



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Transmission of Pre-Conquest Charters at Canterbury and the F-text Scribe of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle

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Abstract

This article considers the role of the F-scribe of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in relation to charter production and within Christ Church cathedral more generally. I begin by examining a series of writs issued in the names of kings from Edward the Confessor to Henry II. I argue that these originate with the bilingual 1100 issue by Henry I for Archbishop Anselm, with chronologically earlier material confected or adapted to provide missing precedent. Through analysis of unusual features of the language perpetuating through the set, I argue that the F-scribe drafted the Henry I issue himself. I further argue that he was also the compiler of the Anglo-Norman cartulary, and demonstrate that the F-text of the Chronicle was likely completed prior to its making. The cartulary's unusual focus reflects a concern which aligns with the office of cantor, and adds weight to Peter Baker's suggestion that the F-scribe acted in that capacity.

A surprising number of royal charters are written in English in the hundred years or so following the Conquest. David Pelteret's *Catalogue* lists some forty-two vernacular writ-charters dating from William the Conqueror's reign to that of Henry II towards the end of the twelfth century.¹ This figure may be supplemented by a few diplomas which survive either in both Latin and English versions, or which have a rights clause in the vernacular. Around

¹ D. A. E. Pelteret, *Catalogue of English Post-Conquest Vernacular Documents* (Woodbridge, 1990).

three-quarters of these writ-charters come from just five archives: Bury St Edmunds, Canterbury, London St Paul's, Westminster and Winchester.

The general skew of these survivals is early. David Bates, the editor of William I's charters, notes that the production of vernacular writs appears to have fallen away after 1070;² around half of those from William's reign are securely datable to 1070 or before, only one to the 1080s.

Richard Sharpe wrote illuminatingly, as always, on the use of writs in the eleventh century, with attention to the pre-Conquest archive at Bury St Edmunds.³ He explained that unlike a diploma, a writ-charter, the type of document considered here,⁴ granted a temporary alienation of royal prerogatives and therefore required renewal when either the king or the holder of the right died. A general observation he makes, one worth repeating here, is that we tend to come at these texts from the perspective either of the pre- or the post-Conquest period, thus obscuring the patterns that are visible if we look at the sequence as a whole. This is a problem that runs across our discipline.

In this article I first consider a group of related writs from Christ Church Canterbury apparently issued by a series of kings from Edward the Confessor to Henry II. I argue that the sequence originates with that issued by Henry I for Archbishop Anselm with wording based on a genuine charter of Cnut, and that the chronologically earlier items in the series were supplied subsequent to that point.⁵ I attempt to explicate the relationship between the single-sheet texts in the series and offer an identification of the scribe likely responsible for the drafting of the Henry I writ based on linguistic features.

The Charters

Below, I list the documents surviving in sequence, together with details of those surviving in apparently original single-sheet form. The description of each, other than the first two, is from Pelteret's *Catalogue*, with corrective adjustments to details and dates as necessary. Further cartulary and Inspeximus copies of these charters survive and are listed in their respective catalogues. I number the single-sheet witnesses consecutively across the series.

² *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: the Acta of William I (1066–1087)*, ed. D. Bates (Oxford, 1998).

³ R. Sharpe, 'The Use of Writs in the Eleventh Century', *ASE* 32 (2003), 247–91.

⁴ Sharpe defines a 'writ-charter' as a specialised form of writ (any kind of official letter) addressed by the king to the shire court granting or confirming land or rights. As he notes, however, in practice, few pre-Conquest documents falling into the more general category were retained or copied by a foundation ('Use of Writs', p. 251). Although I accept the distinction, I use 'writ' here as the term which is more commonly used.

⁵ Most recently the series has been discussed in detail by Mark Faulkner in his *A New Literary History of the Long Twelfth Century: Language and Literature between Old and Middle English* (Cambridge, 2022), pp. 105–21.

Sawyer⁶ 1088 (1052 × 1066 ?for 1052)

Vernacular writ of King Edward declaring that he has granted to Archbishop Stigand and the community at Christ Church judicial and financial rights over their own men and over as many thegns as he has granted them to have.

SS1 London, British Library, Campbell Charter XXI. 5

The text is edited in *Charters of Christ Church*, no. 179.⁷

All but the first three lines of this charter (to *beon*) has been washed out and overwritten by a scribe whom Dumville identified as the main hand of the F-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, discussed further below.⁸ Hudson and Duffy have further shown, through an investigation involving multi-spectral imaging, that the parchment had been reused prior to the F-scribe's intervention, both under the first three lines of the charter and the part overwritten by the F-scribe lie traces of (an)other text(s).⁹ The implication of this is considered further below.

Sawyer 1089 (1052 × 1066)

Vernacular writ of King Edward declaring that he has granted to Archbishop Stigand and the community at Christ Church all the lands that they had in the time of his predecessors and in his own time.

SS2 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, 3

The text is edited in *Charters of Christ Church*, no. 180.

This charter is written in a hand dated by Brooks and Kelly to the beginning of the twelfth century, but one that attempts to imitate one of the middle of the eleventh.¹⁰ The Anglo-Norman cartulary, discussed below, includes a full Latin translation of the text which Brooks and Kelly consider could derive from a bilingual writ produced at Canterbury.¹¹ This seems unlikely as the Latin version was never presented alongside the Old English text for enrolment.

Pelteret 22 (1070 × 1087, probably c. 1070)

Vernacular writ of William I to his bishops, earls, reeves and thegns in the shires where Lanfranc, archbishop, and the community of Christ Church, Canterbury, have

⁶ Pre-Conquest charters are referred to by their number in the updated electronic version of P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography* (London, 1968) at <https://esawyer.lib.cam.ac.uk/about/index.html>.

⁷ *Charters of Christ Church Canterbury*, ed. N. P. Brooks and S. E. Kelly, 2 vols, AS Charters 18–19 (Oxford, 2013), hereafter *CantCC*.

⁸ D. Dumville, 'Some Aspects of Annalistic Writing at Canterbury in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries', *Peritia* 2 (1985), 25–57, at 49. F. E. Harmer had earlier noted the similarity of the hand overwriting **SS1** and **SS3** to that responsible for the additions to the A-version of the Chronicle s.a. 1031 and 1070, two of the interventions to that manuscript now known to have been made by the F-scribe (*Anglo-Saxon Writs*, 2nd edn (Stamford, 1989), p. 452).

⁹ A. Hudson and C. Duffy, 'Under the Impression: Multispectral Imaging of Lord Frederick Campbell Charter XXI 5', *Antj* 102 (2022), 111–33.

¹⁰ *CantCC*, p. 1202.

¹¹ Edited *CantCC*, no. 180A, discussion of form p. 1204.

lands declaring that they are to have their legal powers just as they did under his kinsman, King Edward.

SS3 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 4

All but the first line of this charter (to *sciran*) has been washed out and rewritten.

A further manuscript of this writ, in London, British Library, Cotton Vitellius, D. vii, 40r, is considered below. This is a transcript by John Joscelyn of what is generally regarded to be the lost opening to CCC MS 173, the A-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which had a copy of this charter inserted at its head.

Texts from both are printed in *Regesta*, no. 66.¹²

Pelteret 46 (1100; 1107)

Bilingual writ of King Henry I to his bishops, earls, sheriffs and thegns, French and English, in the shires where Anselm, archbishop, and the congregation of Christ Church, Canterbury, have land, confirming the legal rights over the land that they had in the time of his kinsman, King Edward, and his father, King William I.

SS4 London, British Library, Campbell Charter XXIX. 5 (1100)

SS5 London, British Library, Cotton Charter, VII. 1 (1107)

SS6 London, Lambeth Palace, Cart. Misc. XI/1

Pelteret's *Catalogue* includes these charters under a single entry, although Chaplais's earlier work on the seals of Henry I showed that the charters were issued on two separate occasions, the first following Anselm's return from exile in 1100 using the king's second seal, and the second, using the third seal, after the archbishop's return following a second period of exile in 1106. This charter was likely issued in spring 1107 when Henry I returned from Normandy.¹³ **SS5** is badly damaged and parts of it are now illegible. **SS6** lacks its seal, so could belong to either issue. There is some damage resulting in loss of text, particularly at its right-hand edge.

Pelteret 47 (1114; 1121)¹⁴

Bilingual writ of King Henry I to his bishops, earls, sheriffs and thegns, French and English, in the shires where Ralph, archbishop, and the congregation of Christ Church, Canterbury, have land confirming the legal rights which they possessed in the time of his kinsman, King Edward and his father, King William I.

