the hand of the main scribe.\textsuperscript{84} After a collection of confessional and penitential material, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc. 482 has rites for the visitation of the sick and for attending the dying with vernacular rubrics which are unparalleled in their extensiveness and sophistication.\textsuperscript{85}

Darley displays many of these features, and the Old English headings are in the same hand as the main scribe.\textsuperscript{86} Most of the computistical material is in Old English, which is not uncommon. Within the sacramentary/missal there are two glossed headings which may tell us more about one of its owners than he would have preferred. They are for ðone kyning and for flæsce costnunge þæt is idel lust above headings to masses for a king and for the temptation of the flesh (pp. 133, 171). Are these examples of the aide-mémoire type, marking out masses which the priest used regularly? The marriage blessing has the bilingual rubric ‘BLETSUNG. BENEDICTION’, and the final rubric in the burial service is in Old English (pp. 280, 444). In the offices for the common of saints the lections are headed Reed or Redinc though the other rubrics are in Latin (pp. 508–38 passim). These are examples of the occasional, casual use of Old English for headings also found in other books. The two vernacular adjurations for the ordeal (discussed below) are accompanied by Old English rubrics (pp. 330–2), though the rest of these rites are in Latin.\textsuperscript{87} The most extensive use of Old English is in the manual section: all the rubrics for baptism, short baptism for sick children, blessing water (though the title is in Latin) and visiting the sick are in the vernacular. The rubrics in the offices for Holy Thursday to Easter are also in Old English.

\textsuperscript{83} See Victoria Thompson’s chapter in this volume and her Dying and Death in Later Anglo-Saxon England, ch. 3. For an edition of the liturgical texts see Fehr, ‘Altenglische Ritualtexte’.
\textsuperscript{84} Ker, Catalogue, pp. 120–1 (no. 70).
\textsuperscript{85} Printed in Liebermann, ed., Gesetze, i, p. 415.
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English. A different use of the vernacular is made in the burial service, where some of the Latin rubrics in the early part of the rite have vernacular glosses (pp. 429–35). The presence of so much Old English is remarkable, but one must not lose sight of the fact that the rest of this long and complex book is in Latin.

So far, the Old English has been found in the context of liturgical books, but not actually spoken or sung in the liturgy itself. It is often said that the vernacular was never used in the liturgy but this is incorrect; there were certain specific occasions when the manuscripts suggest that Old English was spoken. In Darley’s rite for the visitation of the sick, the priest’s words are mostly in Latin, but sometimes in the vernacular. After the opening chant and a collect in Latin, he addresses the sick person:

To hwi gecigdest þu, broðor, us hider to þe? \(^{90}\)

who should reply:

To þam þæt ge me smyrian sceoldon. \(^{91}\)

The patient must then make confession and if he is in holy orders, the priest again addresses him in Old English:

Ærest þinga ðu most þa digelnyss ðines modes sefan þæð þæc andetnisse geyppan 7 unðeawa geswicennysse behatan, 7 gif heofona wealdend þines liues dagas lengan wille, medeme dædbote underfon. \(^{92}\)

If the patient agrees to confess his sins, the priest says:

Uton we nu gemænelice biddan mid eallum mode urne drihten hælend Crist, þæt he þysne his mettruman geneosnige to ðearflicere andetnisse. \(^{93}\)

The remainder of the rite follows in Latin. In the visitation of the sick in Oxford, BL, Laud Misc. 482, the same parts of the rite are also in Old English together with a final long statement by the patient at the conclusion of his confession. \(^{94}\)

Though both manuscripts provide different directions for what is to be done for a lay man and what for a cleric, neither makes any linguistic distinction and, as we have seen, one of the vernacular statements was specifically for use with an ecclesiastic.

