

## Record of the sixth conference of the International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, at Wadham College, University of Oxford, 1–7 August 1993

I The following papers were presented on the general theme of the conference, Culture and Social Context.

- James Campbell, 'Taking Directions in Anglo-Saxon History from a Forgotten Oxford Prophet'  
 Helena Hamerow, 'Eynsham before Ælfric: Saxon Settlements in the Upper Thames Valley'  
 C.R. Hart, 'Shelford – the Value of a Multidisciplinary Approach'  
 Elizabeth Okasha, 'The "Commissioners" of Anglo-Saxon Inscriptions'  
 Sarah Foot, 'Letters and the Unlettered: the Reception of Inscriptions in Anglo-Saxon England'  
 William Filmer-Sankey, 'The "Roman Empire" in the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial'  
 Ben Whitwell, 'Flixborough: Excavations of a High Status Middle Saxon Site in the Context of the Kingdom of Lindsey'  
 Audrey Meaney, 'Pagan Anglo-Saxon Sanctuaries and Meeting Places'  
 John Blair, 'Squaring the Circle: Is it possible to Identify Anglo-Saxon Pagan Shrines?'  
 Craig Davis, 'The Social Meaning of Grendel'  
 John Niles, 'Reconceiving *Beowulf*: the Uses of the Past'  
 Andy Orchard, 'Pride and Prodigies: the Legend of Alexander the Great in Anglo-Saxon England'  
 Andrea Rossi-Reder, 'Tradition and Innovation in the Laud Misc. 129 *Physiologus*'  
 Florica Bancila, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in Romania'  
 Jan Cermak, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in the Czech Republic and Slovakia'  
 Przemyslaw Lozowski, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in Poland'  
 Jozsef Laszlovsky and Katalin Halacsy, 'Anglo-Saxon Studies in Hungary'  
 Nicholas Howe, 'Senses of Place in Anglo-Saxon England'  
 Ann Hagen, 'The Anglo-Saxon Feast: a Paradigm of Culture in a Specific Social Context'  
 Elaine Treharne, 'Excommunication in Anglo-Saxon England'  
 Martin Biddle, 'Anglo-Saxon Winchester'  
 Edward B. Irving, 'The Advent of Poetry: *Christ I*'  
 Patrizia Lendinara, 'The First Glossary in CCC 144 as a Source of Anglo-Saxon Culture'

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- Lesley Abrams, 'Anglo-Saxon Missions to Scandinavia'  
 Alicia Corrêa, 'Anglo-Saxon England and Scandinavia: the Liturgical Evidence'  
 Johan Gerritsen, 'What Use Are the Thorkelin Transcripts of *Beowulf*?'  
 Eric Dahl, '*The Battle of Maldon*: after the Millennial Ball'  
 David Dumville, 'Writing and Politics: the Royal Chancery and the Development of Tenth-Century English Script'  
 Daniel Donoghue, 'A Point Well Taken: the Manuscript Punctuation of Old English Poems'  
 Martin Irvine, '*Compilatio*, the Early Medieval Library, and the Exeter Book'  
 David Pelteret, 'Bede's Women'  
 Stephanie Hollis, 'The OE Mildrith Fragments and their Social Context'  
 John McNamara, 'Bede's Role in Circulating Monastic Folklore in the *Historia ecclesiastica*'  
 Colin Ireland, 'Aldfrith of Northumbria, *vir undecumque doctissimus*'  
 Michiko Ogura, 'The Interchangeability of Old English Prefixes'  
 Carole Biggam, 'The Sociolinguistics of Old English Colour Lexemes'  
 Roy Liuzza, 'Putting the Old English Gospels in their Place'  
 Jane Toswell, 'The Codicology of the Paris Psalter Manuscript'

The following reports were given and panel discussions conducted.