SS7 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 7 (1114)

¹² Bates's edition in *Regesta* from Joscelyn cannot be relied on: almost throughout <þ> is given for <ð> where <þ> in Joscelyn's transcript is reserved for the þæt abbreviation. Other errors are as follows (Bates's reading in brackets): line 1 *biscopas* (*biscope*s); line 3 *Cristes* (abbreviation) (*Christes*); line 3 *cyrcean* (*cyrcear*c); line 4 *ælc* (*æle*); line 6 *teames griðbrices* (*teames 7 griðbrices*); line 4 *ælc* (*æle*); line 9 *me* (*ine*); line 9 *heom* (*heam*); line 10 *gelætan* (*gelæton*; *geðafi[an]*) (*geþafi[on]*) line 11 *betæ[ca]n* (*bette[ca]n*); line 12 *forðam* (*forþan*); line 12 [*for*]gyfan (*[for]gifan*); lines 12–13 *alysednisse* (*alysendesse*); line 13 *myn* (*myr*); p. 306 line 14 *abreke* (*abrekt*). On p. 306 Version II, *bes(ceopes)* should read *b(isceop)es*, and the graph after *geþauian* heading the penultimate clause should be the barred thorn as the abbreviation for þ-æt. The missing note to footnote reference 1 is where the original hand stops.

¹³ P. Chaplais, 'The Seals and Original Charters of Henry I', *EHR* 75 (1960), 260–75, at 263–4.

¹⁴ The dates here are from Chaplais, 'Seals', p. 265.

SS8 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 9 (1121)

Chaplais has demonstrated that these charters were similarly issued on separate occasions, **SS7** under the king's third seal, and **SS8** under his fourth.¹⁵ A large hole in the former means that some text is missing, especially affecting the vernacular version.

Pelteret 48 (1123)

Bilingual writ of King Henry I to his bishops, earls, sheriffs and thegns, French and English, in the shires where William, archbishop, and the congregation of Christ Church in Canterbury have land, declaring that they have the rights over their land that they had in the time of his kinsman, King Edward and King William, his father, with legal powers.

SS9 London, British Library, Campbell Charter XXI. 6

SS10 London, British Library, Stowe Charter 43

SS11 London, Lambeth Palace, Cart. Misc. X/109

There is minor loss of text at the right-hand edge of **SS11** affecting the vernacular version.

Pelteret 50 (1139)¹⁶

Bilingual writ of King Stephen to his bishops, earls, sheriffs and thegns, French and English, in the shires where Theobald, archbishop and the congregation of Christ Church, Canterbury, have land, declaring that they have the rights over their land that they had in the time of King Edward, his kinsman, King William, his grandfather, and King Henry, his uncle, with legal powers.

No original of this charter survives. The earliest copy is of an enrolment of 1335.¹⁷

Pelteret 51 (1155 × August 1158)¹⁸

Bilingual writ of King Henry II to his bishops, earls, sheriffs and thegns, French and English, in the shires where Theobald, archbishop, and the congregation of Christ Church, Canterbury, have land, declaring that they have the rights over their land that they had in the time of King Edward, King William, his great-grandfather, and King Henry, his grandfather, with legal powers.

SS12 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 17

SS13 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 18

SS14 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 20

SS15 London, British Library, Harley Charter 111 B. 49

SS16 London, Lambeth Palace, Cart. Misc. XI/3

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ The date here is from *Calendar of the Charter Rolls IV, 1–14 Edward III, A.D. 1327–1351* (London, 1912), p. 345, which prints the text.

¹⁷ A reproduction of an enrolment of 1413 with transcription is in C. Johnson and H. Jenkinson, *English Court Hand A.D. 1066 to 1500*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1915), Plate XXXIV (not from the enrolment of 1335, *pace* Pelteret).

¹⁸ The date here follows the edition in *The Letters and Charters of Henry II, King of England 1154–1189 1: Nos. 1–740, Beneficiaries A–C*, ed. N. Vincent (Oxford, 2020), no. 440.

SS17 London, Lambeth Palace, 873

The text from **SS12** is printed with a full set of variants in *Letters and Charters*, no. 440.

Pelteret 54 (December 1155 × July 1187, ?1155 × 1158)¹⁹

Bilingual writ of King Henry II to his bishops, earls, sheriffs and thegns, French and English, in this shires where Theobald, archbishop, and the congregation of Christ Church, Canterbury, have land, declaring that they have the rights over their land that they had in the time of his kingsman, King Edward, King William, his great-grandfather, and King Henry, his grandfather, with legal powers as full as his own officials might seek them and over as many thegns as his great-grandfather, King William, and his grandfather, King Henry, had ordained.

SS18 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 14

SS19 Canterbury, Cathedral Library and Archives, DCc/ChAnt, C. 18A

SS20 London, British Library, Stowe Charter 44

SS21 London, Lambeth Palace, Cart. Misc. XI/2

The text from **SS18** (with minor loss of text in the vernacular version) is printed with a full set of variants in *Letters and Charters*, no. 465. **SS19** has major loss with only around 4–5 words (fewer in some places) present at the left-hand edge of each line.

As might be expected with charters issued to the same beneficiary only a few years apart, some scribes may be identified as responsible for producing more than one of the surviving single sheets. Royal scribes, writing in charter-hand, were responsible for all the single-sheet copies of Pelteret 51 that survive; all others are Canterbury scribes writing in bookhand. We are here indebted to the work of Teresa Webber and Michael Gullick and, earlier, to that of T. A. M. Bishop. Identifications made are as follows: rewritten parts of **SS1** (Sawyer 1088) and **SS3** (Pelteret 22), discussed below; **SS4**, **SS5**, **SS6** (Pelteret 46);²⁰ **SS8**, **SS9** (Pelteret 47, 48);²¹ **SS13**, **SS14** (Pelteret 51);²² **SS15**, **SS17** (Pelteret 51).²³ Many of these

¹⁹ The date here follows Vincent's edition in *Letters and Charters*.

²⁰ T. A. M. Bishop, 'Notes on Cambridge Manuscripts, Part I', *Trans. of the Cambridge Bibliographical Soc.* 1 (1949–53), 432–7, at 432. The hand is described by M. Gullick, 'The Canterbury Annals and the Writing of Old English at Christ Church in the Early Twelfth Century', *Eng. Manuscript Stud.* 1100–1700 17 (2012), 43–59, at 48–53.

²¹ T. Webber, 'Script and Manuscript Production at Christ Church, Canterbury, after the Norman Conquest', *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066–1109*, ed. R. Eales and R. Sharpe (London, 1996), pp. 145–58, at 152. The hand is described by Gullick, 'Canterbury Annals', pp. 53–4.

²² Bishop scribe xxvii (**SS14**); T. A. M. Bishop, *Scriptores regis* (Oxford, 1960). Tentative identification of **SS13** as the same scribe is made by Webber in *Letters and Charters*, p. 442.

²³ Bishop scribe xxvi. Faulkner notes the literal errors made in **SS17** (p. 117 and notes to figure 5, p. 119), including mistaking **þ** sporadically for **p**. He also includes **g** for **k** in *ginges* for 'kings' there, though von Feilitzen (O. von Feilitzen, *The Pre-Conquest Personal Names of Domesday Book*, Nomina Germanica 3 (Uppsala, 1937), §119) notes the spelling in Domesday Book of 'Husgarla' for 'Huskarl', characterising it as Anglo-Norman interchange. Other spellings falling into this category include *bissepes* (von Feilitzen, §125) and the sporadic loss of initial *h* before vowels (*eaþdon*, **SS15**, *eora* **SS17**, §138), the spelling of *ch* to represent the affricate in *betechan* (**SS15**, **SS17**) and *sechean* (**SS17**), -t for -d

scribes have been identified at work elsewhere.²⁴ An in-house production perhaps explains the odd format of many of the single sheets themselves with the tongue cut to the left-hand side, rather than *sur double queue* at the bottom of the sheet.²⁵

Below, I print the text of what is chronologically the first document in the sequence, Sawyer 1088 (SS1), purportedly issued by Edward the Confessor. The text is from the edition in *Charters of Christ Church*, in which Brooks and Kelly were able to read words written along the folds that are too rubbed to be legible in the digital facsimile.²⁶ To aid reading, I insert modern punctuation. I then provide the bilingual text of Pelteret 46 as it appears in SS4, highlighting the differences between the two vernacular versions with underlining. In line with current editorial practice, word separation has been normalised and the *et*-abbreviation in the Latin silently expanded. The translations are my own.

Sawyer 1088

+ Eadpeard cyngc gret ealle mine biscopas 7 mine eorlas 7 mine gerefan 7 ealle mine þegenas on þam sciran þær Stigande arcebisceop 7 se hired æt Cristes cyrcean on Cantparabyrig habbað land inne freondlice. 7 ic cyððe eop þæt ic habbe him geunnan þæt hi²⁷ beon²⁸ heora saca 7 socne purþe, on strande 7 on streame, on pudan 7 on feldan, tolnes 7 teames, griþbrices 7 hamsocne, forestealles 7 infangenesþeoues 7 flemena fermþe ouer hera agene menn binnan burgan 7 butan, spa full 7 spa forþ spa mine agene picneras hit secan scoldan 7 ouer spa fela þegena spa ic heom to gelæten hæbbe. 7 ic nelle þæt æni man æni þing þær on teo butan hy 7 heora picneras þe hi hit betæcan pyllaþ, for þan þingan þe ic habbe þas gerihta forgiuen minre saple to ecere alysednesse, spa Cnut cyng ær dyde. 7 ic nelle geþauian þæt æni man þis tobrece be mina freondscipe.