The Old English elements in these two ceremonies are witnesses to the presence of the vernacular in confessional and penitential contexts from at least the

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91 ‘In order that you might anoint me’.
92 ‘First of all, you must reveal the secrets of your mind’s understanding through true confession and promise abstinence from vices, and if the ruler of heaven desire to lengthen the days of your life, undertake appropriate penance’.
93 ‘Let us now pray all together with whole heart to our Lord Saviour Christ, that he visit this his sick person with needful confession’.
94 Laud Misc. 482, fols 50–1, 54. This prayer is discussed by Victoria Thompson in her chapter in this book.
mid tenth century. As Dumville notes, this is where Old English is most frequently found: ‘in the area of penitential discipline for the laity where it was necessary for the unlatinate (both laity and, no doubt in part, clergy) to participate more fully in spoken rather than merely physical aspects of the liturgy’. Other versions of the visitation omit such directions, so for example Jumièges simply says at this point: ‘siððan fra þan untruman beo his andytnys gecyd. 7 æfter þon letania’. The spoken vernacular elements in Darley and Laud 482 are present because they incorporate directions for confession (drawn from English vernacular traditions) at the appropriate position.

Confession was not the only occasion when the vernacular could be used. At the coronation of either Edward the Martyr (975) or Æthelred (979) at Kingston, the coronation oath was read out by the king in Old English, and the text of it then placed on the altar. Following the oath, Dunstan, archbishop of Canterbury spoke, again in the vernacular, about the responsibilities of the king and urged him to keep his promises. This at least is the evidence provided by the oath found in two manuscripts. Whether this was an innovation, and whether the tradition of vernacular oath-swatching continued is not known, but it is salutary to note that no hint of these vernacular elements of the rite can be found in the relevant ordinæ, which suggests the practice may have been more common than the surviving evidence indicates. Several manuscripts contain vernacular adjurations for the ordeals, including two for cold water at the end of the rite in Darley. There is also one Old English excommunication formula preserved in a mid twelfth-century manuscript. It follows a Latin excommunication text which it closely parallels, though it is not an exact translation. In her discussion, Elaine Treharne was understandably cautious about suggesting that it would have been used in the liturgy, but in the context of the other evidence presented here, this looks more plausible. The common characteristic of the instances where the

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96 ‘Then let his confession be declared by the sick man, and then afterwards a litany [should be sung]’: Wilson, ed., Robert of Jumièges, p. 287 (translation p. lxxi).
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vernacular is found in a liturgical context is that they are direct addresses by a priest to an individual (not necessarily a layman) in circumstances in which it is critical that he understands what is happening.\(^1\) In the case of the coronation, they were direct addresses by Dunstan to the king and by the king to his people.

What conclusions can be drawn? On the one hand, Old English was not considered out of place even in the grandest liturgical books, if the original owner of the Missal of Robert of Jumièges was content with the book written for him.\(^2\) The pages of a liturgical manuscript did not need to be kept untainted by the vernacular, which was sometimes used casually in place of Latin. On the other hand, the presence of Old English in the liturgy itself was restricted to a few specific contexts suggesting that each language was considered to have a certain range of functions. At times one could choose which was most appropriate, especially when comprehension was vital for the well-being of the soul.

It seems to me that the problem with the argument that Old English in liturgical texts implies their users were poor Latinists is that it relies on the assumption that the vernacular was present because they needed it. A better explanation for unsystematic translation or ‘casual bilingualism’ is that the vernacular was simply a perfectly normal language for writing as well as speech. Victoria Thompson’s studies of the vernacular rubrics for the visitation of the sick and for attending the dying in Laud Misc. 482 have demonstrated that Old English rubrics (and occasionally Old English in the liturgy) were not the preserve of Byrhtferth’s ‘backwoods’ priests.\(^3\) And we can be as sure as we can of anything that Jumièges’s first owner had no problems with his Latin. One thinks here of the point made by Roy Liuzza about Ælfric railing against prognostics, whilst Ælfwine, abbot of New Minster, Winchester had plenty of them in his own prayerbook.\(^4\) For Ælfric, Wulfstan and Æthelwold (as Bede before them), a sound knowledge of Latin was the ideal but it is likely that for most men, even those with good Latin, their standard language was Old English. By the eleventh century, translation of texts of all kinds was commonplace in England and it is worth remembering that, though rare, translation of the liturgy was not entirely unknown in the early and central Middle Ages.\(^5\)

