

consecrate churches and to ordain the priests who attended and staffed the churches.

Parts II and III, 'Lordship over Higher Churches, Ninth to Eleventh Century' and 'Lower Churches as Property, Ninth to Twelfth century,' are the core of the book. In this period the proprietary church reached its heyday. Wood evaluates how churches were treated as property by religious and secular powers and places them into regional contexts. These two parts distinguish between the Higher and Lower churches; 'from the massive splendours of the abbey churches with the treasure enshrined in them to wooden sheds with barely pewter or horn chalice, and from lordship of several thousand *mansi* or peasant holdings to a single peasant holding or less' (438). Between these two extremes Woods considers that the Lower church is more susceptible to being treated a property.

In the final part 'Ideas, Opinion, Change' Wood examines the origin of the proprietary church up to the tenth century; but it was not until the late tenth century that reformers used proprietary rights of God as a defence against the abuses of secularisation of church property. Proprietary practices continued into the eleventh century; however, they were not fully redefined under the canon law of patronage in the twelfth century.

It is an extremely well written book, nevertheless the scope and complexity of the material can sometimes make it not always easy to read and its sheer size, over a thousand pages, can be daunting. The regional and chronological arrangement of the book is carefully considered and covers close to a thousand years of history of the proprietary church. It is well annotated with detailed cross references and an extremely comprehensive index which makes it possible to track down any topic.

The Proprietary Church in the Medieval West is an impressive book and it is a significant contribution to medieval monastic history. It would be a valuable resource for any historian to have in their library.

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Baxter, Stephen, Karkov, Catherine E., Nelson, Janet L., and Pelteret, David (eds), *Early Medieval Studies in Memory of Patrick Wormald* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) hardback; xvii + 582 pages; ISBN 9780754663317

It is a matter of profound sadness for any discipline when it loses a scholar of the stature of Patrick Wormald, particularly when it would not have been unreasonable to hope that he might have continued to

contribute to scholarship for years to come. In the present case, this sadness is reinforced by the frequent statements by contributors in his memorial volume that they had hoped to argue further with Wormald about their contributions. The common threads are regard for Wormald, admiration for his scholarship, and enthusiasm to engage him in debate. As far as subject matter goes, it is not so easy to identify common threads. This is largely due to the remarkable extent of Wormald's interests: here we are faced with contributions about Celtic kingship, Anglo-Saxon politics, early medieval theology, Carolingian scholarship, medieval English law, ecclesiastical history, and material culture, amongst other things. Contributions deploy the tools of literary studies, history, legal history, art history, palaeography, diplomatic, jurisprudence, archaeology, folklore, and more. This gives us some idea of what sort of scholar Wormald was: prolific and eclectic in the best sense of the word. A glimpse of his personal generosity and inclusiveness, inextricably entwined with his scholarly demeanour, is gained from the fact that, as well as scholarly works, this collection includes contributions about Wormald himself, as historian, teacher and partner. Some papers oppose Wormald's arguments, but not one fails to assert the importance, insight and intelligence of those arguments.

It is of course impossible for a short review to do justice to the many contributions or the impressive array of contributors to this collection. I shall rather discuss a few of my personal favourites, in the hope of giving a sense of the flavour of the volume as a whole. The thirty-three papers are divided into six sections: "Patrick Wormald," "Studies: Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Foundations," "Gregory and Bede," "Carolingian Authority and Learning," "English Politics and Law (Ninth-Twelfth Centuries)," and "Church, Cult and Memory in England."

I shall begin at the end. The final paper in the book, John Blair's "The Dangerous Dead in Early Medieval England," takes a refreshing approach to the question of the posthumous activities of problematic individuals in late Anglo-Saxon society. These characters refused to rest quietly, and returned to the world of the living as apparitions, vampires, shapechangers and general pests, knocking on doors, terrorising villages and even resuming intimate relations with their former lovers. Blair takes a close look at the documentary evidence for such events, combining it with the scant archaeological evidence for the 'unclean burial' of individuals who might be expected to be active after death, such as oathbreakers, murderers and the unchaste, and comparing it with modern folk attitudes to

vampirism and the like in eastern Europe. He postulates that the return of such people as ‘undead’ must have constituted a disincentive to such undesirable and unlawful behaviour amongst the living.