King Edward greets in friendship all my bishops and my earls and my reeves and all my thegns in those shires where Archbishop Stigand and the

in *hiret* (SS15), *Teobalt* (von Feilitzen, §102). Although some of this (especially the last) may be explained through native development, their combination suggests a non-native scribe, especially likely given that the scribes of Pelteret 51 were royal. Inverse spellings may explain forms such as *griþbriges* (SS17), where he may have been intent on attempting to amend the spelling of the medial *c* for what he took to be OE velar *g* (von Feilitzen, *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, §128 gives the example of *Wicolf* < ON *Vígulfr*); and *theo* (SS15), *theames* (SS15, SS17) for *teo*, *teames* (§96). Faulkner suggests that he may have had a 'limited grasp' of English (*New Literary History*, p. 120), certainly a possibility given the mess he makes of *þ*, at least twice miscopying as *k*, and there are other spellings which seem insupportable, for example *kanges* for 'kings'. SS15 is more carefully copied than SS17, whose general aspect appears decidedly scratchy and hurried, but nevertheless shares some of these features, perhaps helping to strengthen Webber's identification.

²⁴ See Faulkner, *New Literary History*, p. 117, n. 44 for a useful summary.

²⁵ M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record. England 1066–1307*, 3rd ed. (London, 2013), notes to Plate III.

²⁶ Edited *CantCC*, no. 179.

²⁷ *hi* altered from *he*.

²⁸ The original part of the writ finishes here (at the end of a line). *n* has been added to *beo*, discussed further below.

community at Christ Church at Canterbury have lands. And I declare to you that I have granted them that they are entitled to their sake and soke, on strand and in stream, in woodland and in open country, to toll and team, to [the right of jurisdiction over] *griþbryce* [breach of the peace], *hamsocn* [forcible entry], *foresteall* [obstruction], and *infangenþeof* [the thief caught within the jurisdiction] and *flymena fyrmþ* [the fine due from the harbouring of a fugitive] over their own men within boroughs and without, as fully and completely as my own officials would require to undertake it, and over as many thegns as I have allowed them to have. And I forbid that anyone, except them and their officials to whom they wish to entrust it, take anything therefrom because I have granted the rights for the eternal redemption of my soul. And I will not permit anyone to violate this on (pain of losing) my friendship.

Pelteret 46 **SS4**, Henry I in favour of Anselm²⁹

H(enricus) Dei gratia rex Anglorum episcopis, comitibus, proceribus, uice-comitibus, ceterisque suis fidelibus Francis et Anglis in omnibus comitatibus in quibus archiepiscopus Anselmus et monachi aecclesiae Cristi Cantuariæ terras habent amicablem salutem. Notum uobis facio me concessisse eis omnes terras quas tempore regis Eadwardi cognati mei et tempore Willelmi patris mei habuerunt et saca et socne, on strande et streame, on wudu et felde, tolnes et teames, et grithbrec[e]s et hamsocne et forestalles et infangenesthiofes et flemenefermthe super suos homines infra burgos et extra in tantum et tam pleniter sicut proprii ministri mei exquirere deberent et etiam super tot thegenes quot eis concessit pater meus. Et nolo ut aliquis hominum se intromittat nisi ipsi et ministri eorum quibus ipsi committere uoluerint nec Francus nec Anglus propterea, quia ego concessi Cristo has consuetudines pro redemptione animae meae sicut rex Eaduardus et pater meus antea fecerunt. Et nolo pati ut aliquis eas infringat si non uult perdere amicitiam meam. Deus uos custodiat.

H. þurh Godes geuu Ænglelandes kyning grete ealle mine bisceopes 7 ealle mine eorles 7 ealle mine scirgereuan 7 ealle mine ðegenas Fræncisce 7 Ænglisc on ðam sciran þe Anselm arcebiscop 7 se hired æt Cristes circean on Cantpareberig habbað land inne freondlice. 7 ic kyðe eop þæt ic habbe heom geunnon þæt hi byon ælc þare lande purðe þe hi hæfdon on Eadpordes kynges dæge mines mæges 7 on Pillelmes kynges dæg mines fæder 7 saca 7 socne, on strande 7 on streame, on pudan 7 on feldan, tolnes 7 teames, griðbreces 7 hamsocne, forstealles 7 infangenes þyofes 7 flæmene feormðe ofer hire agene mænn binnan burgan 7 butan, spa ful 7 spa forð spa mine agene picneras hit secan scoldan, 7 ofer spa fela ðegenas spa ic heom to gelæten habbe. 7 ic nelle þæt ænig man ænig þing þær on tyo buton hi 7 heore picnæres þe hi hit betæcan pillað, ne Fræncisc ne Ænglisc, for ðan þingan þe ic hæbbe Criste ðas gerihte forgeuen minre saple to ecere

²⁹ Reproduction in Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, Plate III.

alysednesse, ealspa Eadpord kyng ⁊ min fæder ær hæfdon. ⁊ ic nelle geþafian
þæt ænig man þis tobrece be minan fullan freondscipe. God eop gehealde.

H[enry], by the grace of God, King of England, greets in friendship all my bishops, and all my earls, and all my sheriffs, and all my thegns, both French and English, in those shires in which Archbishop Anselm and the community at Christ Church in Canterbury have land. And I declare to you that I have granted them that they are to enjoy each of the estates which they held in the days of King Edward, my kinsman, and in the days of King William, my father, sake and soke, on strand and in stream, in woodland and in open country, to toll and team, to [the right of jurisdiction over] *griþbryce* [breach of the peace], *hamsocn* [forcible entry], *foresteall* [obstruction], and *infangenæf* [the thief caught within the jurisdiction] and *flymena fyrmþ* [the fine due from the harbouring of a fugitive] over their own men within boroughs and without, as fully and completely as my own officials would require to undertake it, and over as many thegns as I have allowed them to have. And I forbid that anyone, whether French or English, except them and their officials to whom they wish to entrust it, take anything therefrom, because I have granted the rights for the eternal redemption of my soul, just as King Edward and my father had granted them previously. And I will not permit anyone to violate this on (pain of losing) my friendship. May God preserve you.

The Text and its Development

An essentially stable version of the text is reached in the issue of 1100. It is here that we see the single-sheet text presented in a bilingual version. As Faulkner has argued, such a format appears to have developed following the Conquest when William shifted to Latin for his writs c. 1070;³⁰ some houses, such as Canterbury (and others with a strong vernacular tradition, such as Bury St Edmunds), seemed to value it more than others. It is certainly the case that, for those with the ability to produce one, the inclusion of the vernacular text would reinforce the impression of the continuance of an ancient right, while the Latin permitted easy comprehension of the details.³¹

The Confessor Writs, Sawyer 1088 and Sawyer 1089

Harmer noted the similarity in wording of Sawyer 1088 to an existing, irreproachable, writ of Cnut (Sawyer 986) in favour of Archbishop Æthelnoth couched in almost identical terms, on which the entire series appears ultimately to have been modelled.³² It survives as a contemporary copy in the MacDurnan

³⁰ Faulkner, *New Literary History*, pp. 121–2; see also Bates, *Regesta*, pp. 50–2.

³¹ For similar manoeuvres in a different context, see K. A. Lowe, 'Creating and Curating an Archive: Bury St Edmunds and its Anglo-Saxon Past', *Medieval Historical Writing: Britain and Ireland, 500–1500*, ed. J. Jahner, E. Steiner and E. M. Tyler (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 192–207, at 199–200; 204–5.

³² *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, p. 173. Edited CantCC, no. 150A. The manuscript has been digitised and is available at <https://images.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/luna/servlet/media/book/showBook/LPLBLPL~17~17~190970~144902>.

Gospels (London, Lambeth Palace Library, 1370, 114v). Brooks and Kelly assert that the washing out and rewriting of Sawyer 1088 (and of the William I writ, SS3, Pelteret 22) was simply to effect a change to a charter which was essentially identical to the Cnut writ so that the rights extended to the community as well as to the archbishop, a small but significant difference, and one requiring a change from singular to plural in the pronouns used. Otherwise, they argue, '[i]f in accordance with feudal principle, authority over the monastic lands were to pass at the archbishop's death to his lord, the king, then the monks' income would be at the whim of the royal exchequer's assessment of their needs, with the balance being pocketed by the Crown'.³³

In 2002, Alison Hudson and Christina Duffy examined the single sheet using multispectral imaging.³⁴ This revealed layers of erased text, both below the F-scribe's text and under the first three lines of the writ, untouched (largely) by the F-scribe. Underneath the F-scribe's work lay at least two layers of erasures. Hudson and Duffy were able to recover individual letters and letter sequences from the erased text(s).