- Donald Scragg and Michael Lapidge, '*Fontes Anglo-Saxonici*'  
 Richard Pfaff, 'Sources of Anglo-Saxon Literary Culture'  
 Antonette di Paolo Healey, '*The Dictionary of Old English*'  
 Carole Hough, 'The Nottingham University Place-Name Project'  
 Paul Szarmach, Patrick W. Conner, Simon Keynes and Phillip Pulsiano (substituting for Carl Berkhout), 'Anglo-Saxon Bibliography: Making it Better'  
 Christian Kay, Jane Roberts and Lynne Grundy, 'The Historical Thesaurus of Old English'  
 Phillip Pulsiano, 'Old English Manuscripts in Microfiche'

An after-dinner paper was presented by Daniel Donoghue, 'The Reception of Lady Godiva'.

II General Business Meeting held in the Lecture Theatre of Wadham College, University of Oxford, on 6 August 1993, at 5:30 p.m., President Malcolm Godden Presiding.

A The Executive Director reported on behalf of the Executive Committee:

- 1 Membership. As of the date of the Wadham College meeting, the Society had 520 members. The increase in dues from \$10.00 to \$15.00 (US) and from £7.00 to 10.00 (sterling) and arranging for members to pay dues for as many as three years ahead of the current

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year has generated revenues of \$8,196.39, an increase of \$4,284.36 over 1992 revenues.

2 The Society has arranged for the rental of its mailing list to members of ISAS for \$50.00 or £30.00 (sterling). Commercial use of the list is currently set at \$200 (US). Leaflets falling within the scope of the Society's interests may be included in the regular mailings free of charge if below one-half ounce; charges will be levied for items above one-half ounce.

3 The Executive Director described the support which the Department of English at West Virginia University has extended to ISAS, and particularly the secretarial services provided by Nancy Brotherton of the department's office staff. The membership responded with a warm round of applause.

B The President reported on behalf of the Executive Committee:

1 Officers of the Society. In accordance with the Society's constitution, Malcolm Godden completes his term as President as of 31 December 1993, after which George Brown, the current First Vice-President, will assume the post of President. Patrizia Lendinara will assume the post of First Vice-President; Phillip Pulsiano will continue for a second two-year term as Second Vice-President, and Patrick W. Conner will continue as Executive Director for four years.

2 Membership of the Advisory Board. The following have been appointed as members of the Advisory Board from 1 January 1994 until 31 December 1997: Michelle Brown, Mary Clayton, Matti Kilpio and Tadao Kubouchi. Continuing on the Board are: Antonette di Paolo Healey, Michael Lapidge, Paul Szarmach, James Graham-Campbell, Joyce Hill, Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe, Hans Sauer and Patrick Wormald.

3 Honorary Membership of the Society. The present Honorary Membership consists of Peter Clemons, Rosemary Cramp, René Derolez, Henry Loyn, Bruce Mitchell and John Pope. It was proposed that André Crepin and Sigeru Ono be elected Honorary Members. The proposal was approved by the membership.

4 It was proposed by the President that £1,000 be donated by the Society to the Dictionary of Old English project; approval of the proposal was marked with applause.

C The First Vice-President reported on behalf of the Executive Committee:

1 The seventh conference of the Society will be held in Stanford on 6 to 12 August 1995; the theme of the conference will be 'Old and

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New Ways in the Study of Anglo-Saxon Culture’.

- D The meeting closed with a round of applause for Malcolm Godden for hosting a successful and enjoyable conference and for those who assisted in its planning and running.

III The conference included a day-long excursion to Winchester, with a tour of the medieval sites conducted by Martin Biddle, and an excursion led by John Blair to sites at Lew, Bampton, Langfor, Gloucester and Deerhurst. The Bodleian Library arranged for an exhibition of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, and the Ashmolean Museum for an exhibition of Anglo-Saxon coins.

Registration forms for the ISAS conference to be held in Stanford will be mailed to all paid-up members of the Society. Payment may be made by cheque or postal money order for \$15.00 or £10.00 sterling (regular members) or for \$10.00 or £7.00 (student and retired members) and should be sent to Professor Patrick W. Conner, Exec. Dir., International Society of Anglo-Saxonists, P.O. Box 6296, West Virginia University, Morgantown WV 26506-6296, USA. Payment may be made to the Executive Director by VISA or MasterCard or by personal cheque. For members outside the US, transfers in sterling may be sent to the ISAS account, Midland Bank plc, 32 Market Hill, Cambridge CB2 3NU; sorting code no. 40-16-08, account no. 21241605. Members may arrange to pay dues for more than one year. Payment forms are available from the Executive Director.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This record of the Oxford meeting was compiled by Phillip Pulsiano.