It is difficult to assess how much Latin was known by the man for whom Darley was made. As pre-Vatican II generations know, it is possible to have a familiarity with Latin sufficient to follow various masses and parts of the office without actually being able to comprehend long passages of prose. The partial

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\(^1\) Given that excommunication and ordeal are closely associated with legal procedures, I also wonder whether this may reflect legal procedure and, in the case of the coronation, traditions associated with swearing oaths.

\(^2\) A point made by Hohler, ‘Red Book of Darley’, p. 44.

\(^3\) See n. 85.


Old English gloss to the rubrics in the burial service may suggest that in this case the book’s owner did need the vernacular, but other Latin texts were transmitted with vernacular glosses. It is possible that this could also be the case here. What the evidence indicates is that by the eleventh century Old English was a perfectly respectable language for the rubrics of the liturgy and even on occasion for the liturgy itself. The extant manuscripts do not suggest that Old English was always employed specifically because a certain priest would not be able to decipher the Latin. In their interpretation of the status of Old English historians seem to have been influenced by anti-clerical rhetoric as well as by the idealism of writers like Ælfric, who felt the need to apologise for the act of translation even while they performed on such a grand scale.

Nevertheless, the rites which have the most extensive Old English passages are those for occasional offices not reserved for bishops – the pastoral duties that were the main responsibility of the priest. The possibility must therefore be considered that such cases are indicative of poor latinity. Most of the surviving manuscripts containing lengthy rubrics (where Old English is most often found) are pontificals and benedictionals for bishops or the sacramentaries of major monasteries and cathedrals. One would expect such books to be conservative and traditional in their use of language. If more books for priests like Darley and Laud Misc. 482 survived, their Old English would probably look less out of place.

One potential explanation for the presence of Old English in these rites turns on what Ælfric would have made of this, especially if Darley was produced at Sherborne, only ten miles from Cerne Abbas and for whose bishop he wrote the first of his Pastoral Letters. Ælfric was pre-eminently interested in the education and training of the clergy in their duties and in the liturgy they had to perform. He produced vernacular preaching material, a grammar, glossary and colloquy, pastoral letters for the instruction of priests, and perhaps a consuetudinary for secular clergy. The only element missing for a truly comprehensive reform is accessible, authoritative texts of the liturgy itself. Some of Ælfric’s homilies discuss liturgical texts in some detail; the step-by-step explication of infant baptism in the second series Epiphany homily is a prime example. This suggests a detailed and keen interest in the liturgy, and Ælfric may well have fostered the production of rites for pastoral care with clear, explicit rubrics in Old English which explained how they should be performed. The late eighth-century Irish Stowe Missal, with its occasional Old Irish rubrics for baptism, and the early tenth-century Durham collectar show that this insular tradition did not begin with the second generation of reformers. Yet it is only in the second quarter of the eleventh century that Old English is found in liturgical contexts to any degree. Might we see in the Red Book of Darley remnants of a liturgical

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107 See n.14 above and Jonathan Wilcox’s chapter in this volume.

counterpart to the corpus of vernacular homilies?\textsuperscript{109} The ‘English books’ in which \textit{Æ}lfric ‘saw and heard much error’ may have included service-books as well as homiliaries.\textsuperscript{110} One argument against this would be the occasions when Darley’s baptismal \textit{ordo} includes some of the very practices that \textit{Æ}lfric had been railing about sixty years before.

It may be simpler to see the presence of the vernacular in the liturgy, un paralleled in western Europe at that date, as a natural consequence of the long-standing relationship between the Church and the vernacular in England. Bede, Alfred, \textit{Æ}thelwold and \textit{Æ}lfric all thought it more important that God’s word be understood than that it should be understood in Latin, however desirable that was: ‘It certainly cannot matter by what language a man is acquired and drawn to the true faith, as long only as he comes to God’\textsuperscript{111}. In this context, Darley and Laud Misc. 482 look almost inevitable, and the pontificals and benedictionals deliberately conservative. Rather than interpreting the presence of the vernacular in the liturgy as testament to the lack of latinity amongst the clergy, it may be better to see it as evidence for the high status accorded to Old English in the late pre-Conquest period.