The authors advanced several possibilities to account for the combination of recovered erasures and visible text. In the simplest scenario, a piece of reused parchment was redeployed by a scribe in Edward the Confessor's reign to produce a genuine writ in favour of Archbishop Stigand. All but the first three lines of this text were subsequently erased and overwritten by the F-scribe. Traces of one of the texts underneath imply that the text overwritten by the F-scribe was similar in content to the top-layer text: most telling here is 'h[i?]s ag[en?]e menn binnan'.³⁵ Some of the authors' reconstructions, as they concede, are tentative only: so, for example, their suggestion of '[gr]yþbrice', which would link the erased text more closely still with the visible text, might, they acknowledge, instead read 'prite'.³⁶ The F-scribe then erased all but the first three lines, and made minimal changes to the text, largely involving changes to the pronouns. The reconstructed phrase 'h[i?]s ag[en?]e menn binnan' is certainly supportive of Brooks' and Kelly's theory that changes were made to the pronouns (the top layer reads 'here agene menn binnan', with a plural, rather than singular possessive). However, it seems an unusual manoeuvre to rewrite both single sheets almost in their entirety for the sake of just pronouns. Because the third-person masculine dative singular and plural pronouns are the same (*him*),³⁷ the alteration required to Sawyer 1088 would only amount to five pronoun forms (two involving the change of a single letter), and one verb form. Moreover, the first three lines of the text include an alteration where the singular pronoun ('he') is altered to plural ('hi') and an <n> is added to the following verb-form 'beo'

³³ CantCC, p. 1199.

³⁴ Hudson and Duffy, 'Under the Impression'.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 119.

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 119.

³⁷ Though see my suggestion below that Late West Saxon (only) dative plural form *heom* which one finds in all the texts was deliberately selected to be unambiguous. Assuming this, a further pronoun form would need to be altered.

to agree with it, without the scribe feeling the need to rewrite that entire line.³⁸ Potentially more relevant still is the suggestion that the <n> of 'beon' might have been added by a scribe other than the F-scribe, and Hudson and Duffy note that even in visible light the ink appears to differ from that of the rest of the F-scribe's work in the document.³⁹ One might have thought that a scribe who was prepared to rewrite almost the entire document solely in order to make changes to pronouns and, where necessary, verb concord, would have paid closer attention to that requirement.

Hudson and Duffy noted a sequence of recovered letters in one of the erased layers, 'PER', and advanced a second theory that one of the overwritten layers might have related to an estate at Warehorne in Kent, recorded in a gospel-book in the 1070s as having been confirmed by King Edward the Confessor.⁴⁰ As they note, once the Domesday Book recorded the foundation as the owner of the estate, the writ in that form had reached the end of its useful life and could be repurposed in a way more valuable to the foundation.⁴¹ In this eventuality, no part of the top layer would be authentic; they observe that the hand of the first three lines of the writ would be just as 'plausible' dated in the 1070s as the 1060s,⁴² though a point after the production of the Domesday Book would push the date for the hand into the 1080s.

Harmer considered the change in hand between the first three lines and the rest to be so obvious 'that it can scarcely have been even intended to deceive',⁴³ but although the rewriting seems evident to us today, much of this is to do with the colour of the ink in the section overwriting the existing writ, which is considerably paler than that in the first three lines and which may have lacked stability due perhaps to a poor quality or insufficient binder (plus of course, the fact it was written on parchment likely abraded by having been overwritten at least twice). The key to success was the presence of the seal of the Confessor, a most valuable commodity as Hudson and Duffy, amongst others, have observed.⁴⁴ The rewriting might not pass muster today, or perhaps even at the time, but an attempt

³⁸ The alterations are misreported in *CantCC*, p. 1198, n. c.

³⁹ The note recording the alteration above in Brooks' and Kelly's edition is written ambiguously. It is therefore unclear as to whether they in fact believed that another scribe was involved at this point, though Hudson and Duffy observe differences in letter formation ('Under the Impression', p. 115).

⁴⁰ Hudson and Duffy, 'Under the Impression', pp. 124–5. This theory does not, of course, preclude the possibility that the genuine writ relating to Warehorne was similarly produced from reused parchment; there are traces of capitals towards the start of the text ('Under the Impression', p. 123) which are not in the right position to have been used in a standard address clause of this document type or date.

⁴¹ Hudson and Duffy, 'Under the Impression', p. 125.

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 124.

⁴³ *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, p. 174. Brooks and Kelly make the important point that the although the change in script is obvious to us today, 'to those with limited (or no) reading skills it may have been less clear' (*CantCC*, p. 146).

⁴⁴ Hudson and Duffy, 'Under the Impression', p. 129. During the Quo Warranto proceedings in the late thirteenth century, Abbot John of Northwold of Bury St Edmunds brandished a vernacular charter of Edward the Confessor in parliament in support of his petition, one of which, the foundation's cartulary account was careful to record, had a seal appended to it, see Lowe, 'Creating and Curating', p. 199.

was surely made to pass it off as genuine. I note that the writ could be folded horizontally along the visible creasemarks such that the first two lines only were displayed along with the pendant seal.

The relationship between Sawyer 1088 and Sawyer 1089 is difficult to ascertain. The latter is written in a hand imitative of contemporary charters, but one that is datable to the early twelfth century. In general, Sawyer 1089 includes more features found in the Henry I issues and beyond, including, anachronistically, in the address clause, the phrase ‘*purh Godes geuu Ængelandes kining*’,⁴⁵ not found in genuine writs of the Confessor, plus the use of the first person of *gretan*, where the third person would be expected in pre-Conquest writs.⁴⁶ Sawyer 1088 is, of course, saved from these errors as the salutation of the otherwise overwritten text is preserved. Sawyer 1089 uniquely boasts a flamboyant closing anathema ‘*ȝ gif ænig man sy spa dyrstig þæt þisne cpide æfre apænde, oððe þærto geþpærlice, sy he Iudas gefere þe Crist belæpde, ȝ Drihten fordo hine a on ecynysse. Amen*’,⁴⁷ not a normal feature of this text type, and one that appears erroneously to refer to the writ as a *cwide*, a will or bequest. This passage appears, as Harmer first observed, and Brooks and Kelly have most recently noted,⁴⁸ to have been assembled from phrases in Sawyer 1047, a composite charter of the Confessor copied into the Athelstan Gospels (London, British Library, Cotton Claudius A. ii, 6v): ‘*ȝ gif ænig man si swa dyrstig oþþe þærto geþwærlice... si he Iudas gefera þe Crist belæwade, ȝ þe þisne cwyde æfre awende ... Drihten fordo hine a on ecnesse. Amen*’.⁴⁹ The part of Sawyer 1047 to which the anathema belongs is datable to the 1070s; its scribe is the copyist of the original part of Pelteret 22 in SS3.⁵⁰ Strictures of space may, of course, have saved the single-sheet of Sawyer 1088 from including both this ending and an additional clause which appears in Sawyer 1089 which seems to have been adapted from the later issues: ‘*[þæt hi byon] ealra þære lande wurðe þe hi hæfdon on ealre minre foregænla timan ȝ on minan*’⁵¹ (Pelteret 46 ‘*[þæt hi byon] ælc þære lande purðe þe hi hæfdon on Eadpordes kynges dæge mines mæges ȝ on Pillelmes kynges dæg mines fæder*’). It is possible that the choice to include an anathema was inspired by the entries in the Anglo-Norman cartulary which habitually included this feature; if this is the case, the charter was likely confected after 1107.⁵² As mentioned above, a full Latin translation of the text was included there, but it differs in this way from the summaries and uniform style of earlier entries, appears late in the

⁴⁵ The very unusual spelling ‘*Ængelandes*’ in the address clause is found in copies of the series from Henry I onwards and is likely derived directly from the 1100 issue.

⁴⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, p. 61.

⁴⁷ ‘And if anyone is so rash that they ever alter this will, or consent to its being altered, may he be a companion to Judas who betrayed Christ, and may the Lord damn him forever in eternity. Amen’.

⁴⁸ *Anglo-Saxon Writs*, p. 175; *CantCC*, p. 1202.

⁴⁹ *CantCC*, no. 181.

⁵⁰ *CantCC*, p. 1206.

⁵¹ ‘that they are to enjoy all of the estates which they held in the days of all my predecessors and of mine’.

⁵² See below, p. 21.

cartulary, and was likely an addition to it. The solecism, noted above, of *cwide* in the anathema is smoothed over by being translated as *donatio*.