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## A background to Augustine's mission to Anglo-Saxon England

ROB MEENS

As is well known, Bede gives a biased account of the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England.<sup>1</sup> He highlights the role of the Roman mission, initiated by Pope Gregory the Great and led by Augustine, the first bishop of Canterbury. Almost as important in the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* is the effort made by the Irish to Christianize Northumbria. The Frankish contribution to the missionary process, however, is not mentioned at all, though Frankish clerics certainly played an important role in the conversion of England. This role is attested by later contacts between England and the Frankish church.<sup>2</sup> The letters of Gregory the Great relating to the mission of Augustine, moreover, make it clear that this mission also benefited greatly from help supplied by the Frankish church.<sup>3</sup> The continuity of the British church seems to have been stronger than Bede suggests and his statement that the Britons did nothing to convert the Angles and the Saxons should be regarded as an overstatement.<sup>4</sup> It has been argued recently that Bede left out an account of the

<sup>1</sup> A recent study of the biases in Bede's work is W. Goffart, 'The *Historia Ecclesiastica*: Bede's Agenda and Ours', *Haskins Soc. Jnl* 2 (1990), 29–45.

<sup>2</sup> J. Campbell, 'The First Century of Christianity in England', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History* (London and Ronceverte, 1986), pp. 49–67 (originally ptd *Ampleforth Jnl* 76 (1971), 12–29), esp. 53–9; A. Lohaus, *Die Merowinger und England*, Münchener Beiträge zur Mediävistik und Renaissance-Forschung 19 (Munich, 1974), 5–39 and 144–51; F. Prinz, 'Von der Bekehrung der Angelsachsen bis zu ihrer Missionstätigkeit im Frankenreich', *SettSpol* 32 (1986), 701–34, esp. 715–25; I. Wood, 'The Franks at Sutton Hoo', in *People and Places in Northern Europe, 500–1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer*, ed. I. Wood and N. Lund (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 1–14, esp. 6–9; H. Chadwick, 'Gregory the Great and the Mission to the Anglo-Saxons', *Gregorio Magno e il suo tempo: XIX Incontro di studiosi dell'antichità cristiana in collaborazione con l'École Française de Rome, 9–12 maggio 1990*, 2 vols., *Studia Ephemeridis 'Augustinianum'* 33 (Rome, 1991) I, 199–212, esp. 202–5; and I. Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms 450–751* (London and New York, 1993), pp. 176–80.

<sup>3</sup> I. Wood, 'The Mission of Augustine of Canterbury to the English', *Speculum* 69 (1994), 1–17.

<sup>4</sup> J. Campbell, 'Observations on the Conversion of England', in his *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, pp. 71–3. On the importance of the place-names formed from OE \**eccles*, see C. Thomas, *Christianity in Roman Britain to AD 500* (London, 1981), pp. 262–5. Augustine's request for relics of the holy martyr Sixtus, which is left out of Bede's version of the *Libellus responsionum* but is transmitted in other versions, suggests continuity of British Christianity near Canterbury, as does some archaeological evidence; see N. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury: Christ Church from 597 to 1066* (Leicester, 1984), pp. 17–21.