Elaine Treharne’s contribution, “The Bishop’s Book: Leofric’s Homiliary and Eleventh-Century Exeter,” discusses the homiliary, which is now divided amongst British Library, MS Cotton Cleopatra B.xiii, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 489, and Cambridge Corpus Christi College, MS 421. By closely examining the choice of material it contains against the eleventh-century background of the church at Exeter, she convincingly demonstrates that the choice of material in the homiliary would have met precisely the needs of Bishop Leofric as he went about his business at Exeter, consolidating and protecting the work of his cathedral and its canons in a period of instability. She concludes that Leofric was a man of “vitality, integrity and overwhelming sense of episcopal responsibility” (537), whose achievement is reflected in his homiliary.

A number of papers on law mount vigorous arguments which show that, largely thanks to the work of Wormald, medieval English law is increasingly being considered as a legal system that can reveal much about its social context and about the development of legal systems in general and the English legal system in particular. Janet L. Nelson, in a delightfully written and extremely persuasive contribution, argues that earlier scholars misinterpreted medieval sources, citing the example of Southern, who read Alcuin as saying that laymen might “at best... ask questions” (436), leaving clerics to lay down the truth. As Nelson points out, what Alcuin actually seems to have been pointing out was that wise laymen who considered profound questions were at the heart of the Carolingian renaissance. Nelson’s argument is that law and liturgy were important and simultaneous elements of most of the earlier medieval period: to insist that at any given time one must have given way to the other is to deny the interesting complexity of the period. John Hudson takes a legal historian’s view of Wormald’s great unfinished *The Making of English Law*, simultaneously endorsing Wormald’s arguments concerning justice and law in the Anglo-Saxon period and opposing his conclusion that this was the formative period for English law. On Hudson’s view, while the criminal law before the arrival of the Normans in England was a necessary precondition for the later development of English law, English law would not have developed the way it has without the addition of Anglo-Norman land-holding customs. Thus, in what are now considered two quite different branches of law, the influence of on the one hand the Anglo-Saxon legal system and on

the other the Norman one has shaped today's English legal system. Stephen Baxter's detailed analysis of the judicial functions of the soke and commendation models of lordship is similarly insightful. By looking closely at examples of the two models in action, recorded in surviving letters, he establishes a view contrary to that of Maitland, who started from Domesday Book and concluded that the pre-conquest system of rule was unsuccessful. Rather, Baxter tells us, it was highly successful, in a complex and considered way, and contributed important elements to future English law.

My failure to comment on most of the contributions to this book must not be taken as implying that they are in any way of lesser quality than these few. This is a remarkable tribute to a remarkable scholar, and anyone who is interested in early medieval law and scholarship, Anglo-Saxon society or the early medieval church simply must read it.

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M^cCorkle, Jr., William, W., *Ritualizing the Disposal of the Deceased: From Corpse to Concept*

(New York: Peter Lang, Toronto Studies in Religion 30, 2010) paperback; 182 pages; 6 b/w illustrations; RRP €25.10; ISBN 9781433110108

This monograph, a revised edition of William W. M^cCorkle Jr.'s doctoral thesis, is a comparative study of the ways in which different cultures throughout historical periods and geographical regions have ritually disposed of their dead. As M^cCorkle states: 'Humans dispose of dead bodies and this cultural behaviour appears to be widespread spanning time and space' (4), though why and how these rituals have developed have not been fully explored. Consequently, in his study, M^cCorkle has four goals: to give a clear account of the widespread behaviours humans exhibit when disposing of their dead; provide scholarly explanations for these behaviours; to account for the gaps in these previous explanations; and to offer a model that "may provide [...] a more viable explanation of the religious ritualised disposal of corpses."

M^cCorkle divides his book into four sections, each aimed at addressing his stated goals. In section one, "The Culture of Death," he demonstrates how cultures have dealt with their deceased in a ritualised way for at least one hundred and fifty thousand years. M^cCorkle further argues that as cultures became more complex so did the ritual behaviours associated with corpse disposal. M^cCorkle also asserts that professional guilds, a relatively new phenomenon on the scale of human activity,