Pelteret 22

The two copies of the William I charter (Pelteret 22) considered here, **SS3** and the antiquarian transcript made by John Joscelyn of the lost opening to the A-version of the Chronicle, also differ from each other. Bates notes some of the differences between these two versions and takes the transcript as a lost record of an authentic William I writ, subsequently improved in **SS3**.⁵³ However, the differences he notes between the two do not amount to obvious improvements in **SS3**, and it is probably better to regard both as retrospective attempts to make good the lacuna in the archive. **SS3** is another single sheet which has been washed out and overwritten, almost certainly by the same hand as that responsible for the same procedure in **SS2**.⁵⁴ Its text appears to be based squarely on that copy, though it includes the detail ‘ouer Cristes cyrcan’ before the ‘ouer spa fela ðegenas’ clause. This is found only in the Cnut charter, Sawyer 986, so it appears that fresh recourse was made to this document when it was being drafted, or that whatever it was based on included that detail.

The transcript adds the qualifier ‘frecisce [sic] 7 ængliscse’ to ‘ðegenas’ in the address clause. This is included in all later issues. **SS3** is prevented from adding it at this point, as the address clause constitutes the unaltered part of the original charter, but incorporates it later on.

Other variations in wording between these pre-Henrician texts together suggest to me a series of post hoc attempts to come up with phrasing appropriate to the alleged date of composition by lightly adapting the phrasing of the 1100 issue in the series and combining it with borrowed material from earlier charters. Here I am at odds with Faulkner’s conclusion that, in his words, what these chronologically earlier texts display is ‘a gradual evolution of the wording’, ‘someone gradually working out the optimal formulation’, leading to its final form in the issue of 1100.⁵⁵ He argues this, focusing on the two overwritten texts, because of the differences in formulation, but much of what he observes may be explained by the exigencies of space in those rewritten charters as discussed here.⁵⁶

⁵³ *Regesta*, p. 305.

⁵⁴ The hand is noted as being the same by Dumville, ‘Aspects of Annalistic Writing’, p. 49, followed by Brooks and Kelly, *CantCC*, p. 1198. Bates appears independently to have reached the same conclusion (*Regesta*, p. 304). Baker, however, rejects the attribution: see p. 16 below.

⁵⁵ Faulkner, *New Literary History*, p. 109. This is essentially the conclusion reached by Hudson and Duffy, ‘Under the Impression’, p. 130. However, David Bates’s discussion of the rewrites of **SS3** and S 1088 concludes that ‘the purpose of the rewriting was to bring the writs into line with the texts of the Henry I confirmations of Christ Church’s privileges’ (*Regesta*, p. 304).

⁵⁶ The situation is further complicated by the existence of two vernacular writs from Christ Church’s neighbour, St Augustine’s, couched in essentially identical terms as the Christ Church series. One is issued in the name of Edward the Confessor, Sawyer 1091 (*Charters of St Augustine’s Abbey, Canterbury and Minster-in-Thanel*, ed. S. E. Kelly, AS Charters 4 (Oxford, 1995), no. 35 [hereafter *CantStA*]), similarly confirming a grant of privileges by King Cnut, Sawyer 989 (*CantStA*, no. 32).

Henry I and Later

Once the series at Christ Church gets under way, we may observe in the Old English of Pelteret 46 a somewhat approximate rendition of the Latin address clause, with *scirgereuan* (Latin *uicecomitibus*) updating the *gereuan* of Sawyer 1088,⁵⁷ but with *eorlas* having to do for both *comitibus* and *proceribus*. Updating of the vernacular version from this point onwards is generally to adjust the initial of the king, the name of the archbishop, and the nouns of relationship, thus William I is Stephen's grandfather, and Henry I his uncle; in Henry II's case, William is his great-grandfather, and Henry I his grandfather.

In the Latin text, Pelteret 51 and 54 are distinguished by the inclusion of the full regnal style for Henry II, giving his titles, something, as Faulkner observes, that is not reflected in the vernacular version.⁵⁸ Both issues also add *libertates* to the phrase 'ego concessi ... has *libertates et consuetudines*'. Pelteret 51, produced by royal scribes, removes the clause 'sicut rex Eadwardus ... antea fecerunt' and its equivalent in the vernacular version entirely. It also omits the valediction clause 'Deus uos custodiat' in the Latin in favour of a short witness-list.⁵⁹

The vernacular text of Pelteret 51 seems to have been modelled differently, perhaps on a version of Pelteret 22 related to the Joscelyn transcript. As noted above, the transcript was copied from the now lost opening to the A version of the Chronicle which presumably itself derived from a single sheet. The two share certain substantive variants: both deploy the verb *habban* instead of *don* in the clause 'eall spa [Eadp]eard kyning myn mæg ær hæfde' (SS3 'dyde' in the equivalent clause), and include the variant *abrecan* instead of *tobrecan* in the prohibition clause.

In the final issue in the series, Pelteret 54, *hamsocn* is replaced in the Latin by the broadly synonymous *hamfaru*, first recorded in the twelfth century. In the same issue, a strange form of the past participle of *getiðian* 'grant', 'allow'

The other, in the name of William I, confirms Sawyer 1091 (*Regesta*, no. 80). Neither survives in single-sheet form, with the earliest manuscript witness of either dating from the late twelfth century. It seems unlikely, particularly given the close ties between the two foundations, that they and the Christ Church series are independent of each other. I note that Sawyer 1091 gets a more tentative endorsement ('may be genuine') by its most recent editor, Susan Kelly (*CantStA*, p. 128), than that of earlier, more enthusiastic, commentators. There is no evidence that the vernacular original of Sawyer 989, which survives only in a wholly unconvincing Latin version, ever existed, and this may support the theory that the Canterbury series is primary and was used as a model at St Augustine's. The manuscript witnesses to Sawyer 1091 and *Regesta* 80 present spellings which are notably similar to the texts in Christ Church series. Particularly relevant here is the spelling of the Confessor's name in a fifteenth-century manuscript witness as 'Eadpord' (unreported in Bates's edition). While this may be considered injurious to my argument presented below, I see it rather as supportive of the interdependence of these charters. More work in general is required on the links between the St Augustine's and Christ Church archives in this period.

⁵⁷ By the Confessor's time, the address should have been to the sheriffs, the *scirgerefan*, rather than the reeves, *gerefan*, but its appearance in Sawyer 1088 as well as Pelteret 22 results from its having been modelled on Sawyer 986, the Cnut writ (*Anglo-Saxon Writs*, p. 50).

⁵⁸ Faulkner, *New Literary History*, p. 115.

⁵⁹ There are other differences in individual copies of Pelteret 51: *baronibus* (SS15) appears instead of *proceribus*, *seige* (SS16) instead of *keþe* (as spelled in other copies). On this scribe's language see further Faulkner, *New Literary History*, p. 117.

(‘geteiðet’) replaces that of *gelætan*, again with a similar meaning. *Ealdealdefæder* ‘great-grandfather’, Latin *proavus*, which appears uniquely in Pelteret 54, replaces another expression not found elsewhere, *furþur ealdefæder*, in Pelteret 51. **SS21** stands alone in its more ambitious alterations to the vernacular text, replacing ‘ic habbe heom geunnon’ with the more expansive ‘icc hæbbe geunne ðan ercebiscop 7 ta muneken æt Cristes circen on Cantoreberi’. This particular copy appears to have been the model for the subsequent Inspeximuses and their enrolments which include this addition. It also resurrects the detail of the (now decidedly distant) relationship to King Edward (*mæg*), last seen more relevantly in Pelteret 22, and includes further elaboration of the relationship between Henry II and his forebears ‘Eadpard king mi mæg 7 Pillemin king min ealde ealdefader 7 Henri king min ealdefader ær hædden idon’ (other copies ‘Eadpard kynig 7 min ealdefæder’, i.e. Henry I). The past participle construction at the end appears to be making sense of what in the other copies of this issue looks to be a garbled verb form, *hæfdidon*, an accidental blend, perhaps, of *hæfdon* and *dydon*.

In terms of spelling and phonology, the language of the texts shows some variation, but there are clear indications of Kentish dialect transmitted through all the texts (to a lesser extent in Pelteret 51 produced by royal scribes).⁶⁰ Late West Saxon features are also perpetuated, such as *heom* for the dative third-person plural pronoun across all copies. This form may well have been deliberately selected as a variant which was distinct from the singular.

The F-scribe of the Chronicle and his Output

As noted above, the scribe who rewrote Sawyer 1088 was first identified by David Dumville as that responsible for the main text of the F-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (London, British Library Cotton Domitian A. viii, 30–70), produced at Christ Church, dated by Ker to s.xi/s.xii.⁶¹ The bilingual text of the Chronicle ends imperfectly partway through the annal for 1058. The same scribe also made a series of interventions to the A-text of the Chronicle during its sojourn at Christ Church, probably working on it over an extended period of time.⁶² Opinion on the F-scribe’s ability is not kind, with adjectives such as ‘disorderly’;⁶³ ‘irregular ... untidy’;⁶⁴

⁶⁰ A summary of such features as they exist in the Henry II issues (Pelteret 51 and 54) is provided by Richard Dance (*Letters and Charters*, p. 442). Most of these are also found in the issues of Henry I onwards.