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conversion of the Anglo-Saxons living west and south-west of the Mercians, the Hwicce, the Magonsæte and the Wreocensæte, not because of a lack of information, but because of the part the Britons played in it.<sup>5</sup>

Biased though Bede's account may be, his work remains the cornerstone of every history of the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England. Fortunately he also provides us with opportunities to detect other missionary activities in England, though this has not been fully appreciated yet. Out of reverence for Gregory the Great, Bede includes several letters written by this pope in his *Historia*. These are amply used in historical works treating the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England. I would like to draw attention to some implications of one of these letters, the so-called *Libellus responsionum*, that have gone unnoticed. This 'booklet' contains a number of questions from Augustine of Canterbury to the pope concerning problems in the newly converted regions together with the answers provided by Gregory. The questions asked by Augustine show that some of the missionary activity in southern England was not Roman in character.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE *LIBELLUS RESPONSIONUM*

Before tackling this problem, it needs to be said that the authenticity of the *Libellus responsionum* has been a matter of dispute. Suso Brechter questioned the authenticity of the work on the grounds that it was not included in the Lateran collection of the letters of Gregory the Great, the *Registrum Gregorii*. Already in 735 Boniface, suspicious of the judgements concerning prohibited degrees of marriage made in the letter, had made a request that it should be looked for in the papal archives, where it could not be found among the copies of letters of Pope Gregory I.<sup>6</sup> Other arguments which Brechter produced

<sup>5</sup> S. Basset, 'Church and Diocese in the West Midlands: the Transition from British to Anglo-Saxon Control', in *Pastoral Care before the Parish*, ed. J. Blair and R. Sharpe (Leicester, 1992), pp. 13–40, esp. 39: 'It was this [= British] church which converted the immigrants. It left the missionaries from Canterbury and Iona with little to do here – and Bede with little to report, especially since he notoriously disliked the British churches and wrote them out of his *Ecclesiastical History* as much as he could.' Cf. P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600–800*, CSASE 3 (Cambridge, 1990), 75–86, who, while also mentioning the plausibility of British missionary activity in this region, holds that it was not bias but a lack of information that led Bede to leave out an account of the conversion of the Hwicce and the Magonsæte.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. xxxiii in *Briefe des Bonifatius, Willibalds Leben des Bonifatius, nebst einigen zeitgenössischen Dokumenten*, ed. R. Rau, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters: Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe 4B (Darmstadt, 1968), p. 110: 'Similiter et diligenter obsecro, ut illius epistolae, qua continetur, ut dicunt, interrogationes Augustini pontificis ac praedicatoris primi Anglorum et responsiones sancti Gregorii papae, exemplar mihi dirigere curetis, in qua inter cetera capitula continetur, quod in tertia generatione propinquitatis fidelibus liceat matrimonia copulare, et ut scrupulosa cautella diligenter investigare studeatis, si illa conscriptio supradicti patris nostri sancti Gregorii esse conprobetur an non, quia in

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against the authenticity of the *Libellus* were based on the lack of formal characteristics typical of the letters written at the papal chancery and from the use of concepts and ideas which were not in existence at the time of Gregory the Great and Augustine. According to Brechter, we are dealing with a text fabricated by Nothhelm, who provided Bede with most of his 'Gregorian' material, and hence was included in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult, however, to think of a reason why Nothhelm should have forged this document.<sup>8</sup> It has been argued that we are not dealing with a forgery, but with a basically authentic work, compiled at a later date by Nothhelm out of a set of separate responses to separate questions. The authenticity of each *responsio* should then be judged on its own terms. Most of the work can thus be regarded as Gregorian; only *responsiones* nos. 8 and 9 were probably derived from the teaching and influence of Archbishop Theodore at Canterbury, though they may ultimately have been inspired by Gregorian writing.<sup>9</sup>

The *Libellus* is not only known from its inclusion in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*; it is transmitted as a separate tract in over 200 manuscripts. It survives in three versions, which differ mainly in their formal composition: the 'Letter version', the 'Capitula version' and the 'Question and answer version'. From an analysis of its textual transmission, it is clear that the text as used by Bede had already had a long history. From this it follows logically that the text can be no forgery concocted by Bede or Nothhelm.<sup>10</sup> The contents of the *Libellus*, moreover, clearly echo the thought of Gregory the Great.<sup>11</sup> Study of the influence of the Old Testament in early medieval Europe shows that at least some of the questionable concepts and ideas expressed in the *Libellus* were in existence in the time of Augustine and Gregory the Great. This also

scrinio Romanae ecclesiae ut adfirmant scriniarii, cum ceteris exemplaribus supradicti pontificis quaesita non inveniatur.