There is very little evidence for the liturgy of parish churches in late Anglo-Saxon England, though Darley brings us as close to it as we may ever get. A consideration of the liturgy of parish churches forces one to look again at familiar questions: who staffed local churches; were they, and if so where were they, educated; where did they get their knowledge of the liturgy from, and how was it transmitted? This preliminary survey of the presence of the vernacular in liturgical contexts warns that we should not assume that the amount of Old English in Darley is necessarily indicative of an incompetent, ignorant priesthood. But it might just hint at how the priest who served the chapel at Raunds, and so many others like him, was able to perform the liturgy in the eleventh century.

\textsuperscript{109} This was at least implied as long ago as 1972, though has been little noticed: Hohler, ‘Red Book of Darley’.
\textsuperscript{110} ‘\textit{æ}c for \textit{ð}æn \textit{ð}e i\textit{c} ges\textit{a}h \textit{g}e\textit{hyr}de \textit{m}yc\textit{e}l \textit{g}ed\textit{w}yl\textit{d} on \textit{m}an\textit{e}g\textit{um} \textit{e}ng\textit{l}i\textit{s}c\textit{um} \textit{b}oc\textit{um}’: P. Clemoes, ed., \textit{Æ}lfric’s \textit{C}atholic \textit{H}omilies: the \textit{F}irst \textit{S}eries, EETS ss 17 (Oxford, 1997), p. 174.
\textsuperscript{111} ‘\textit{W}el mæg dug[an hit naht] mid hwylcan gereorde mon sy gestryned \textit{g}e\textit{leaf}an \textit{gewæmed}, butan \textit{þ}æ\textit{n} sy \textit{þ}æ\textit{t} he Gode \textit{ge}g\textit{an}ge’: ‘King Edgar’s Establishment of Monasteries’, \textit{Councils and Synods}, i, pp. 151–2.
English literature had its beginnings while the Anglo-Saxons were still on the Continent. When they conquered the Celts, they brought with them a rich tradition of oral literature steeped in their customs and pagan beliefs and rituals. This literature focussed on the telling of the brave and heroic deeds of the warriors possessing attributes they valued and wished to emulate. Both of this epics recount clashes between the English and the Viking Danes. Two other important types of Anglo-Saxon poetry are the lyric and the riddle. Many Old English poems glorified a real or imaginary hero and tried to teach the values of bravery and generosity. Poets used alliteration (words that begin With the same sound) and kennings (elaborate descriptive phrases). Anglo-Saxon settlers first started colonising parts of Britain in the fifth century AD and, over the following 500 years or so, would establish themselves as the foremost power in the British Isles. Yet it would be hundreds of miles to the south, in Rome, that arguably the most significant event in their history would occur. Â This was the happiest time for the English people, wrote the eighth-century English historian Bede. Theodore died in AD 690, aged 88. Alfredâ€™s victories over the Vikings saved England and left him â€œKing of the Anglo-Saxonsâ€ in other words, of the Mercians and West Saxons together. But no less important was his project to restore learning and education: â€œTo translate into English the books most needful for men to know.â€ The Liturgy of the Late Anglo-Saxon Church, ed. H. Gittos and M. B. Bedingfield, Henry Bradshaw Subsidia Series 5 (London, 2005) more. by Helen Gittos. In this innovative study, Helen Gittos examines ceremonies for the consecration of churches and cemeteries, processional feasts like Candlemas, Palm Sunday, and Rogationtide, as well as personal rituals such as baptisms and funerals. Drawing on little-known surviving liturgical sources as well as other written evidence, archaeology, and architecture, she considers the architectural context in which such rites were performed.