⁶¹ Dumville, ‘Aspects of Annalistic Writing’, pp. 49–50; Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 148. The manuscript has been digitised and is available via its catalogue entry at <https://searcharchives.bl.uk/catalog/040-001103650>. Dumville accepts the rewrite of **SS3** as the F-scribe’s work. He argues that the modifications might have been undertaken in order to ready such improved texts for the compilation of a cartulary, though the lost Anglo-Norman cartulary is known not to have included vernacular texts, and there seems not to be any other candidate. It furthermore seems unlikely that it was considered to be necessary to wash out and rewrite an existing writ, with seal, for this purpose.

⁶² For reassessment of his work in this manuscript, see *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS F*, ed. P. S. Baker, *AS Chronicle: a Collaborative Edition 8* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. xx–xxii [henceforth *ASC F*].

⁶³ Dumville, ‘Aspects of Annalistic Writing’, p. 45.

⁶⁴ Ker, *Catalogue*, p. 187.

‘slipshod, mean’;⁶⁵ and ‘undisciplined’⁶⁶ dominating the descriptions of his hand.⁶⁷ However, he demonstrates competence in other respects; working from a variety of sources including the A-text and the archetype of the E-text, he seems to have undertaken the triple role of scribe, editor and translator. Peter Baker, the F-text’s editor, estimates that he amplified the ancestor of the E-text he worked from with reference to more than twenty additional sources.⁶⁸ He clearly knew the archives well, inserting summaries of charters at four places in the F-text narrative.⁶⁹

The F-scribe also reused parchment to fabricate Sawyer 1221, a grant, in Latin, by one ‘Healthegean scearpa’ of land at Saltwood, Kent to Christ Church.⁷⁰ He has also been associated with the rewrite of Pelteret 22 in **SS3**.⁷¹ Although Baker accepts both Sawyer 1088 and Sawyer 1221 as his work, he rejects the attribution of **SS3**, noting in particular differences in the construction of **e** and **3** while accepting the similarity in aspect.⁷² While I acknowledge these differences, it seems more likely, given the close relationship of the two charters and what we know of the scribe and his familiarity with the archives, to see both rewrites as his work; after all, a hand such as his is likely to vary letter-forms to a considerable degree, and the washing (and rewashing) of the parchment would have led to an uneven writing surface.

The Drafting of the I 100 Document in the Series

A remarkable, and consistent, feature of the vernacular copies of these texts is the idiosyncratic spelling of the first appearance of the Confessor’s name as *Eadpord* as part of the phrase ‘on Eadpordes kynges dæge’, appearing in every single sheet except Pelteret 51, produced by royal scribes, where the form given instead is the latinised *Eduardes* (*Edwardes* **SS15**).⁷³ As von Feilitzen has observed, the diphthong in the name-element *-ward* in Domesday Book is spelt <a> with great consistency.⁷⁴ Spellings of this name with <o> in the second

⁶⁵ F. P. Magoun, ‘*Annales Domitiani Latini*: an Edition’, *MS 9* (1947), 233–95, at 238.

⁶⁶ *ASC F*, p. xviii.

⁶⁷ For other unflattering descriptions, see *ASC F*, p. xvi. Baker’s edition includes an illustrated description of his hand, *ASC F*, pp. xviii–xx.

⁶⁸ *ASC F*, p. lxix.

⁶⁹ Sawyer 22 (erroneously listed in *ASC F*, p. lvii as Sawyer 20) s.a. 694, 45r–46v, Sawyer 90 s.a. 742, 48r, copied compactly into a space made by an erased series of shorter annals, Sawyer 1431b s.a. 796, 50v, and Sawyer 959 s.a. 1029, inserted in the right and bottom margins and partly over an erasure, 67r. Baker describes the last of these as ‘almost certainly copied from the Christ Church Cartulary’ (*ASC F*, p. 113), where it appears out of order right at the end of the pre-Conquest charters (ed. ‘Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, no. 86) and was clearly an addition to it.

⁷⁰ Edited *CantCC*, no. 152. See below, p. 21.

⁷¹ See above, note 7.

⁷² *ASC F*, p. xxiii.

⁷³ The form in Joscelyn’s transcript of the A-Chronicle addition (Pelteret 22), is *Eadward*.

⁷⁴ *Pre-Conquest Personal Names*, pp. 57–8, 237–8. Occurrences of the reflex of the second element of *Eadward* are all spelt <a>; the same final element in other names has two further examples in <o> alongside one with <e>, both in the Exeter Domesday (*ibid.* p. 410).

element are extremely unusual.⁷⁵ In the Dictionary of Old English corpus, such spellings appear once in the *Textus Roffensis* (101v, a list of kings, copied by the main hand, probably compiled 1115–24),⁷⁶ and once in a list of guild members at Exmouth of around 1100.⁷⁷ Leaves on which this text and others were copied, now part of the preliminary material to the Exeter Book, originally formed a quire fronting a gospel book for a copy of Leofric's bequest to the cathedral.⁷⁸ It also appears in a manuscript witness to a William I writ in favour of St Augustine's, a text very closely related to the series under consideration here.⁷⁹ Otherwise, the form is only found in the F-text of the Chronicle. Here the expected reflex of the short diphthong *ea* in this reduced stress environment, <a>, appears fifteen times; <o> on five occasions.⁸⁰ I believe that the form of this name is sufficiently unusual to associate it with the F-scribe. My contention therefore is that the F-scribe drafted the 1100 issue of Pelteret 46, handing it over to a more accomplished scribe to copy the single sheets; at the same time he backfilled the archive by washing out and rewriting as necessary. The conservative nature of the transmission process meant that idiosyncratic spellings were transmitted through these copies, even appearing in the enrolment of the earliest (1335) Inspeximus charter of the Stephen issue (Pelteret 50) which does not survive in its original form. These texts additionally display other, more common, features which also cohere with the F-scribe's language as described by Baker,⁸¹ notably his preference for spelling voiced *f* as <u>, in, for example, *geuu* and *geþauian*, similarly transmitted through almost all the copies, though not again in those by royal scribes.

Edward's name recurs towards its end in most copies (the clause is omitted in the Henry II issue for Theobald, Pelteret 51). Here the <o> spelling of the second element is more sporadic, including early on in the series where the <a> spelling appears in two of the three single sheets (SS9, SS10) of Pelteret 48 issued by Henry I for William (1123).⁸² However, there is no straightforward line of

⁷⁵ Other names with recorded spellings in <o> in the second element are Ælfweard, Æthelweard, Alweard, Cyneweard, Hereweard, Osweard, Sæweard, Sigeweard, ðureweard, and Wulfweard. They constitute a tiny fraction of what may be considered the normal reflexes of these names, in <a> or <e>. Many of the same texts, including forms in the F-text, tend to recur.

⁷⁶ See the description in 'The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220' project website at <https://em1060.stanford.edu/> [accessed 11 August 2025]. The digitised manuscript is available at <https://luna.manchester.ac.uk/luna/servlet/detail/Man4MedievalVC~4~4~990378~142729>.

⁷⁷ *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus*, via <https://doe.artsci.utoronto.ca/> [accessed 11 August 2025].

⁷⁸ Ker, *Catalogue*, no. 20 art. 4. The digitised manuscript is available here <https://theexeterbook.exeter.ac.uk/index.html>.

⁷⁹ *Regesta*, no. 80; see note 51. The witness is Elmham's fifteenth-century *Historia* of the Abbey (Cambridge, Trinity Hall, 1, 78r), which generally provides notably reliable texts of early charters. The digitised manuscript is available at <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/MS-TRINITYHALL-00001/161>.

⁸⁰ s.a. 1014, 1048 (twice), 1050, 1051. Forms in <a> appear s.a. 901, 910, 924, 925, 975, 979, 980, 1013, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1044, 1049, 1051, 105.

⁸¹ ASC F, p. lxxxiii.

⁸² Forms in <o>: SS4, SS5 (SS6 damaged), SS7, SS8, SS11; forms in <a>: SS3, SS9, SS10, SS18, SS20, SS21 (SS19 damaged). The Joscelyn transcript (Pelteret 22) has *-eard*. The 1335 enrolment of Pelteret 50 has <a> at this point.

transmission between the copies: none of these is likely to have been copied from the immediately preceding issue for Archbishop Ralph (Pelteret 47) as the two surviving single sheets of that issue (**SS7**, **SS8**) both omit 'ecere' before 'alysed-nesse' and this would be unlikely to be restored in subsequent issues if it were not in the exemplar. The variation between <o> and <a> we see in the 1123 issue is best explained if each were copied from the original draft; Baker observes that the F-scribe's **a** when carelessly written is hard to distinguish from **o**;⁸³ certainly the example from the F-text annal for 1051 (f. 70r) that Baker edits as **o** is formed very similarly to the **a** in the first element and could easily be mistaken for it. A similarly ambiguous letter-form would explain the variation.