<sup>7</sup> S. Brechter, *Die Quellen zur Angelsachsenmission Gregors des Grossen: eine historiographische Studie*, Beiträge zur Geschichte des alten Mönchtums und des Benediktinerordens 22 (Münster, 1941).

<sup>8</sup> M. Deanesly and P. Grosjean, 'The Canterbury Edition of the Answers of Pope Gregory I to St Augustine', *JEH* 10 (1959), 1–49, esp. 38.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 38–43.

<sup>10</sup> P. Meyvaert, 'Bede's Text of the *Libellus Responsionum* of Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury', in his *Benedict, Gregory, Bede and others* (London, 1977), no. X (originally ptd in *England before the Conquest: Studies in Primary Sources presented to Dorothy Whitelock*, ed. P. Clemoes and K. Hughes (Cambridge, 1971)), pp. 15–33. He then knew about 130 manuscripts, by now over 200; see P. Meyvaert, 'Le *Libellus Responsionum* à Augustin de Cantorbéry: une oeuvre authentique de Saint Grégoire le Grand', *Grégoire le Grand*, ed. J. Fontaine et al. (Paris, 1986), pp. 543–9, esp. 543, n. 1.

<sup>11</sup> P. Meyvaert, 'Diversity within Unity, a Gregorian Theme', in his *Benedict, Gregory, Bede*, no. VI (originally ptd *Heythrop Jnl* 4 (1963), 141–62) and Chadwick, 'Gregory the Great and the Mission', pp. 207–12.

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holds true for the dubious responses, nos. 8 and 9.<sup>12</sup> A critical edition of the text will ultimately give us a clear picture of its complicated textual transmission and may finally settle the question of its authenticity, but such an edition has not yet appeared.<sup>13</sup> It nevertheless seems justified to regard the *Libellus* as a genuine work of Gregory the Great written in response to questions posed by Augustine of Canterbury.

In the major historical works dealing with the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England, the *Libellus* is indeed treated as a genuine work of that age, which gives important information on the earliest organization of the Roman church in England.<sup>14</sup> These works, however, tend to devote all their attention to the questions of church organization or liturgy touched on in this document. The lengthy discussion of questions of ritual purity are sometimes simply dismissed or not mentioned at all. Symptomatic are the words of Peter Hunter Blair: ‘Apart from matters touching ritual purification, no longer of great interest, Augustine sought advice on various problems concerning the organization of the new church . . .’<sup>15</sup> These matters are, however, particularly instructive for the early history of the conversion of Anglo-Saxon England.

Let us first consider which matters of ritual purity are treated in questions 8 and 9 of the *Libellus* (*HE* I. 27), before viewing them in their proper historical context. The central topic was the relationship between holiness and people in

<sup>12</sup> R. Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluss des Alten Testaments auf Recht und Liturgie des früheren Mittelalters (6.–8. Jahrhundert)*, 2nd ed., Bonner Historische Forschungen (Bonn, 1970), pp. 110–16.

<sup>13</sup> A critical edition with a list of manuscripts and a study of the contents of the *Libellus* is at present being prepared by Paul Meyvaert: see his ‘Le *Libellus Responsionum* à Augustin de Cantorbéry’, p. 543, n. 1.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1971), pp. 106–8; J. Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 80–6; M. Deanesly, *The Pre-Conquest Church in England*, 2nd ed. (London, 1963); P. Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 64–5; Prinz, ‘Von der Bekehrung der Angelsachsen’, pp. 707–8, though rather sceptical on the authenticity of the work as a whole; H. Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity to Anglo-Saxon England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1991) does not use it in his account of the Gregorian mission, but treats it on p. 249 as a genuine document; the authenticity is also accepted by J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History of the English People: a Historical Commentary* (Oxford, 1988), p. 38. Only G. Jenal, ‘Gregor d. Grosse und die Anfänge der Angelsachsenmission (596–604)’, *SettSpol* 32 (1986), 793–849, at 810, leaves out a discussion of this text because of the doubts raised about its authenticity.