This series stands out at first sight as being anomalous: the only example in a royal documentary context of the continuation of a vernacular tradition into the middle of the twelfth century. However, as I have shown here, these texts are nearly identical to each other, and the amount of fresh composition in them is virtually nil. In general, the texts are conservatively copied, retaining early features which can be traced throughout the copies. In this respect they bear comparison to the *Inspeximus* charters of the later medieval period which are similar in terms of their copying strategies.⁸⁴ They are different, then, from many cartulary copies, certainly of the thirteenth century, which admit a greater degree of variation, perhaps because of their less official status. This conservatism, however, has linked the drafting of the Henry I issue, which I have argued is primary here, to the F-text scribe of the Chronicle, whose involvement therefore extended further than simply the doctoring of existing charters. This work shows an archival awareness resulting from his familiarity with the pre-Conquest charters of his foundation evidenced by the incorporation of such material into the F-text. I move on in the next part of this article to consider whether he can be associated with other historical material produced at Canterbury and what his role there might have been.

The F-scribe's Role at Christ Church

Baker identified the F-scribe tentatively as the cantor of the cathedral on the basis of his interests and output.⁸⁵ As Fassler has observed, the role of cantor is one that becomes considerably extended from the tenth century onwards.⁸⁶ By the twelfth century, he 'had become one of the most important persons in the religious community: he supervised all aspects of music-making, he was in charge of the library and the scriptorium, and he oversaw and directed celebration of the liturgy'.⁸⁷ No customary required the cantor to write history, though, as Rozier observes, several other contemporary historians seem to have undertaken

⁸³ ASC F, p. xix.

⁸⁴ For these texts, see K. A. Lowe, 'The Exchequer, the Chancery, and the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds: *Inspeximus* Charters and their Enrolments', *Eng. Manuscript Stud.* 14 (2008), 1–26.

⁸⁵ ASC F, p. lxxx.

⁸⁶ M. Fassler, 'Office of the Cantor in Early Western Monastic Rules and Customaries: a Preliminary Investigation', *Early Music* 5 (1985), 29–51.

⁸⁷ Fassler, 'Office of the Cantor', p. 29.

this task or at least something similar to it, including Eadmer of Canterbury, William of Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis and Symeon of Durham.⁸⁸ Comparison with Symeon is perhaps especially relevant here. Symeon is identified as cantor in the records, but his work in terms of his core responsibility, of the delivery of the liturgy, is, in Rozier's words, 'poorly attested'.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, his hand has been identified by Gullick as appearing in around thirty manuscripts from Durham including editing work on subjects such as theology and exegesis, and he also added names to Durham's *Liber vitae*; this last activity, associated with liturgical observance, in particular is very much to be associated with the office.⁹⁰ In contrast, the F-scribe's known activity is restricted to the writing (or rewriting) of historical texts: the F-text of the Chronicle, additions to the A-text, and three charters. There is, however, some evidence for associating him with the compilation of an additional major work of history, the Anglo-Norman cartulary with an unusual focus on patronage, and it is to this possibility that I now turn.

The Anglo-Norman Cartulary and its Date

The Anglo-Norman cartulary is known only from three later copies, and the date of its original compilation is disputed, as discussed below. The way in which it presents its material, as outlined by its editor, Robin Fleming, is extremely unusual.⁹¹ Most of its contents are abstracted and modelled as diplomas, dated at their head. They generally include reservation clauses and an anathema, even when the original texts, some of which were in the vernacular, did not feature them. The cartulary includes a copy of a charter in the series considered earlier, Sawyer 1089, as well as all four charters included in the Chronicle, either as additions or incorporated into the main text. In this section, I consider its date relative to the F-text of the Chronicle and how closely it may be associated with the F-scribe himself.

Fleming argues that the cartulary was compiled in the 1070s or early 1080s for two main reasons. First, it seems that the cartulary originally included only pre-Conquest charters, and, second, some of its apparent preoccupations reflect concerns over litigation live during this period.⁹² For her this approach makes most sense had the cartulary been compiled prior to the production of the Domesday Book, which, as it confirmed the majority of the foundation's estates,

⁸⁸ C. C. Rozier, 'Symeon of Durham as Cantor and Historian at Durham Cathedral Priory, c. 1090–1129', *Medieval Cantors and their Craft: Music, Liturgy and the Shaping of History, 800–1500*, ed. by K. A. Bugyis, A. B. Kraebel and M. E. Fassler, *Writing History in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 2017), pp. 190–206, at 200.

⁸⁹ Rozier, 'Symeon of Durham', p. 195.

⁹⁰ M. Gullick, 'The Hand of Symeon of Durham: Further Observations on the Durham Martyrology Scribe', *Symeon of Durham: Historian of Durham and the North*, ed. D. Rollason (Stamford, 1998), pp. 14–31. For Eadmer's early work, which includes charters, professions, letters, and the earliest known copy of Lanfranc's *Constitutiones*, see M. Gullick, 'The Scribal Work of Eadmer of Canterbury to 1109', *AC* 118 (1998), 173–89.

⁹¹ R. Fleming, 'Christ Church Canterbury's Anglo-Norman Cartulary', *Anglo-Norman Political Culture and the Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, ed. C. W. Hollister (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 83–155.

⁹² 'Anglo-Norman Cartulary', p. 96.

in her view rendered the strategy unnecessary. There are other potential explanations for its contents and appearance which mean that it need not be dated so early; the pre-Conquest charters may, for example, have been kept separately from the later ones following the fire in 1067 that destroyed the cathedral, as Brooks and Kelly note.⁹³ The different presentation of these texts may also have eased reference: a reader would be able to locate more readily all the information required if the entries were laid out in a particular, uniform style.

Brooks had argued in previous research that the core of the cartulary was compiled rather later, c. 1090,⁹⁴ and the points he and Kelly raise in their discussion of the cartulary and its contents push the date later still. They draw attention to the styling of the archbishop of Canterbury as ‘archiepiscopus [or equivalent term] totius Britanniae’, a phrase which is certainly not pre-Conquest, nor indeed one apparently employed in the works of the cantor Osbern, who died in 1093. However, it was deployed during Eadmer’s time as cantor (beginning at some point after his return from Scotland in 1121) and was a phrase used by him in his *vita* of St Dunstan.⁹⁵ They conclude that the cartulary was likely compiled somewhere between 1090 and 1120, noting that it may well have been just after the final two documents to appear in the cartulary dated 1101 and 1106, recording the recovery of two estates originally granted in the pre-Conquest period.⁹⁶ That is certainly possible, although towards the end, and at times elsewhere, the cartulary’s generally uniform style as summarised above appears to break down somewhat, with fewer attempts at dating of entries. It is likely that the original cartulary was added to on a series of occasions, as Brooks had earlier argued, as a number of the charters are structured differently, lacking the features noted above.⁹⁷ Fleming contends instead that all of the pre-Conquest contents are original to the cartulary.⁹⁸ This cannot be, if her early dating of the cartulary stands, given that some of its contents are known to be forgeries produced far later than her suggested dating, including a summary of Sawyer

⁹³ *CantCC*, p. 60.

⁹⁴ N. P. Brooks, ‘The Pre-Conquest Charters of Christ Church, Canterbury’ (unpubl. DPhil dissertation, Univ. of Oxford, 1968), p. 120 (section on cartulary pp. 102–28).

⁹⁵ *CantCC*, p. 65.

⁹⁶ *CantCC*, p. 71. Baker puts the cartulary at 1100 or later, but does not give reasons to support this dating (*ASC F*, p. xxvii, n. 3).

⁹⁷ For a summary of his attempt to distinguish original contents from later additions, see Brooks, ‘Pre-Conquest Charters’, p. 116. His numbering of the texts in the various surviving manuscript witnesses is a little different from that of Fleming, and he was working prior to the publication of Sawyer’s *Annotated List*. The following lists those pre-Conquest charters he believes to have been added subsequently to the cartulary, added either towards the end or incorporated at other place, aligned with their Sawyer (S) numbers and Fleming’s edition: S 1209, S 132, S 1614, S 398, S 1210 (Fleming, nos 40–44); S 477 (Fleming, no. 48); S 1221, S 1218 (Fleming, nos 69, 71); S 981, S 1089, S 1047, S 1090 (Fleming, nos 74–76, 78); S 1644, S 959 (Fleming, nos 83, 86). These are charters that appear in all three of the manuscript witnesses. He goes on to identify further charters as additions on the principle that they do not appear in the earliest of the manuscript witnesses, but later accepts Fleming’s argument that each manuscript witness derives directly from the original cartulary (*CantCC*, p. 61), and therefore that material is selected or omitted as is a result of other factors.