<sup>15</sup> Hunter Blair, *The World of Bede*, p. 64. Cf. Godfrey, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon England*, p. 86: ‘Both of these questions [= nos. 8 and 9] are concerned with the subject of ritual defilement, and though the answers are of considerable length, they are of no importance to the modern reader.’ See also the superficial treatment of these questions in M. Deanesly, *Augustine of Canterbury* (London, 1964), pp. 71–2, compared to the detailed analysis of the other topics raised by this document on pp. 63–71. Cf., however, the detailed treatment of these questions in A. G. Weiler, *Willibrords missie: Christendom en cultuur in de zevende en achtste eeuw (met een vertaling van de voornaamste literaire bronnen door P. Bange)* (Hilversum, 1989), pp. 35–42.

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a certain state of impurity. It is implied that a certain sense of impurity was inherent in basic states of the human condition: giving birth, menstruation and sexual activity. Giving birth gave rise to a whole range of questions. Can a pregnant woman be baptized? How long should a woman refrain from attending church after delivery? When can a new-born child be baptized? When can a man resume sexual relations with his wife after the delivery? Impurity inherent in menstruation gave rise to the question of whether a menstruating woman could enter the church and receive holy communion. The impurity resulting from sexual activities led to such questions as: can a man, after having had sexual intercourse with his wife but without having washed, enter church and approach holy communion? Or can a man, after having had a sexual emission during his sleep, receive the body of the Lord, and, if he is a priest, can he celebrate the holy mysteries?<sup>16</sup>

According to Brechter these questions were anachronistic for the era of Gregory the Great and could only have arisen after the introduction of Greek rules on purity and impurity articulated by Archbishop Theodore, who was born in the Greek-speaking world, and was sent from Rome to Canterbury by Pope Vitalian.<sup>17</sup> It has been shown, however, that at least some of Augustine's questions show striking similarities with matters raised in texts from Ireland and Britain written from the sixth to the early eighth centuries: the *Excerpta quedam de libro Davidis* (Wales, c. s. vi), the Irish *Liber ex lege Moysis* (s. vii<sup>ex</sup>), the penitentials of Finnian and Cummean (Ireland, s. vi and vii respectively), and the *Collectio Hibernensis* (c. 690–725).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, ed. B. Colgrave and R. A. B. Mynors, rev. ed. (Oxford, 1992), pp. 88–103.

<sup>17</sup> Brechter, *Die Quellen zur Angelsachsenmission*, pp. 98, 100–3 and 289; Deanesly and Grosjean, 'The Canterbury Edition', pp. 10–12 and 43. On Theodore, see Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, pp. 130–42; Mayr-Harting, *The Coming of Christianity*, pp. 121–2 and *passim*; M. Lapidge, 'The School of Theodore and Hadrian', *ASE* 15 (1986), 45–72; and Brooks, *Early History*, pp. 71–6 and 94–9.

<sup>18</sup> Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluss*, pp. 112–14. On the *Excerpta quedam de libro Davidis*, see *The Irish Penitentials*, ed. L. Bieler, 2nd ed., *Scriptores Latini Hiberniae* 5 (Dublin, 1975), 3; for the penitentials of Finnian and Cummean, see *ibid.* pp. 2–7. Körntgen recently discovered that the *P. Ambrosianum*, formerly thought to be a continental work based on Irish texts, is in fact a very old penitential written in the Irish or British church that was the main source for Cummean's penitential: L. Körntgen, *Studien zu den Quellen der frühmittelalterlichen Bußbücher*, *Quellen und Forschungen zum Recht im Mittelalter* 7 (Sigmaringen, 1993), 7–86. The Irish origin of Finnian and his penitential has lately been called into question, and both a Breton and a Brittonic origin have been suggested: see R. Meens, 'The Penitential of Finnian and the Textual Witness of the *Paenitentiale Vindobonense B*', *MS* 55 (1993), 243–55, esp. 245–7. On the *Liber ex lege Moysis*, see R. Kottje, 'Der *Liber ex lege Moysis*', *Irland und die Christenheit: Bibelstudien und Mission/Ireland and Christendom: The Bible and the Missions*, ed. P. Ní Cháthain and M. Richter (Stuttgart, 1987), pp. 59–69. For the *Collectio Hibernensis*, see M. Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons: the Origin of the Royal Anointing Ritual*, *Arbeiten zur Frühmittelalterforschung* 17 (Berlin and New York, 1985), 44–8.

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Finnian's penitential states that man and wife should abstain from sexual activities on Sunday night, explicitly linking this prohibition with the worthiness to receive the body of the Lord.<sup>19</sup> So, like the *Libellus*, this text raises the question of receiving holy communion after sexual intercourse. Cummean's penitential adds a further period of sexual abstinence by stating that man and wife should abstain when a woman is having her menstrual period. A ban on sexual activity during this time is mentioned twice in the *Liber ex lege Moysis*.<sup>20</sup> The justification for abstinence probably derives from a belief that a menstruating woman is impure. The same can be said of a woman who has recently given birth. Cummean's penitential forbids sexual relations with a new mother for a period of thirty-three days after the birth of a son and sixty-six after the birth of a daughter; the same prohibition is made in the *Collectio Hibernensis*, though as a result of a scribal blunder it prescribes an abstinence of forty-six days after the birth of a girl. That this apparent state of impurity could have entailed exclusion from church is borne out by the ban on a woman entering the temple after having given birth, found in Leviticus and thence in the *Liber ex lege Moysis*.<sup>21</sup> The latter text should best be seen as a juridical collection dealing with questions that were of interest when the text was composed.<sup>22</sup> In the *Excerpta quedam de libro Davidis* (one of the earliest penitential documents) a seminal emission during sleep requires penance, presumably to restore the state of purity.<sup>23</sup> Cummean's penitential, furthermore, lays down a penance of one *superstitio*, a special fast, for someone who accepts the host after having had 'a nocturnal pollution'.<sup>24</sup>

From the similar concerns shown by the Irish texts mentioned above and the questions on ritual purity raised in the *Libellus responsionum*, we can conclude that there is no reason to suppose that Augustine's questions could only have been formulated after exposure to the teachings of Theodore of Canterbury. In several Irish and British texts from the same period we find similar restrictions which impose strict segregation between the 'sacred' and

<sup>19</sup> *Paenitentiale Vinniani*, ch. 46 (*Irish Penitentials*, ed. Bieler, p. 92): 'et in nocte dominica uel sabbati abstineant se ab inuicem . . . Si autem perfererent secundum istam sententiam, tunc digni sunt Domini corpore.'

<sup>20</sup> *P. Cummeani* II.30 (*Irish Penitentials*, ed. Bieler, p. 116); for the *Liber ex lege Moysis*, see Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluss*, p. 78.

<sup>21</sup> *P. Cummeani* II.31 (*Irish Penitentials*, ed. Bieler, p. 116); *Collectio Hibernensis* XLVI. 11 (*Die irische Kanonensammlung*, ed. F.W.H. Wasserschleben, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, 1885), pp. 187–8). For the *liber ex lege Moysis*, see Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluss*, p. 78.

<sup>22</sup> Kottje, 'Der *Liber ex lege Moysis*', pp. 60–1.

<sup>23</sup> *Excerpta quedam de libro Davidis*, chs. 8–9 (*Irish Penitentials*, ed. Bieler, p. 70).

<sup>24</sup> *Excerpta ex libro Davidis* chs. 8–9. Cf. *Praefatio Gildae de paenitentia* ch. 22; *Synodus Anquilonalis Britaniae* ch. 2 (*ibid.* pp. 70, 62 and 66); and *P. Cummeani* (XI) 10 (*ibid.* p. 130): 'et qui acciperit sacrificium pollutus nocturno somno, sic peniteat [= superponat]'. See also Kottje, *Studien zum Einfluss*, pp. 77–8 and 112–13.