⁹⁸ ‘Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, p. 91.

1221. This survives elsewhere in a single sheet, produced by the F-scribe himself, described by Brooks and Kelly as ‘a completely unconvincing fabrication’,⁹⁹ with no reason to assume a basis in any pre-Conquest source.

There are some intriguing links between the F-text of the Chronicle and the reconstructed Anglo-Norman cartulary, as Brooks and Kelly have noted. The compiler of the Anglo-Norman cartulary certainly used a version of the Chronicle in order to supply dates for some of the material,¹⁰⁰ but he seems to have used information that is found elsewhere only in the F-text. This includes a misdating of a charter, Sawyer 1212, in the original part of the cartulary.¹⁰¹ The charter there is attributed to the year of Oda’s death, wrongly given as 961 (rather than 958), a mistake which is found in the F-text.¹⁰² Brooks and Kelly also note the cartulary’s use of the double form of Queen Emma’s name in Sawyer 1644, ‘Ælfgifu Imma’, which is found in no pre-Conquest source but is used consistently throughout the F-text.¹⁰³

There is some evidence that the Anglo-Norman cartulary was produced subsequent to the F-text, or at least that the F-scribe was unaware of it when compiling the Chronicle. As mentioned above, the F-text is dated palaeographically to s.xi/s.xii by Ker, that is, to an approximate twenty-five-year period spanning the century.¹⁰⁴ Baker’s careful discussion of the scribe’s revisions allowed him to refine the dating further to c. 1100 × 1107, or a little later, but not prior to that point.¹⁰⁵ Most helpful in terms of relative dating is that both the F-text (s.a. 694) and the cartulary each contain a summary of Sawyer 22, but the text in the Chronicle is subsequently altered in places to cohere with the cartulary.¹⁰⁶ The charter appears early on in the cartulary (Fleming edits as no. 7) and is likely to be part of its original compilation. Given the F-scribe’s knowledge of the archives, it therefore seems probable that the Anglo-Norman cartulary had not been compiled when the F-scribe set to work on his chronicle.

Is it possible to arrive at a *terminus ante quem* for the production of the original part of the Anglo-Norman cartulary? As noted above, the cartulary included a copy of Sawyer 1221. It survives as a single sheet written by the F-scribe, and was likely forged, Brooks and Kelly argue, during the aftermath of events in 1107.¹⁰⁷ This charter grants land at Saltwood to the foundation. The entry in the

⁹⁹ *CantCC*, p. 1101.

¹⁰⁰ *CantCC*, p. 67.

¹⁰¹ Edited ‘Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, no. 52.

¹⁰² *CantCC*, p. 68.

¹⁰³ *CantCC*, p. 68, edited there as no. 165. The charter, which survives in no independent copy outside the Anglo-Norman cartulary appears towards its end (ed. ‘Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, no. 83); Brooks had earlier argued that this was one of the texts subsequently added to the original cartulary (‘Pre-Conquest Charters’, p. 116, and see [note 95](#) above).

¹⁰⁴ *Catalogue*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁵ *ASC F*, p. lxxvi.

¹⁰⁶ *ASC F*, p. lvii. The texts from the single-sheet charter, the Anglo-Norman cartulary and the F-text usefully appear in sequence in *CantCC*, 8, 8A, and 8B. Brooks and Kelly describe the corrections made in the F-text against the Anglo-Norman cartulary as by ‘a later revisor’ (p. 319), though Baker does not note a difference in hand.

¹⁰⁷ *CantCC*, p. 1102.

cartulary, which adds Hythe to Saltwood, is believed by Brooks on the basis of its form to be an addition to the original cartulary.¹⁰⁸ If this is correct, we may assume that the cartulary had been completed by the time the charter had been forged in 1107.

The Authorship of the Anglo-Norman Cartulary

Brooks and Kelly conclude their summary of the similarities between the F-text of the Chronicle and the Anglo-Norman cartulary by stating that this evidence did not permit the cartulary to be associated directly either with the F-scribe or with Eadmer, or indeed any other member of the community.¹⁰⁹ Here it is worth summarising the evidence aside from the specific links noted above in favour of the F-scribe's involvement. The F-scribe was ideally placed to have compiled this cartulary, having already produced his version of the Chronicle which required much the same skill-set. The layout of this text alongside his experience there may well have contributed to the unusual format of the cartulary with its annal-like insistence on dates at the head of each entry. Not only did the cartulary scribe need to summarise and adapt sometimes quite lengthy material in Latin (or alternatively expand on brief entries in necrologies or obituary lists),¹¹⁰ but also to invent anathemata if the original charters did not contain one.¹¹¹ He additionally had to summarise, translate and transform material that was originally in the vernacular. Although it seems that the F-scribe was working from a bilingual exemplar for his Chronicle, Baker has shown that his exemplar extended only as far as 991 at which point the F-scribe was obliged to produce the Latin translations of the material himself, so he was easily capable of the challenge of assembling the cartulary.¹¹² The linguistic capacity required for this task is not insubstantial, nor was it necessarily common in the early years of the twelfth century. Although we cannot, of course, be certain of the authorship of the cartulary, the F-scribe seems a likely candidate.

The unusual features that Fleming observes in the cartulary allows her to identify a central emphasis on what she terms 'liturgical benediction',¹¹³ which falls more squarely within the remit of cantor or his office, as outlined in Lanfranc's *Monastic Constitutions*: 'Cura breuium, qui foras mitti solent pro defunctis fratribus; et cura numerandi tricenaria, et septenaria, ad eum pertinet. De uniuersis monasterii libris curam gerat, et eos in custodia sua habeat, si eius studii et scientie sit, ut eorum custodia ei commendari debeat'.¹¹⁴ This guiding

¹⁰⁸ See note 89 above.

¹⁰⁹ *CantCC*, p. 68.

¹¹⁰ 'Anglo-Norman Cartulary', p. 92.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 95.

¹¹² *ASC F*, pp. lxxii–lxxiii.

¹¹³ 'Anglo-Norman Cartulary', p. 103.

¹¹⁴ 'It also pertains to his office to supervise the letters sent out to ask for prayers for the dead brethren, and to keep count of the week's and month's mind. He takes care of all the books of the house, and has them in his keeping, if his interests and learning are such as to fit him for keeping them'. *The Monastic Constitutions of Lanfranc*, ed. and trans. D. Knowles and C. N. L. Brooke, OMT (Oxford, 2002), p. 122.

principle for inclusion of ‘commemorative liturgy’¹¹⁵ explains why the original contents of the cartulary, as may be reconstructed from its surviving witnesses, seem not to have included privileges and general grants habitually showcased in such collections; its compilation, as mentioned above, required close attention to obituary lists and necrologies as well as knowledge of the library archive itself. It seems a task very much aligned with the role and general interests of a cantor. If the cartulary, as argued above, can be dated to the first decade of the twelfth century, it would seem that its compiler would have been active in this role at some point between two identified holders of the office, Osbern, who died perhaps in 1094, and Eadmer.¹¹⁶ There is apparently no evidence that Eadmer, who accompanied Archbishop Anselm abroad extensively over a sixteen-year period from his consecration in 1093 to his death in 1109, held a role in the community prior to 1121,¹¹⁷ but Southern notes that he probably assumed the office then following his return from an ill-fated trip to Scotland.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

This article has argued for a role for the F-scribe of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle expanded from what is already known of his work. I have argued first that he was not simply responsible for erasing and rewriting two single-sheet charters from Christ Church as part of a series of vernacular confirmations which extended into the twelfth century. Instead his role was more central to the series, being likely responsible, based on linguistic evidence, for drafting the 1100 issue with which I believe the series began. The F-text links to the Anglo-Norman cartulary in interesting and suggestive ways. I have provided evidence to suggest that the cartulary was produced subsequent to the F-Chronicle, with both probably completed by 1107, and argue that the F-scribe’s interests in, and knowledge of, the pre-Conquest archives of the foundation would have made him an ideal candidate for its compilation. If he can be associated with its production, the cartulary’s resolute focus on, in Fleming’s resonant phrase, ‘liturgical benediction’, strengthens Baker’s tentative identification of him as the cantor of the foundation. The work, conducted in the first decade of the twelfth century, would place the F-scribe’s tenure at a point between that of two identifiable individuals, Osbern (d. ?1094) and Eadmer, who continued his predecessor’s work as historian of the foundation.

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¹¹⁵ ‘Anglo-Norman Cartulary’, p. 103.

¹¹⁶ For Osbern, see J. C. Rubenstein, ‘The Life and Writings of Osbern of Canterbury’, *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars, 1066–1109*, ed. R. Eales and R. Sharpe (London, 1995), pp. 27–40.

¹¹⁷ R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), p. 236.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 237.